

Board of Health

Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2025

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2025 FEB 14 A 9:10

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 at 4:30 PM by Ms. Lamas and the Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

Monthly Business:

Ms. DeSantis signed the meeting minutes from November 19, 2024. Mr. Tavares made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from Tuesday, November 19, 2024, seconded by Ms. DeSantis. All in favor 3-0.

Actions/Correspondence:

The Board discussed the request for chickens at 70 Willard Avenue. Ms. Quinn shared that a complaint was received from the Building Department regarding chickens without prior approval from the Board. Ms. Quinn passed out copies of the request along with a letter of recommendation from a neighbor, she noted the thirteen hens are primarily used for eggs and further explained the location of the coop, storage and cleaning. Mr. Tavares made a motion to approve the request for thirteen chickens at 70 Willard Avenue, seconded by Ms. DeSantis. All in favor 3-0.

The Board discussed the request for a Local Upgrade Approval for 469 Poole Street, they are requesting a reduction in depth to high ground water from five feet to three feet. Ms. Quinn explained that an Eljen system will be installed and feels that this is a reasonable request given the cost to add Title V fill to raise the system and to potentially raise the sewer line to the house. The Eljen system allows them to reduce it up to two feet. Ms. DeSantis made a motion to approve the Local Update for 469 Poole Street from five feet to three feet, seconded by Mr. Tavares. All in favor 3-0.

Ms. Lamas discussed the Opioid Settlement Update. In November, Tapestry sent a proposal to the Board of Selectman for the Opioid Settlement Funds and the funding request was approved at their November 19, 2024, meeting. At the December 3, 2024, meeting the Board of Selectmen rescinded Tapestry's funding request insinuating that someone from the Board of Selectmen's office or Marc Strange (Town Administrator) reached out to Ms. Matusik or the Board of Health on this and did not receive a response. Ms. Lamas expressed that this is inaccurate information because no one contacted the Board of Health either prior to the November 19, 2024, meeting or prior to the December 3, 2024, meeting. Ms. Lamas sent an email to the Board of Selectmen as Chair of the Board after having a discussion with Ms. Matusik. Ms. Lamas noted that Tapestry has been a partner with Ludlow and the Health Department since 2023, providing free services to the Town of Ludlow for syringe access and how their services align directly with the guidelines set forth by the State for the Opioid Settlement Funds and the harm reduction framework that the State has set for these funds to be allocated. She made note that Liz Whynott (Director of Harm Reduction

Programs) for Tapestry was not notified about the funds being rescinded until January 14, 2025, when she reached out to Marc Strange. Ms. Lamas feels that rescinding these funds based on inaccurate claims undermines fair governance and disserves the Ludlow residents and further explained that Ms. Matusik has been providing updates about Tapestry to Marc Strange and the Board of Selectman.

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Ms. Whynott appreciated attending this meeting to explain the services of Tapestry, she shared that she has been with Tapestry for over fifteen years. This program originally started with one syringe access program that served all of Western Massachusetts and was located in Northampton. Since she started, she advocated to expand the syringe access program, which has happened all over the State. About seven or eight years ago the law clarified how syringe programs are approved by the Boards of Health. The Harm Reduction Program works with people who are at high risk for overdose and who are high risk for other issues related to drug use. They primarily focus on people who are not ready to seek treatment, Tapestry has someone who specializes in finding, accessing and building trust with people who are often stigmatized and have trouble accessing general services due to their drug use. Ms. Whynott explained that Tapestry has a cell phone that can be called and receives text messages to meet individuals where they are at, and they have a van that comes to Ludlow on a regular basis.

Ms. Whynott expressed that when discussions started in 2023, they looked forward to starting services in Ludlow because their goal has always been how can they better provide the services they offer for people in need.

Tapestry's medical mobile van went to Everest Recovery for the first time recently and tested four people for Hepatitis C. When they go back, they do expect to test approximately eight more. For the people where the results come back positive, they will be connected to a Tapestry Clinician through Telehealth and get them started on medication.

Ms. Matusik added that the Health Department does meet with Tapestry monthly. They use their recovery service that goes out with Ms. Jediny (Shared Services Social Worker) on an as needed basis to do close overdose work including substance use and alcoholism. Because the Town of Ludlow has partnered with Tapestry the Health Department has been able to expand the sharps disposal service to everyone for free, this is not just limited to Ludlow residents.

Ms. Lamas discussed with the Board a Homebound Policy that was created with Ms. Matusik from conversations they had. The goal is to streamline nursing services and to look at the definition of a public health nurse to realign with health care services in general. There isn't currently a policy in place, so the Homebound Policy would be to ensure that residents of Ludlow who are homebound, whether they are young adults, to the elderly who are receiving homebound services through the public health nurse for what the Health Department provides or connecting them to services they don't currently have. This Homebound Policy would align with both Medicare and the MassHealth guidelines in relation to the definition of homebound.

Ms. Matusik explained that she sat with Ms. Kramer (Town Nurse) to create a Homebound list. A Homebound policy (policies are made by the Board of Health) would help streamline the nursing services for the town and align with the job description they currently have. This policy would promote community health and enhance overall preparedness by having a policy in place.

Ms. DeSantis asked if this policy means that the Health Department will only service the residents who are homebound. Ms. Matusik explained that this policy will streamline the structure of the town nurse, so in the past the Health Department was all nursing, noting that residents have mentioned services are not the same, and explaining the services that were provided by the Health Department were not what a Health Department does. By creating a Homebound policy, the policy will define what the Health Department does and help refer residents to services. The town nurse will still go to residents' homes but previously the Health Department did not have a Homebound definition, list or policy in place that aligned with the job description. This policy will help to place a focus on homebound residents. Ms. DeSantis made a motion to approve the Homebound Policy that was created for the Health Department as written, seconded by Mr. Tavares. All in favor 3-0.

