

BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

Monday, January 13, 2020 – 5:00 PM – Richmond Town Hall, 1529 State Road

PRESENT: Mr. Peter Cohen, Chair; Mr. Andrew Fisher; Mr. Antony Segal; Mr. John Olander, Agent; Ms. Louise Maron

ABSENT: Mr. Fred Schubert

GUESTS: Ms. Claudia Ryan; Ms. Emilie Jarrett, RN, Community Health Assn.; Mr. Peter Beckwith, Highway Superintendent

Mr. Cohen called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

OLD BUSINESS:

Sanitation Budget in BOH Budget – Status? Mr. Cohen explained that in the months just prior to Ms. Fillio's becoming Town Administrator, the Town signed a three-year contract with Casella. Therefore, any discussion about the Board of Health having input into that negotiation is moot for the next three years.

Signs for Beach Closing: Mr. Cohen posted samples of the kinds of signs that need to be posted permanently and the one that closes the beach and advises when the water test shows an unacceptable level of e-coli. The permanent signs advise when the water is tested and when it is not. Swimming at other than during the testing period is at your own risk.

Mr. Beckwith will arrange for five signs to be made: One for Richmond Town Beach, one for the Boat Ramp, one for the Richmond Shores Assn. Beach and one for Camp Russell. They will be black on white reflective lettering and measure 12" x 18". The Beach Closed warning sign will be in red on white reflective lettering and measure 18" x 24". All signs will carry the Town Seal and the words "Board of Health" at the bottom. When the proof arrives, Mr. Beckwith will forward it to Mr. Peter Cohen for review.

Algorithm for Beach Testing and Closing: In Mr. Fred Schubert's absence, the issue was deferred.

Chapter 12A Fines: The Board has previously discussed the issuance of fines. Town Council was to have provided guidance on revising the Town's Bylaws that would provide a clear authority to levy fines for non-criminal offenses to specific agents. No such bylaw currently exists.

Online Permitting Program: This is a proposal of the Berkshire Alliance to sign on to a software program that provides online permitting to municipalities. The Alliance is offering to provide a grant for the one-time set up cost and the first year's maintenance. After year one, the Town will be responsible for the \$400 per year maintenance fee, which will be covered by funds obtained from permits issued. The Alliance has offered to speak to the Town and explain how the program works.

After some discussion, Mr. Tony Segal moved that the Board agree to opt-in to this program, pending the information to be provided by the Alliance. Mr. Fisher seconded the motion, which was carried by unanimous consent.

Ms. Jayne Smith's Letter to Hilltop Orchards (See attached): As Ms. Smith has resigned her position with the Alliance, follow-up will be discussed at the next meeting when Ms. Laura Kittridge will introduce the new agent to the Board.

Approval of the December 3, 2019 Minutes: Mr. Tony Segal moved that the Minutes of the December 3, 2019 meeting of the Board of Health be approved as read. His motion was seconded by Mr. Andy Fisher and adopted by unanimous vote.

Approval for Ms. Claudia Ryan to sign permits: It was noted that, when the question was raised at the last meeting, the then Chair, Mr. Fred Schubert, objected to giving Ms. Ryan that authority. A discussion ensued that resulted in the consensus that it will be useful for Ms. Ryan to be able to compete permits by signing them for the Board. It was noted that the permits in question do not provide any specific powers to the requester and will be followed by a formal inspection, which provides the opportunity to revoke or suspend.

Mr. Peter Cohen moved to give Ms. Claudia Ryan authority to sign permits for the Board of Health. He was seconded by Mr. Andy Fisher and the motion was adopted by unanimous consent.

Emergency Management Conference Call: Mr. Cohen noted that he had received an email announcing a conference call from Mass. Emergency Management. A discussion as to whose responsibility it is to be aware of correspondence from Mass. Emergency Management resulted in the consensus that Mr. Steve Traver, Richmond Fire Chief, is the Town's Emergency Management Director and that such information should be referred to him in the future. Mr. Cohen will do that.

Community Health Report (See attached): Ms. Emilie Jarrett noted that the report she provided is a summary of the work of the past six months, along with the entire 2019 MAVEN report, which provides an overview of the kinds of illnesses experienced in Richmond in the past year.

Mr. Cohen passed on to Ms. Jarrett an email from the Berkshire Opioid Addiction Prevention Collaborative (BOAPC) concerning Opioid Addiction Prevention. Ms. Jarrett noted that she regularly receives these emails and she attends the meetings.

Mr. Cohen asked whether opioid addiction exists in Richmond. Ms. Jarrett has not seen any reports of overdose incidents specific to Richmond after the one reported in 2013. But there are undoubtedly people in town dealing with addiction and those are the people the BOAPC and Ms. Jarrett are hoping to reach.

Flu Report – Ms. Jarrett reported that all the influenza strains that have been identified in Massachusetts this season to date are covered by the current vaccine. West Mass has a moderate level of cases now, although the number of cases usually peaks in February. The incidence of influenza related illnesses is high this time of year, but the severity is not as high as it has been in previous years. This improvement is directly correlated to flu injections.

Community Health Alliance Seminar: In May, the Alliance will host a Dinner Talk on nutrition by Ms. Leah Fink. The topic will be “What Kind of Diet Should I Follow?” A general discussion of how to negotiate the various diets and healthy eating tips that are available to the public.

Agent’s Report (See Attached): Mr. John Olander expanded on the events in his report.

Mr. Olander advised the group that the Town has had an invitation to join the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Springfield, which most of the towns in Berkshire County belong to except Richmond. There was a discussion of the cost involved, which is higher than the value of the recycled materials, and the need to do something to help protect the environment. There were several issues to consider along with the cost and Mr. Cohen volunteered to research what can be done and what it will entail for the Town.

Ms. Jarrett suggested sending a mailing to Richmond residents with tips to lessen the impact of garbage on the planet such as avoiding the use of plastic straws, plastic bags, single-use plastic bottles and increase car-pooling.

Mr. Olander raised the issue of the status of the supply of recycling bins. Ms. Ryan noted that Mr. Peter Beckwith had assured her that he has about 25 left. Mr. Olander has been researching the cost of these bins and has obtained a quote for a supply of either 150 or 300. There was a discussion of the problem of storage. Mr. Cohen will follow up on the quotes.

Rotation of Chairmanship – Discussion: Mr. Cohen said that he felt that rotating the chairmanship of the Board every three months resulted in a lack of continuity. He cited the excellent organization experienced when Ms. Maron held the Chair for an extended amount of time. That continuity enabled issues to be dealt with efficiently. He proposed that the rotation be extended to at least six months if not for a full year and that he would be willing to volunteer to take the first new rotation.

There was a discussion that resulted in a consensus to ask Mr. Cohen to accept the Chair for the current year, January – December 2020.

Next Meeting – Tues., February 4, 2020 at 5:00 PM

There being no further business before the Board, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and approved by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM