

Board of Health

Meeting Minutes

October 8, 2024

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2024 NOV 19 A 11: 24

TOWN OF LUDLOW

Members Present: Kelly Lamas, Chair; Adrienne DeSantis, Secretary; Antonio Tavares, Member

Also Present: Paulina Matusik and Emily Quinn

Meeting was called to order @ 4:31 PM by Ms. Lamas and the Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

Monthly Business:

Ms. DeSantis signed the meeting minutes from August 15, 2024. Ms. DeSantis made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from Thursday, August 15, 2024, seconded by Mr. Tavares. All in Favor 3-0.

Ms. Matusik noted the Board did not meet in September and began with the September updates. September is Food Safety and Emergency Preparedness month, there were educational postings and food safety kits available on the counter in the Health Department that Ms. McMurray put together from the Shared Services Grant.

Ms. Matusik wanted to share acknowledgements of the Health Department noting that the West Brookfield Senior Center director complimented Ms. McMurray and Ms. Jediny from the shared staff on how well they work together and how helpful they are. Ms. Crosby has received compliments for being friendly and kind. Ms. Kramer received a certificate from Baystate (Grant Funded) on a Geriatrics segment that she took. She learned a lot, and this has been helpful for the community. Ms. Quinn is new and fresh; she has jumped in full swing and is doing a great job. Ms. Matusik is thankful for her staff and what they do daily.

Ms. Matusik explained for this month Flu Clinics have started, the first one was October 2nd, 2024, at the Veterans Center where Nineteen residents were vaccinated. There are two upcoming clinics at the Senior Center, October 15th, 2024, from 3pm to 5pm and October 21st, 2024, from 9am to 12:30pm and anyone is welcome to come. There will also be a Flu Clinic for the staff at Town Hall on October 29th, 2024, from 9am to 11am and 3pm to 5pm. If residents want the Flu Vaccine, they can call the Health Department and that can be set up. There have been twenty-eight vaccines given so far which includes the homebound residents and the Flu Clinic at the Veterans Center.

The Health Department has been busy with events, the whole department participated in the 250th Committee "Falling into Fun" event except for Ms. McMurray who was away. Ms. Matusik felt it was a great way for the community to interact with staff they may not see in the office because not everyone is in the office all the time. The Health Department had a lot of traffic at their stand, there were many conversations, recommendations and with everything the health department brought to the event, not much was left. For upcoming events the next one will be "The Rag Shag Parade" at the Boys and Girls Club (Halloween event) the Health Department Staff will be participating in on Friday, October 25th, 2024. Ms. Matusik and Ms. Kramer will be participating in the Ludlow Police &

Fire Open House that will be emergency preparedness related, and youth focused on October 27th, 2024. Ms. Jediny (Social Worker) will be away for this event.

For the Month of September:

Nursing:

(53) Footcare Patients - \$1,060.

Applications:

(7) Temporary Food Event Permit - \$350.00

(4) Well Construction Permit - \$340.00

(3) Disposal Works Construction Permit (Septic Plans) - \$750.00

(2) Septic Installer's Permit - \$250.00

(1) Perc Test - \$300.00

Total Fees: - \$3,050.00 (to the Town of Ludlow)

Visitations/Call in:

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The Board discussed the request for chickens at 29 Manor Lane. Ms. Matusik explained the zoning bylaws would require a permit from the BOH. Mr. Hogan wanted to introduce himself to the Board stating that he has been the secretary on the Agricultural Commission since 2009, has been on the ICOM since 2007 and on the Massachusetts Association of Agricultural Commissions as the Hampden County Representative for several years. Mr. Hogan noted that once he received the correction order regarding the roosters and chickens, he did relocate the roosters to his other property of forty-five acres, he currently has eleven chickens on the property and has had chickens since he got married in 2011. Mr. Hogan would like to be considered for the full amount chickens up to 25. Ms. Quinn noted that she had not heard from the complainant since the rooster was relocated to another property. Mr. Tavares made a motion to approve the request for up to 25 chickens at 49 Manor Lane, seconded by Ms. DeSantis. All in favor 3-0.

Kristen Bunten (Ludlow Public Schools), Gail Gramarossa (Primary Grant Writer) and Laura Rooney (CARES) came in to discuss the Drug Free Community Grant and to give an update on CARES.

