

Charlemont Board of Health Minutes
BOH Minutes April 28, 2021
Conference call

Present: Doug Telling, Bill Harker
Absent: Rob Lingle
Guest: Randy Crochier, Marguerite Willis

Called to order at 6:02 pm

--Mosquito spraying possible opt-out

1. Willis asked who would do the work of an alternative plan? Who will pay for it?
2. General discussion followed on why the opt-out is now proposed as an option; on the process involved to opt out; what, if known, are other towns doing—Crochier noted that 6 CPHS towns are showing an interest in opting out but no one has developed a clear plan as of now. Given the district interest he expected that he/district will be able to help with the alternative plans. He noted that the questions Willis raised apply to his town of Gill, too. Harker did not believe we know enough to make a decision. Telling noted that the role of the Board of Health is to provide input on the decision to the Select Board, who is tasked with the final decision. He also noted that we have a couple of weeks before we need to reach a final decision and we can use that time to research the issue and develop a plan if there is a feasible one. Willis worried about this become an unfunded state mandate at a time when the town is strapped for resources. Telling said that we should not move to those conclusions until we know more. If the state sprays, it will probably be charged to the town via the cherry sheet.

Telling moved and Harker seconded the following motion: The Board of Health recommends that the town move to opt out of the spraying and that the town pursue a feasible alternative to spraying. Passed 2-0

Willis agreed to a joint meeting in May to vote on a plan, if one is put forward.

--Harker moved and Telling seconded a motion to approve the minutes of March 24, 2021. Passed 2-0

--Crochier provided a health agent report: Both health agents have been busy with a significant uptick in Title-V's and Perc tests. The town has received 13 permit applications including the septic permits. Crochier has been spending a lot of time researching the spraying issue. He reported no news on the public health grant (one that would help fund the nursing program, someone to work on the administrative work now done ably by Phoebe Walker, improved permit software, and the lowering of town assessments. Reports have it that all but one who applied will get all or some of their requested money. The program is for ten years, pending annual renewal by the legislature. He noted that the vaccine rollout has gone well, but demand has recently declined. The drive through at GCC planned by FRCOG this week has been cancelled for both days. He noted that all national pharmacies in the area are awash with vaccine as is the Community Health Center. Telling and Harker both wondered about the implications of this for the proposed clinic at the Fairgrounds. Crochier added that the Bone Frog organization had contacted him and has presented a plan on the safe administration of the race. Finally, he noted that the people looking to move campers from Mohawk Park to a parcel on Warfield Rd have decided not to buy that land.

--Town Hall: Telling noted that he received an email from Dennis Annear asking about the status of the Town Hall. Telling raised three options: 1. Open it up; 2. Keep it locked but allow people to make appointments with those working there and be escorted into offices; 3. Keep it locked and have people with business with town employees meet outdoors (status quo). He ran these options by those working there and no one wanted it opened and all were happy to continue with 3. Telling noted that in meetings he has had with other local board of health officials that the remote meetings seemed to attract more participation by towns people than the face-to-face meetings. Harker worried about people looking for information and finding it difficult. Telling agreed that this was a problem, but it can be overcome with phone calls and meeting with employees. Telling also expressed concern about people being able to go into the library, even one at a time, but until the new librarian was in place, it seemed best to leave it as is. All agreed that it is important to protect the health of the workers and noted that the virus is still in town and the surrounding towns and that herd immunity was a ways off. Harker offered a motion to maintain the current status until the end of June. Telling seconded with the note that this can be revisited as events develop. Harker agreed and the motion passed 2-0.

--On three outstanding issues: King Septic, 119 Main St. complaint, and trash at the former Goat Rising location nothing much has changed.

Harker moved and Telling seconded a motion to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm

These minutes not official until signed.

Documents Reviewed

4/28/21

- Agenda 4/28/21
- Minutes 3/24/21
- Email from Dennis Annear
- Opt-out information from mass.gov
- Gloucester alternative proposal
- Email from Telling to Willis