Board of Health

Meeting Minutes

April 20, 2023

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TOWN OF LUDLOW

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

Also Present: Paulina Matusik

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

Monthly Business:

The meeting minutes from 4/6/2023 were signed. Motion was made by Mr. Tavares to approve the 4/6/2023 minutes, seconded by Ms. DeSantis. All in favor 3-0.

Visitations:

None

Actions/Correspondence:

The Board continued their discussion for the request of reinspection of the system at 515 Holyoke Street. Clarke Kennedy was present for the discussion. Ms. Matusik reported that she spoke with Chrissy Florence, Mike Pietras, and Dave Kibbe of Complete Septics. They all recommended that Mr. Kennedy be allowed to replace the 2 components (tank and distribution box) and that there be a reinspection after 6 months of normal water flow. No one can say with any certainty that the system would sustain a normal water flow as the flow has been less than 100 gallons per month for over a year now. The system is designed to handle up to 330 gallons per month. It was also recommended that there be an escrow account set up if Mr. Kennedy sells that home and there are any issues with the system. The Board feels that that can be handled at the closing as the buyers will be aware of any potential concerns after achieving proper water flow. Ms. DeSantis made a motion to allow Mr. Kennedy to replace the tank and distribution box through a conditional pass and reinspection after six months of adequate water flow. Seconded by Mr. Tavares. All in favor 3-0.

There was discussion on the Health Director job description. Ms. Matusik made a few changes to the wording but this draft is essentially the same as the one approved by the Board of Selectmen. Once the Board of Health approves the final draft it will go to Human Resources and be posted for July 1, 2023. Motion was made by Ms. DeSantis to accept this final draft of the Health Director job description, seconded by Mr. Tavares. All in favor 3-0.

Ms. Matusik presented the Board with information on the Syringe Services Program (SSP) available through the State. She recommended using a mobile unit to provide the services to our residents. Ms. Matusik also explained that through an SSP our resident could have access to sterile syringes & safe disposal, infectious disease prevention materials, screening & testing for HIV, Hepatitis C and sexually transmitted infections, overdose education and access to Narcan.

Through SSPs, our residents may be more likely to engage in their care. As of March 2023, there are 70 cities and towns in Massachusetts that have a Syringe Services Program. Ms. Matusik also provided the Board with statistics on the overdose rates in Ludlow since 2020. The rates are based on 911 calls and are trending upwards in 2023. At this time, she has presented the numbers in percentages as she would like to speak with the Police and Fire Departments before releasing actual numbers. To move forward with this program, the Board of Health must approve an SSP for their town and provide in writing a letter to the State. The State would then review the information and, if approved, provide funding for an SSP provider for Ludlow. Ms. DeSantis made a motion to approve bringing a Syringe Services Program into Ludlow through a provider. Seconded by Mr. Tavares. All in favor 3-0.

There was discussion on whether the department should be called Board of Health or be changed to Health Department. Ms. Matusik reviewed the roles of the the Board as well as the staff members within the department. The Board is responsible for following Mass General Laws and creating policies, but the staff is who carries them out. The staff members report to the Health Director, who in turn reports to the Board. Mr. Tavares asked if the Board is allowed to change the name without authorization from the Charter. He would like to ask our Town Administrator what he thinks. Ms. Lamas feels that the Board is within their rights to change the name. Ms. Matusik suggested that this discussion be tabled until the next meeting and allow Mr. Tavares time to talk to Mr. Strange about this. The discussion is tabled at this time.

Other Discussion:

Ms. Lamas asked that another board member attend the Town Meeting on May 8, 2023 as she will be out of the country. There is an article for our revolving fund on the agenda. Ms. DeSantis stated that she is able to attend the meeting.

The next two Board of Health meetings will be on May 18, 2023 at 4:30 PM and June 15, 2023 at 4:30 PM.

A motion was made by Mr. Tavares to adjourn the meeting at 5:46PM. Seconded by Ms. DeSantis. All in favor 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Adrienne DeSantis

Secretary

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