Other Discussion:

Ms. Matusik explained that she emailed and printed out the email for the mandatory State Ethics, if the Board has any questions, she is there to help if they have not already taken the training.

For November most of the staff in the Health Department attended the 2024 Massachusetts Officers Association, a three-day conference, that was held at the MassMutual Center and topics included environmental health, nursing, epidemiology, local public health practice and management, and wastewater. These training courses provided continued education and credits.

Ms. Matusik and Ms. Quinn completed the in-person and virtual portion of the local public health intensive training housing course (formally known as the Mass Fit Housing). This course is designed for local health inspectors charged with enforcing housing-related laws and regulations including state sanitary codes, general administrative procedures and the minimum standards of fitness for human habitation. The next step for them will be the in-person housing training.

In preparation for permit renewals, Ms. Matusik and Ms. Quinn updated the applications for dumpsters, food service, mobile server, residential kitchen, retail food service, and the inspection checklist. Ms. Matusik noted that Ms. Quinn did the bulk of the work on these applications and that they have also been updated on the Health Department website. Ms. Lamas wanted to know if the local businesses that are renewing their permits are finding the updated applications helpful? Ms. Matusik explained that the reason the permits were updated is to make the applications easier to read by using a checklist system because the applications were being submitted with only the permit fee and not any of the required documentation and many of the business owners did not know where their certifications were, they should be posted within each establishment. Ms. Matusik also noted that along with the renewal letters and application an update regarding the Allergen Awareness training requirement was included because the Department of Public Health Food Protection Program updated its policy to allow for new Allergen training videos. The previously approved Allergen Awareness training courses are no longer approved, if someone took a class prior to October 7, 2024, their certification will still be valid until it expires. The new guidance for the training videos that are now approved is the ANAB accredited fair check certified course. Ms. Quinn put some classes together to help local businesses with the renewal process.

Ms. Matusik updated the Board on permits that needed to be renewed before December 31, 2024.

- (96) Food establishments (retail, restaurants, churches and schools) - (94) renewed
- (3) Residential kitchens
- (5) Body Art establishments – (4) renewed
- (16) Septic Installers
- (16) Septic Haulers
- (3) Trailer Parks – (2) renewed
- (28) Residential Dumpsters
- (65) Retail Dumpsters
- (232) Total permits were issued**

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Ms. Matusik noted that the Health Department still has free Covid tests available.

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

**Inspections for Title V:**

- (3) Final inspections
- (3) Perc tests
- (1) Plan review

**Food Inspections:**

- (9) Routine food inspections

**Nuisance Complaints:**

- (7) Complaint inspections
- (3) Orders to Correct sent

**Housing Inspections:**

- (2) Complaint housing inspections
- (4) Reinspection's
- (1) Order to Correct sent

- (2) Well Permit Reviews

**Flu Vaccine's:**

- (5) given for the month of December
- (230) Total vaccine's given out this Flu season

Ms. Matusik shared with the Board Ms. McMurray's (Shared Services) update that included Nalox boxes, both Ms. McMurray and Ms. Jediny went out to service all the Nalox boxes within the town to remove the expired Narcan and submit a monthly report. Ms. Matusik explained that she had applied for the Community Naloxone Purchasing Program to get free Narcan, this requires monthly reporting that they are already doing. They can order Narcan for the other communities and submit a report on each individual community.

Ms. McMurray is holding CPR classes on Thursday, January 16, 2025, and Monday, January 27, 2025, from 10am to 1:30pm and will continue to have classes every month. To schedule a class with Ms. McMurray all the information can be found online, including her contact information or by calling the Health Department.

Ms. Matusik discussed the Social Worker drop-in hours at the library that are held on the first Wednesday of every month from 11am-1pm. Ms. Jediny provides a wide range of services. Ms. Lamas asked how is this going and Ms. Matusik explained that it is up and down, noting that Ms. Jediny called the library to see if she should change her hours and was told that they have been receiving calls inquiring about the social worker drop-in hours. For now, the hours will stay the same.

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The legal notices were reviewed by the Board.

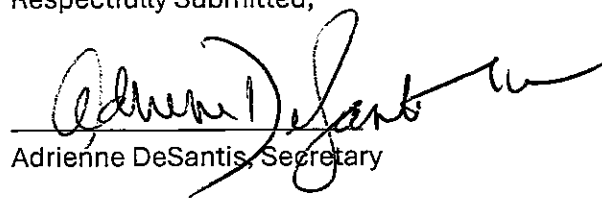
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Ms. Matusik mentioned that the Public Hearing on Tobacco Regulations will be Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 5pm in the Board of Selectman's Conference Room. Ms. Lamas explained that she will have a script that will outline what the public hearing is about and the rules. There will be a two-minute limit for anyone that shows up to share their concerns. She noted that the Board does not respond to comments during a public hearing unless the board member wants to follow up on a specific question based on what someone says. Once the public hearing is closed, they will decide if they will vote on the regulation changes. Ms. DeSantis asked if it will be an open meeting for the public after the public hearing. Ms. Lamas explained that they will close the public hearing, and the Board will deliberate, and they will decide if they want to vote on the changes or vote on a different date.

The next Board of Health meeting will be on Thursday, February 6, 2025, at 4:30 PM in the Board of Selectman's conference room.

A motion was made by Mr. Tavares to adjourn the meeting on January 15, 2025, at 5:26 PM, seconded by Ms. DeSantis. All in Favor 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Adrienne DeSantis, Secretary