Ms. Rooney began with the CARES update noting that in 2023 they embarked on a mental health initiative to try and educate 1,000 Ludlow residents, including people that work in Ludlow with youth or adult mental health first aid, and since it started, they have been able to educate about 400-450 residents. Ms. Rooney wanted to share Karen Carreira's feedback noting she is in Vermont. Since Ms. Carreira has been engaged in the Ludlow organization, she has been employed to teach classes in Monson, Northampton, Palmer, Quaboag, South Hadley and Springfield. Ms. Carreira has college engagements at Bay Path College, Springfield College, UMASS – Office of Accessibility, Western New England College and Westfield State. She has been nominated one of ten volunteers for the American Society for the Prevention of Suicide, nationally. Red Ribbon week will be held October 23-30th, 2024, and the theme will be "Life is a Movie, Live Drug Free." Posters have been placed in the schools and within the Town. Information will be given out to the students and there will be programs in all schools during Red Ribbon Week about prevention. There will be education for older students on some of the dangers of drugs and alcohol. This year CARES will have a motivational speaker which they have not had since Covid. Tony Hoffman has a very

interesting story and will be coming from California. He was a BMX athlete in high school and was looking forward to going to the Olympics, some things took him down a tougher path, he ended up in recovery after some time in the Service and a little time in prison. After he got out of prison he still wanted to go to the Olympics as a BMX racer, he got another injury and was not able to but did go to the 2016 Olympics as a coach. Mr. Hoffman will be speaking to the Middle and High School students and there will also be an evening event.

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In March the schools traditionally have a Professional Development Day for all professional staff, the staff were informed that the one initiative they were offering was youth mental health first aid on this development day because of how important it is to the school community, to the children, to the professional staff and the community. There were 300 teachers, counselors and desi licensed professionals who spent the entire day doing youth mental health first aid. The feedback from the staff felt this was a valuable day. Ms. Bunten explained that they were not teaching people to be clinicians but empowering the staff to be more comfortable with the conversations and to recognize when someone is needing help or further conversation and where to go from there. She also noted that there were eleven groups with twenty-one instructors. This event was held at the High School. The groups were mixed by both building and by professional roles so that they could get cross experience of what was being seen in the classrooms. They have continued to train some of the paraprofessionals and classroom aids, they are moving forward to train the rest of them, as well as additional new staff because this is too important to be a one-time training. They would like to see this continue with new staff that come into the district.

Ms. Rooney noted that because more than 10% of the faculty at the schools have been trained in youth mental health first aid, they have become one of the first schools in the area to be able to offer teen mental health first aid, which is a peer-to-peer program that can be offered in the high school through the mental health first aid organization with Ms. Bunten, Lisa Nemeth and Ron Hokanson and the LHS CARES group working on permission slips for the students to sign up. This program would not be counseling, it is for the students to understand on a peer basis about teen mental health first aid. Ms. Rooney explained that there will be upcoming classes on youth mental health first aid that are free to the public, they are virtual classes and will be held on November 4th and 7th, 2024 from 6pm-8:30pm. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention gave a substantial grant to hold the faculty presentation as well as all the donors over the years that have donated to CARES. CARES also received a sizeable donation from "For the Health of It", an organization for mental health that gave CARES the proceeds of their organizations remaining efforts because the organization was dissolving. She also explained that they have been using the Opioid funds to be reimbursed for drug prevention and mental health first aid efforts because their organization is focusing on prevention which includes having Tony Hoffman speak, Red Ribbon week, and to help reduce the stigma of addition so people can get help.

Ms. Lamas explained that before Covid she trained in youth mental health first aid and was also an instructor. She wanted to know if the curricula have been or will be amended to have more inclusive data around LGBTQIA youth and demographics, and how has it changed over the last four to five years because it did not have a lot of inclusive youth data or inclusive youth dialog? Ms. Rooney explained that she has taken the class now about four to five times because she is with Ms. Carreira which includes diversity in general, including youth dialog, data, and updated manuals.

