



Town of Fairhaven

Board of Health

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February 15th, 2023

PRESENT: Heidi Hacking, Kevin Gallagher, David Flaherty
Absent: Michael Ristuccia

1. Call to Order

- a. Chairman Kevin Gallagher called the meeting to order at 5:00pm. Chairman Gallagher welcomed everyone.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Welcome and Media Notification

- a. Chairman Gallagher read the media and recording notifications, and welcomed the public to speak on items.

4. Minutes of the Meeting:

- a. Chairman Gallaher made the motion to accept the minutes of the meeting of February 1, 2023. Vice Chair, Heidi Hacking in agreement and motion accepted.

5. Health Agent Report

- a. Health Agent Flaherty reports statewide hospitalizations for COVID: 189 down from 266, ICU Admittances is 77 down from 86. 25 Intubated cases down from 28. Other statistics have been included in order to educate the public. The 14 day Positivity rate for Fairhaven is 16.7 % up from 14.9%. Case counts for the last two weeks are 32 down from 26. Since reporting began in 2020 Fairhaven has had 5318 cases. Reportable tests for the last two weeks are 221. Since the beginning of reportable tests 88113. Trends seemed to have plateaued at this time.
- b. Covid Test Kits are available and the public can pick up a kit at the Board of Health office or Council on Aging.
- c. The Community Health Nurse will be offering homebound vaccinations for Covid & Flu shots for homebound residents, please call 833-983-0485.
- d. Medication disposal bags are available in the Health Office, Library, COA, Recreation Center and the Fire and Police Department.

- e. Go to South Coast Health Care Website for vaccine clinic information at southcoast.org/covid-19-vaccination
- f. Blood Pressure Wellness Clinic held at Council on Aging weekly on Wednesdays Between 1:00 p.m. & 3:00 p.m. No Perc tests and no other Title 5 System inspections performed.
- h. Follow up on various chapter two housing inspections with focus on complaints.
- i. Arbovirus update- Hard Frost has taken place and testing season is now over.
- j. Rodent Complaints-No rodent complaints at this time received in the last two weeks.

6) Covid Number Update- Chairman Gallagher confirms with Agent Flaherty that Covid numbers have hit a plateau. Chairman Gallagher also reports the positive percentage rate used to be so reliable prior to all tests being reported to the state. All the tests that are taken at the doctor's office are reported however, any tests that are taken at home are not.

7) Fairhaven Sustainability Department Committee- Kristin Ric of the Sustainability Committee states she was here with other members of the committee about a year ago. The idea was for a proposal for a by law that would regulate the use of single use plastics and polystyrenes in town for environmental and health reasons, The main concerns the Board had at that time were mainly the costs that would infringe upon businesses that would be distributing these items. The Board suggested that a survey be done to get business input. She states the Styrofoam and plastic. It cannot be recycled and pollutes the ocean causing injury and death to animals in the ocean. She has many concerns for human as well. There is a chemical named Benzene that can be stored in the body. Kristin reports all of the research has come from N.I.H universities and articles. She states regarding the survey; they approached food establishments and any retailer that has a business license to sell food and drink. Kristin reports over the course of two months they emailed and ran a press release in the neighborhood news in order for business to get in contact with them. Some establishments were visited in person and called to get updated contact information. 26% of food establishments responded. Fast food or corporate chains responded that they did not have a local manager to respond to contact corporate. On the retail side, which includes liquor, convenient, grocery and drug store/pharmacy chains she reports they had a very poor response with only two surveys completed. She reports that some establishments reported they would not fill out the survey and just comply with corporate rules. They were unable to analyze those responses due to the many of the questions were split 50/50. The results were 71% do not use Styrofoam containers. Of the few that are, using Styrofoam cups 100 % percent stated they

