

Board of Health

Meeting Minutes

July 22, 2024

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

Also Present: Paulina Matusik

Meeting was called to order @ 4:30 PM by Ms. Lamas and the Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

Monthly Business:

Ms. DeSantis signed the meeting minutes from June 24, 2024. Ms. DeSantis made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from June 24, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Tavares. All in favor 3-0.

Ms. Matusik stated the Health Department is busy with new staff and training.

Ms. Matusik wanted to make everyone aware there are free Covid tests available at the Health Department.

Last week, Ms. Matusik presented at the Mass Association of Schools Superintendents Executive Institute on their community partners efforts towards building a prevention prepared community. There is a Facebook post on their Facebook page and more information can be found on the Ludlow Public School website. There is a brief description of the presenters, the topic and presentation slides.

Visitations/Call In:

Ms. Lamas introduced Ms. Quinn, the new Ludlow Health Inspector, Ms. Quinn started off by saying she received her bachelor's in public health at UMASS and has since worked as a Health Inspector and a Regional Health Inspector in Central Massachusetts before coming to the Town of Ludlow. She is a certified pool and spa operator, soil evaluator, system inspector, she has her Serv-Safe and Allergen Awareness certifications, she has done trainings for emergency management and preparedness, and has her local public health foundations and other necessary courses. Ms. Quinn has experience in housing and hotel inspections, food inspections, swimming pool inspections, recreation camp inspections, she had done water sampling for public swimming beaches and has experience in housing court. Her goals for this position are to become a licensed lead determinator and a registered sanitarian. Her goals for the town would be to go digital, Ms. Matusik has been working with Ms. Quinn to get the software up and running on the iPads for Food Code Pro and Housing Code Pro with the idea of making inspections quicker because the regulations will be on there for the inspector to refer to when out in the field, it goes on digitally and saved to the computer.

Ms. DeSantis asked about the new software, she wanted to know if this would be any different than the paper inspection reports that the health department has been using and would there be a need to educate the restaurants or food establishments? Ms. Matusik explained that the inspections are more FDA focused. Ms. Quinn explained that when the health inspector is out in the field they will

do the inspection on the iPad, mark the violations and take photo's of the inspection to document what the health inspector is seeing because if the health inspector is not available to do the reinspection the health director would be able to do the inspection because everything would be documented and the photo's would be there for the inspector and/or director to review and know what was corrected or not corrected. Once the inspection is done, the Inspector would go over the violations and/or findings, get a signature, and an email. Upload the information back at the office then cinque the information to iCloud and download the information into the file and send a digital copy in an email to the responsible party.

Ms. Quinn explained that for right now her top priority will be to catch up with the food inspections, noting that the Health Department has been without a Health Inspector for about five months.

Ms. Quinn has been working and training with Ms. Matusik by doing the water sampling at Haviland Pond, inspecting the Whitney Summer Camp Program and the Thompson Memorial Pool, Food inspections for restaurants and food trucks, they have worked on food plan reviews, pre ops, Septic Plan Reviews, Perc Tests and Final inspections as well as Housing inspections and Nuisance complaint inspections.

Mr. Tavares asked if the new inspection software is in the budget? Ms. Matusik explained that the software was paid for by the Shared Services Grant and does not come out of the Town of Ludlow budget.

Ms. Lamas introduced Ms. Jediny, the Mill Towns Social Worker, she received her master's in social work in May of 2021 and went on to get her License Certified Social Worker also known as LCSW in August of 2022. Her experience is mainly in substance use, she ran an overdose program team at the Hampden County Sheriffs Department before coming to the Town of Ludlow. She has experience within the schools and has her mental health clinician. Her internships were done in grad school. Ms. Jediny shared what she has been doing for the Shared Services. On the first Wednesday of the month from 11-1pm Ms. Jediny has Social Work drop-in hours at the Hubbard Memorial Library. Last month was the first one, no one attended, and hoping that residents will join. On the third Friday of the month from 10-11am, she attended the West Brookfield Coffee hour and plans on continuing to attend and joining the Warren Senior Center for coffee hour. She has been reaching out to other social workers within Massachusetts to see what they are doing in their towns regarding the work they are doing and bringing resources to their communities.

Ms. Lamas noticed at the library that there is a drop box for questions, she wanted to know if anyone is filling them out? Ms. Jediny explained that Ms. McMurray has put a drop box in Ludlow, Palmer, Warren and West Brookfield and monitors them. Ms. Jediny thinks there were two that Ms. McMurray retrieved from the drop box.

Ms. DeSantis made a motion to nominate Ms. Quinn to be the Ludlow Health Inspector and Agent of the Board. Seconded by Mr. Tavares. All in favor 3-0.