Ms. Gramarossa discussed the Drug Free Communities Grant that is a federal program that was created by congress and has been around for decades. Congress wanted a program that would support local communities to look into substance use prevention, particularly among people ages eighteen and younger. Ms. Gramarossa noted that it is helpful when the reviewer reading the proposal can see the School Committee, Board of Health, Board of Selectman, Recreation Department and the Boys & Girls Club showing that all these groups are in favor of this community being funded. She went on to explain there are two main goals for this grant –

- (1) Keep the local coalition community wide with participation, lots of volunteerism, community support and work towards substance use prevention.
Ms. Gramarossa feels the Ludlow CARES Coalition is perfectly positioned for this grant because they have been around for a long time, there are lots of activities and lots of initiatives.
- (2) The goal is to drive down the rates of substance use and to have the outcome where fewer young people are engaging in substance use.
Ms. Gramarossa explained that on a national level the evaluation shows that this does work. Communities that receive the grant and work the model as it was designed see decreases in their youth substance use.

This grant enables the coalitions to continue by building, expanding and driving down the rates of substance use.

Initially the grant was for five years, once communities receive the first five years they can apply for a second five years. Recently, the federal government, the two organizations that sponsor this program are considering making it a fifteen-year grant, which would mean the coalitions would be able to apply for a third time.

To apply for the grant, there would need to be a community coalition, and the Town has Ludlow CARES. The next decision would be who will be the fiscal agent, who will manage the money. The Ludlow schools have agreed to be the fiscal agent – the schools agreeing to this is what has been done in the surrounding communities – the school district and the local community wide coalition team up which makes for a good partnership. The federal grant is \$125,000.00 a year which includes a lot of paperwork, and the schools are well positioned to help with the administration side along with Ludlow CARES. Ms. Gramarossa explained that the tag line of the program is “local problems require local solutions” and explained the recipe is community coalitions are encouraged to be used, the federal funders like to see evidence-based programs like youth mental health first aid with the opportunity to tailor it to your community. She explained the timeline for the grant. The official request for the proposals will come out after the first of the year in early 2025. They are looking to have the draft done a lot sooner than this. The grant needs to be submitted in April, they will find out in late August if they have been funded and the start date of the grant is September 30th, 2025. She also explained that this is mostly about prevention, but this does not mean that they cannot collaborate with treatment and recovery, on other resources within Ludlow, Hampden County or the wider region, they can collaborate and work together on a variety of issues and initiatives with community input.

Ms. DeSantis wanted to know who would oversee the grant? Ms. Gramarossa explained that this will be a partnership between Ludlow CARES and the Schools.

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Ms. Lamas wanted to know if the youth will be involved in the planning process of prevention, noting this grant is about them and for them? Ms. Gramarossa explained that she has been at meetings where there have been youth representatives and feels that this would be a good idea between now and the finalizing of the proposal that they meet with students because a lot of the initiatives will be youth driven. Having youth design messages, create social media, and create posters because they know how to talk to their peers. She also explained that they may want to create a mini youth coalition to work with the adults, which would be another way to bring in young people. She has been to national conferences and conferences of the grantees for this funding where the youth are there, the opportunity to bring youth down to Washington, DC, for advocacy and to learn from their peers from all over the country what the prevention movement is all about. Ms. Rooney explained they do have a youth advisory board that is from the high school and several of them go on to be on the Hampden County youth advisory board. LHS CARES works with the students as a guide and receives ideas from them. The mental health first aid came from the students by having conversations and letting them know how anxious and stressed they were. Ms. Gramarossa added that when congress created the program, they also created this organization to provide support and training to all the grantees. They put on webinars and conferences and a lot of them are geared towards the youth. To help the youth feel empowered to be spokespeople for promoting health and talking about mental health. The funder has recently, within the past several years, recognized that substance use, and mental health are often very closely linked. Youth mental health first aid and other mental health promotion programs can be funded which can be done under this grant because promoting mental health is substance use prevention and substance use prevention typically promotes mental health. The two are closely linked. Ms. Rooney stated that one of the reasons they didn't look at this grant before is because they wouldn't have had the freedom to do what they wanted. They wanted to do what was right for Ludlow and it wasn't always what was tied to the grant. By waiting as long as they did, the program is more tolerant in terms of what they can do, where they can get the funding from and how they can run it.