would change over to paper cups. Kristin reports the price for papers cups are a cheaper price looking at online bulk website. The restaurants would have additional access to a wholesale distributor website that provides additional options. Nearly everyone reported they use single use plastic item. Half of them have considered changing from plastic to aluminum boxes due to various reasons. The number one reason was due to performance of the items such as paper straws. Other factors included cost and availability of products and that corporate decides which product to implement. They are aware of other towns and cities that have regulated what items can be provided. 71% would change over to paper straws vs. plastic if the cost were with 1-2 cents per unit. 21% would not change due to the quality or performance of the product or own corporate regulations. 57% would be willing to change to a less harmful alternative than paper straws for 0.05% per straw that would be a completely biodegradable straw made of plant fiber. Cost was not as much as a factor as expected to be. The next section of the survey was on items that are given out on request only. 86% would consider providing plastic single use utensils drink stirrers and splash sticks only on requests in order to use fewer of them which would then be cost saving. If they would consider giving a 5-10 cent discount for consumer bring in their own bags. As of May 2022 154 towns in Massachusetts have regulated the use of single use plastic bags. Two of those towns include Dartmouth and New Bedford. She also mention bag bans across the state. Chairman Gallagher questions if it is bags only. Kristin confirms yes. The by law that has been drafted has been established in order to reduce the vast amounts of materials for the environment and human health. There are parts of the bylaw that still require legal counseling. It prohibits two things, which is Styrofoam food packaging, coolers, and plastic bags with some exceptions for plastic bags. The second part of the by law makes other food service items request only plastic utensils splash sticks and drink stirrers. Erin states they do not want to completely ban those plastic items however, they would like to reduce the amount going out into the environment. Single use plastic cups lids, take out boxes would be unaffected by this bylaw. Based on the survey results from the businesses and due to the health risks, the Sustainability Committee is optimistic the Board of Health will co-sponsor this by law when it is presented in the town meeting in May. Kristin explains a warrant must be submitted by March 1st, 2023. Chairman Gallagher explains that the Select board established the Sustainability Committee a few years ago. Chairman Gallagher commends the Sustainability Committee for taking the survey results and meeting the local businesses to a certain extent. He explains they are not looking for a complete ban and are looking to reduce the amount. Kristin explains that the survey was able to provide insight on why local business use certain products. She does believe the way of the future will be to eliminate plastic bags and her concerns of Styrofoam is that it is toxic and cannot be recycled. Styrofoam coolers present as a concern as well and are found on the beaches in town. Walmart responded to the survey and explained that they sell different types of coolers vs. only Styrofoam. Kristin explains to the board where the possible ban of sale of these particular coolers is located in the bylaw draft. She explains that in New Bedford all plastic bags have been banned. Chairman Gallagher questions the cost difference and how she would grade that starting with Styrofoam first? Kristin explains she went to an online retailer to research on purchasing bulk restaurant items and found that paper items were cheaper than Styrofoam. She states this could vary for wholesale items that are being purchased. Chairman Gallagher also questions the request of single use utensils, plastic straws vs. being automatically given. Kristin explains if someone would order food for takeout they would have to request utensils vs. automatically receiving them. She explains that straws would not

be prohibited. She states the restaurants would have the option to offer plastic or paper straws. Chairman Gallagher questions if all of Cape Cod also has these restrictions. Kristin explains it is spotty however, under 12 ounces water/ juice bottles are no longer being sold or used on town property. Chairman Gallagher questions what the status of the article is presently. Kristin explains she does have a draft that she plans to submit prior to the March 1, 2023 deadline and would hope the Board of Health would co-sponsor. She states the Sustainability Committee is in full support of this. The language used in the draft will be proof read to make sure the language is legal and is based on bylaws that other towns have used that the state has approved. Chairman Gallagher questions if the town administrator in the enforcement agent? Kristin explains it would be an elected board or health agent that when performing health inspections it could be enforced. Chairman Gallagher questions the head of the Sustainability Department "BY law Chapter 47 471 Solid Waste this is something we share responsibilities with the DPW". Anne Richard responds that she spoke with the T.A. Vice Chair Hacking states; she thinks this is very well written. She states this is timely for the town and that The Board would support this. Chairman Gallagher states he does see the impacts of this especially at the beach and down at West Island. Chairman Gallagher explains there is not a full board present and within the last year when it comes to sponsoring, he would like a full board present to make a decision. Due to the deadline, Gallagher is willing to entertain a motion. Vice chair Hacking questions the current draft and items in red would need to come to reviewed and returned for the Board of Health to review and Kristin agrees. Health Agent Flaherty states possibly vote on draft regulation with minor edits to follow without any substantive change. Chairman Gallagher makes a motion to The Board of Health to endorse the Sustainability Committee by-law for single use plastic reduction for the Town of Fairhaven pending the edits. All in favor. Chairman Gallagher commends all of the committee for hearing what the Board requested a year ago, acting upon this, and returning with the results.

8) Update on reportable issues or concerns with Wind Turbines- No comments or concerns at this time.

9) Public Comment- No public comment

10) Invoices, Correspondence & Other Business

a. Invoices reviewed and approved.

11) Next Meeting Date: March 15, 2023 at 5:00pm

12) Future Agenda items

a. Update on reestablishing ability to report issues or concerns on wind turbines