Ms. Lamas introduced Ms. Lapin, the UMASS/Department of Public Health Student Intern, Miss Lapin is from Philadelphia, she just graduated two months ago with her bachelor's in public health. She is in the accelerated graduate program and will be getting her masters next Spring. Her concentration for the master's program is Community Health but she is most passionate about

data analysis and using data to implement programs. She has been working with Ms. Matusik on increasing medical presents, updating files and resources, emergency preparedness and first aid resources and expressed that she has learned a lot working with Ms. Matusik.

Ms. DeSantis wanted to know when the internship ends? Miss Lamas explained that the internship ends August 14, 2024, and is funded by the Department of Public Health.

Actions/Correspondence:

Ms. Lamas wanted to discuss, approve and vote on an additional step increase for Ms. Matusik regarding her performance review. Ms. Lamas wanted to give context on how this position came about and explained that there were challenges in getting this Health Director role approved, they were (in her opinion) very cautious in grading the initial step for Ms. Matusik. After being in this role for a full year and her stellar performance review, there is a standard step increase that everyone gets yearly as municipal employees of the Town of Ludlow. The recommendation based on her performance review would be to bump her up two steps, one more step beyond the standard to give her market salary for the role that she is performing. After speaking with Mr. Stange (Town Administrator) and Ms. Ribeiro (Human Resources) there would need to be a formal vote and approval from the Board to move forward for the two-step increase. Ms. Lamas also explained there is money in the budget, that is freed up in general from salaries and there is room in the next fiscal year to continue and feels there are no concerns monetarily or salary issues.

Mr. Tavares asked if the raise was ever in the budget and where is the money coming from? Ms. Matusik explained that based off the health inspector salary there is money in the budget because of what the previous health inspector was making and what the current health inspector is making now there is money in the budget. This was not planned for.

Ms. Lamas explained how the budgets are structured for salary and non-salary. The salary budget can be moved around in salaries only and has extra funds of about \$10,000.00 after the increase. Ms. Lamas also explained that the budgets are also structured where salary cannot be moved to non-salary and vice versa.

Mr. Tavares noted that he feels Ms. Matusik has been doing a great job and is doing a great job in her position.

Mr. Tavares mentioned that he did reach out to Ms. Ribeiro in Human Resources to find out if anyone has ever received a two-step increase? Ms. Ribeiro let him know that it has never been done. Ms. Lamas explained that if they look at the scope of Ms. Matusik responsibilities, her salary and the difference in what she is making compared to her staff, it is minimal, and her responsibilities have tripled within the last year. Ms. Lamas expressed that as someone who is a director of a health department professionally Ms. Matusik is not getting equitable pay as a health director. Ms. Matusik has been taking on responsibilities beyond her job description and has taken on added responsibilities in the last year that has expended her role. Her staff has grown in the department with added responsibilities in terms of personnel.

Ms. DeSantis wanted to know if the two-step increase will bring Ms. Matusik up to the standard? Ms. Lamas stated that it would. Ms. DeSantis then questioned that they will not be looking to do this every year? Ms. Lamas explained that this would not happen again and feels that as a Board

they went in very cautiously for this Health Director position regarding the salary because the Health Department was the only department in the Town of Ludlow without a director and wanted this position approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. DeSantis asked Ms. Matusik if she gets any funds from the Shared Program? Ms. Matusik stated that she does, it is separate, and she does not do work for that. If she does get any funding, it's only for after normal hours and noted that she has a spreadsheet that she tracks for this.

Ms. DeSantis made a motion to approve the additional step increase for Ms. Matusik. Seconded by Mr. Tavares. All in favor 3-0.

Other Discussion:

Ms. Matusik explained to the Board that she met with Ms. Kramer a couple of weeks ago regarding the clinic room. Ms. Matusik pulled data from the past couple of years from the annual reports and the only vaccines that are administered are Flu and Tetanus. All the Flu vaccines are done at Flu clinics and about five Tetanus vaccines were administered. Ms. Matusik decided for now that the vaccines will not be administered in the Health Department because there isn't a need until they can better establish some procedures, cleanliness, and set up. The Health Department will continue to do homebound vaccines and host Flu clinics at the Town Hall and in other areas within the town. Ms. Matusik stated that she will reassess the need going forward. Ms. Lamas explained that having residents walk in without an appointment would be inefficient at times because Ms. Kramer may be on her way to an appointment or not in the office. Ms. Lamas suggested planning out the vaccine clinics in August for the rest of the year. Ms. Matusik explained that after speaking with Ms. Kramer and working through the procedures, Ms. Kramer orders the vaccines in the early Spring, she does not schedule anything until she gets notified when the first shipment will be coming in and how many are in the shipment. As an example, she may order two hundred vaccines and only receive fifty in the first shipment and the last thing they want to do is cancel and reschedule a flu clinic which is why Mr. Kramer is unable to schedule too far ahead.