Ms. Lamas inquired as part of the planning process and the collaboration, will Ms. Gramarossa research the best practices for youth substance use programs and present this to the coalition and the schools to think through comprehensive evidenced bases? Ms. Gramarossa explained they are looking for specific things in a proposal, which includes research and evidence-based information. She feels it is a combination of continuing and maybe expanding on some of what CARES is already doing and already happening in the community with other partners and thinking about what is on the wish list that they haven't been able to get to but with a little more money could help by getting an updated version of a curriculum or program. With the online world being where the youth live these days, how do they use that and how do they use good health communication to make a difference. Ms. Bunten stated that the school system is pleased to be a partner with CARES because they know they need more targeted substance use prevention and it's a lift they don't have within their capacity and have not had. This will help them to meet this need not only for the community but also for the children.

Ms. DeSantis wanted to know how information is collected on evidence-based information because this area of concern does not have numbers, how do you prove that it is effective and that you're reducing the rates for substance use? Ms. Gramarossa explained that not only this funder, but other federal and state funders have directories as well as databases of programs that have

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already been researched and programs that have helped to change attitudes, behavior and knowledge about substance use. There are databases that can be searched for by age groups and other factors that would align with the grant. This grant requires some data to be submitted to the National Evaluation, they do give the resources to do annual or every other year surveys of where youth are at so that over time you can examine how well things are changing regarding their use and their beliefs about substance use. The data is anonymous, as an example, they could start off with the seventh-grade class and see what this class would look like when they are ninth graders and eleventh graders, have their attitudes and behaviors changed within this time frame.

Ms. Lamas expressed that a lot of what CARES has been working on and will expand on is the concept of protective factors that prevent risk behaviors for young people. She also feels that peer to peer will have a great impact on them. Ms. Rooney explained the protective factor is something that CARES has looked at for a while but it was not presented in a way they could share it with the community and it is what the youth mental health first aid does in the prework by discussing the protective factors so parents can learn about what they are and what are the risks within their own family that may be an issue for their son or daughter, this also benefits the school and the community. Ms. Gramarossa further explained that one of the objectives is to make an impact on the age group of eighteen and younger. Adults are around every day and have an influence on the youth from the bus driver to the coach, to the neighbor, they all influence the youth, which is why there is parent education as well as grandparents' education because grandparents are more active in their grandchildren's lives.

Ms. Rooney discussed funding because it is a matching grant. CARES raised between \$20,000.00 and \$30,000.00 a year through businesses. With the mental health initiative and the ongoing things, they have doing, CARES was granted a portion of the Opioid Relief Funds, and that fund money will go towards the matching grant. CARES did not fundraise this Fall because businesses have supported them for years and the need was not there because they received a significant contribution from "For the Health of it" and the Opioid Relief Fund. Next year as part of the grant process, CARES will need to fundraise to show community support. With so many volunteers the volunteer hours can be monetized and counted toward the matching funds along with any work that is done with CARES can also go towards the matching funds. Ms. Rooney explained that they are not a town that is creating a coalition because they are one, they have followers on social media and will have the ability to work with the money right away and make the kind of impact they want, which includes sustaining CARES for the Town of Ludlow. Ms. DeSantis made a motion that the Board of Health will support CARES and the Drug Free Community Program, seconded by Mr. Tavares. All in favor 3-0.

Actions/Correspondence:

The Board discussed the request for chicken increase at 3 Rogers Avenue. Ms. Matusik noted that this is the third request, the request is to increase the chickens from fourteen to twenty-five. Ms. Matusik explained the use of chickens is for eggs, she handed out copies of the location of the coop, plans for storage, and included the first two requests for chickens with the meeting minutes attached. Ms. Quinn did not do an inspection, she asked the homeowner for photos and explained that the homeowner did submit a sketch from the last submission, and asked if any of the specks had changed, the homeowner stated to Ms. Quinn there were no changes. Ms. DeSantis made a

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motion to allow 3 Rogers Avenue to increase their chickens to 25, seconded by Mr. Tavares. All in favor 3-0.

The Board discussed the request for thirteen chickens at 45 Howard Street. Ms. Matusik explained that the use of chickens is for pets and eggs and the Board was given copies of the request, location of the coop, plans for storage and cleaning. The health department received a complaint on September 16, 2024, a neighbor was complaining of chicken feces on their property. The health department did not go out to inspect this because they would need to see them doing it. Ms. Matusik did not feel this was an appropriate request. There have not been any other complaints received. Ms. DeSantis made a motion to pass approval for thirteen chickens at 45 Howard Street, seconded by Mr. Tavares. All in favor 3-0.

Ms. Matusik explained that the Local Upgrade Approval for 7 Warwick Drive is requesting a two-foot reduction in separation to ground water from four feet required to two feet. Ms. Matusik and Ms. Quinn both reviewed the plan and did not see any issues with the plan, the reason this was being brought forward to the Board is because the system was installed before the permit was approved and she is looking to see how the Board would like to proceed. Ms. Lamas asked Ms. Matusik to share why the system was installed before the plans were approved? Ms. Matusik explained that she reached out to the installer, they had told her that it was an error on their part, they had a new secretary and didn't realize the plans were not approved. Ms. Matusik went on to explain the normal process - the Health Department will go out and do a perc test, from there the Engineer draws up the plans, the plans are given to the Board for approval, once they are approved, the plans are given to the homeowner to pick up to then look for an installer usually price quotes. She is not sure how the plans were received and where the confusion fell when it was not the normal process, in her opinion. Ms. Quinn did note that when they receive the approved plans there is an approved stamp and signature on the plans. The plans Clean Septics, Inc. worked from did not have the approved stamp and signature from the Health Department on them. Ms. Lamas asked Ms. Matusik what are the steps as a Board, is there a contingency like an amendment to the approval? Ms. Matusik explained there are a few options including a Title V enforcement order, a warning or a fine. The Title V enforcement order could state that the system was placed/installed before it was approved, there could be a fine, in the order for the house to be sold, they need a Certificate of Compliance, we can state the system was placed/installed before the plans were approved and that the engineer was the only one to do a final inspection, Ms. Matusik and Ms. Quinn did go out to do a final inspection, noting the system was partially covered with dirt and was difficult to see the components, they left a few sections open and the inspection ports were covered. Ms. Matusik feels that attention to detail is important when installing systems, which is why she brought this to the attention of the Board. Ms. DeSantis noted that they were requesting a variance from the Board that was never approved. Mr. Tavares made a motion to approve the two-foot reduction in separation to ground water from four feet to two feet at 7 Warwick Drive with the contingency that the Board is approving post installation, and the Certificate of Compliance should read as such because the Board approved the plans after installation, seconded by Ms. DeSantis. All in favor 3-0. Ms. DeSantis made a motion to issue a warning to Clean Septics, Inc. informing them that if they are to install a system again without the Boards approval their permit will be suspended and a timeframe will be determined, seconded by Mr. Tavaras. All in favor 3-0.

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Ms. Matusik explained through Shared Services, they have a contracted position for Title V services for Ludlow, Palmer, Warren and West Brookfield. As of now Ms. Matusik and Ms. Quinn are doing all the Title V inspections but if they are on vacation or there is an emergency, there is a need for a back-up person. Mr. Garcia would need to be voted in as an Agent of the Board in order to do any work including perc tests, approving plans or if the Board wants and/or needs further discussion. Mr. Garcia would be a back up to Ms. Matusik and Ms. Quinn and he would be paid through The Mill Towns Shared Services.

Ms. DeSantis asked what Mr. Garcia does now. Ms. Matusik explained that he works for the state as a Lead Community Trainer, he trains public health staff, he works from home, his schedule is flexible, and he works with Ms. McMurray by creating a schedule month by month.

Ms. DeSantis asked if Mr. Garcia applied and was interviewed for the position. Ms. Matusik explained that at the interview he was very prepared and knowledgeable by coming in with all the regulations he could find for all four towns. She also noted how friendly and nice he was and that he would be a great asset for all the communities. Ms. Matusik shared that she is currently working on updating the regulations and feels that Mr. Garcia would be very helpful with this.

Ms. Matusik explained that Mr. Garcia has been hired for the Title V position. Ms. DeSantis asked if the Board is voting to support the decision. Ms. Matusik explained that any person who comes into the Town of Ludlow and does any work on behalf of the Board of Health needs to be appointed. Ms. DeSantis made a motion to appoint Mr. Garcia as an Agent of the Board for Ludlow as the Title V contractor The Mill Towns Shared Services, seconded by Mr. Tavares. All in favor 3-0.

Ms. Quinn discussed with the Board the Haviland Pond toxic Algae advisory. She explained there was a cyanobacteria bloom, which is also known as blue-green algae. It occurs naturally in fresh water and is common this time of year as summer winds down. In the summer the water becomes stratified, it is warmer on top and a lot cooler on the bottom and in the cooler layers the phosphorus that is bound to the sediment with the iron becomes unbound and is in that water table, now that the temperature is going down and the top of the water begins to cool off the water mixes and is no longer stratified so all of the phosphorus that was in the bottom layer moves to the top. If there are any cyanobacteria existing in the top layer, it now has a major food source and that is what creates the bloom, it does happen rapidly and unfortunately the only thing that can be done, is to wait it out, there is no chemical treatment for the cyanobacteria bloom. Because this is harmful to people and animals through direct skin contact, ingestion and inhalation, an advisory was put into effect not to recreate in the water, swim, and to avoid contact if possible. Ms. Quinn stated that this is an advisory, and the Health Department can't really enforce this, she did see people swimming and paddleboarding and explained they are doing this at their own risk and feels that the Health Department did their due diligence in educating them. Ms. Quinn explained that a complaint came in from a resident on September 12, 2024. The resident did submit photos to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation Recreation Lakes and Ponds Program. Ms. Quinn handed out copies of the photos that were submitted and was confirmed as cyanobacteria bloom, including three photos of each of Ms. Quinn's reinspection's to each member on the Board. When Ms. Quinn received the complaint, she put out the advisory and reported the presence to MASS DPH, they also confirmed that it appeared to be cyanobacteria bloom, they put Haviland Pond on their website with a list of blooms in the state (there are probably about thirty others – Ms. Quinn

feels this is normal). She posted signage at the public access point at the boat launch on September 16, 2024, she posted advisories online, which include the Health Departments website and Facebook for the public. On September 25, 2024, she went back to Haviland Pond for a reinspection and there was some improvement. She reinspected on September 30, 2024, and the conditions worsened. A reinspection was done on October 8, 2024, and the conditions were clear, she did not see any algae. Ms. Quinn contacted MASS DPH to request they sample the water. It is scheduled for October 10, 2024, the Health Department can rescind the advisory once they have two test samples that are taken a week apart and both come back clear. Ms. DeSantis asked about a timeframe. Ms. Quinn explained that it is the end of the season, and she has seen people boating out on the pond, there really is no timeframe because it can take days or even months, noting it would depend on the food source and how long it can last.

Other Discussion:

Ms. Matusik shared with the Board that Ms. McMurray put together a quick update for the Board including the events they have been going to in the other communities. They are going to reach out to all the Boards for the Advisory group to set up a meeting. They were preparing to teach CPR. Ms. McMurray attached Ms. Jediny's card regarding the social work services that she offers which have been shared with the libraries and other communities.

Ms. Matusik updated the Board on Ms. Quinn's inspections:

Inspections for Title V:

- (5) Final inspections
- (2) Perc tests
- (3) Plan reviews

Food Inspections:

- (3) Routine inspections
- (1) Reinspection
- (2) Complaint inspections

Nuisance Complaints:

- (11) Complaints received
- (11) Reinspection's conducted
- (6) Orders to correct sent out
- (2) Pool inspections
- (3) Water tests (Haviland Pond – Algae water testing)
- (4) Well Permits

Ms. Lamas shared with the Board; the Charter Article did not pass at the Town Meeting that was held on October 7, 2024.

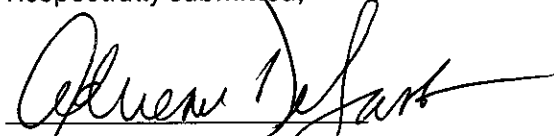
The legal notices were reviewed by the Board.

The next Board of Health meeting will be on Thursday, November 14, 2024, at 4:30 PM.

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A motion was made by Mr. Tavares to adjourn the meeting on Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 5:56 PM, seconded by Ms. DeSantis. All in favor 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Adrienne DeSantis, Secretary

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