Ms. Matusik explained that she mentioned to the Board about working with the towns press release company about monthly educational pieces that they were sending out and the last one was the Ludlow Health Department promoting community involvement in rodent control initiatives noting that the last news media that came out was inaccurate. Ms. Matusik explained the definition of a rodent is not just a rat or a mouse but an animal that includes 4,660 different types of species, including squirrels, hamsters, porcupines, chipmunks, etc. With the term rodent the health department is not just addressing rats and mice, they are addressing the whole term and what that stands for. Ms. Matusik noted that Ms. Lapin pulled together the rodent portion of the community needs health assessment and wanted to address that 71.8% of the respondents were unaware of where to report rodent related issues, and feels that sending the letter out last year compared to this year regarding the number of complaints the health department has received is because they did not know where to address this issue and now they do. This was mentioned in the interview which was not included. Ms. Matusik explained that the health department has taken initiatives to help promote the prevention in rodent control that includes knowledge of what to do, tools needed and working together which has been the main drive. Ms. Matusik gave an example that if one house has the problem and there are four surrounding neighbors and the one house is not doing what they should be doing, they are affecting not only themselves but the four surrounding

neighbors. She also feels that people may not understand this is a community wide effort and everyone needs to work together to help prevent this. Ms. Matusik expressed that the health department has been working on a rodent control plan since last year. A survey was sent out last year to see who was seeing what. Only 40% of the respondents have encountered rodents in their surrounding area or stated that they encountered rodents or some type of rodent activity. She stated this is less than half and is looking into what the factors are going into this. The health department is also working with the building department and the DPW. They have also reached out to the Mill Towns asking for monthly pest reports, noting that they are still waiting for April, May and June. It looks like they changed pest management companies and once they did that the reports changed, not as detailed as the previous pest management company.

Shared Services Updates:

- As of June 17, 2024, Ms. McMurray has met with each of the Board of Health's in all the participating municipalities of the PHE Grant, her next goal is to set up a governance board meeting to go over the FY25 Workplan and Budget with a representative from each of the towns.
- The FY25 Workplan and Budget have been approved by DPH.
- An update from DPH: fifty percent of the funds for the PHE grant will be issued this summer for the first payment, the second payment of twenty five percent of the funds will be issued in the Fall, and the third payment of twenty five percent of the funds will be issued in the Spring of 2025.
- Ms. McMurray has been working on the end of year reporting that is due at the end of the month to DPH. Additionally, unused funds from FY24 are due back to the state by Mid-August.
- Ms. McMurray and Ms. Jediny have been doing a great job revolving around community engagement, getting out into the communities visiting the libraries, senior centers, schools and contacting the police departments within the participating municipalities.
- Ms. Jediny has been meeting with social workers from other towns who work in Local Public Health to find out what their role is in the community and to get ideas regarding how she can better support the Mill Towns.
- Ms. McMurray and Ms. Jediny have been attending many community events such as the Three Rivers Farmers Market on July 12, 2024, the West Brookfield Farmers Market on July 17, 2024, and have the Warren Concert Vendor Night on their schedule for this Friday, July 26, 2024. They have been trying to attend a community event in each town.
 - o At the tabling events they have been handing out sunscreen packets, bug repellent wipes/bracelets, Fentanyl test strips, mental health resources for mothers, those who use substances, and everyone else, as well as tick and mosquito safety information. It has been amazing getting out into the communities and interacting with the residents.
- Ms. McMurray and Ms. Jediny have been working on adding a "Mill Towns Public Health" page to the Ludlow town website.

Ms. Lamas wanted to know if there was any unused FY24 funds from the PHG? Ms. Matusik will have Ms. McMurray email the board members with an accurate amount and break it down between salaries and the other categories.

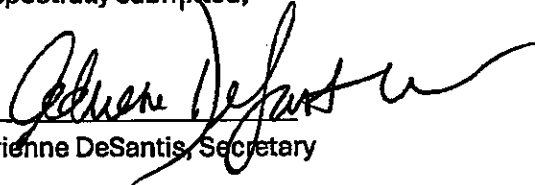
The inspections reports were reviewed by the Board.

The Legal notices were reviewed by the Board.

The next Board of Health meeting will be on Thursday, August 15, 2024, at 4:30 PM. They are holding off on scheduling a Board of Health meeting for September for now. The Board did schedule a Board of Health meeting for Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 4:30 PM.

A motion was made by Mr. Tavares to adjourn the meeting on July 22, 2024, at 5:11 PM. Seconded by Ms. DeSantis. All in favor 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrienne DeSantis', is written over a horizontal line.

Adrienne DeSantis, Secretary