



# Town of Fairhaven

## Board of Health

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2021 DEC -3 11-05

December 15, 2021

PRESENT: Michael Ristuccia, Peter DeTerra, Kevin Gallagher, David Flaherty

### Call to Order

- a. Chairman, Michael Ristuccia called the meeting to order at 5:00pm. Roll call attendance of the meeting members were taken, all members were present.
2. **Welcome and Media Notification**
  - a. Mr. Ristuccia welcomed everyone and read the media and recording notifications and welcomed the public to speak on items.
3. **Minutes of the Meeting:**
  - a. Mr. DeTerra made the motion to approve the minutes of the meeting on December 1, 2021. Mr. Gallagher seconded the motion, vote passed.
4. **Health Agent Report/ COVID-19 Update**
  - a. Mr. Flaherty read his report: As of December 1, 2021: Total Case Count: 2,824. Total Tests in the last 2 weeks 1,813. Total cases in the last two weeks: 155. Positivity Rate of 8.94%. Total vaccinated persons in Fairhaven 10,426. Vaccinated Females is 5,713, 69% Per Capita and 55% Proportion. Fully Vaccinated Males is 4,713, 61% Per Capita and 45% Proportion.
  - b. COVID Testing will be until further notice and subject to change at the Emergency Management Building at 150 Sconticut Neck Rd from 10am- 12pm on Saturdays. Acushnet will also be doing COVID testing on Saturdays from 9am-12pm at the Acushnet Council on Aging. Shots and testing can also be obtained at local pharmacies. Community Nurse is assisting with homebound vaccines by using the Intake line.
  - c. Next blood pressure clinic is December 22, 2021 from 1-2 PM at the Town Hall in the Banquet Room.
  - d. The Board of Health Office has been trying to get a booster clinic running, it has been difficult due to staffing constraints. Looking forward to after the New Year to schedule a booster clinic.
  - e. Mr. Flaherty has followed up on Chapter 2 complaints with the Building Commissioner. Conducted 1 Title 5 Inspection and 1 food service inspection.
  - f. Mr. Flaherty said the clothing donation bins are becoming a problem at the Council on Aging. Mr. Flaherty is currently looking into another company that is well represented and will pay more per pound. They will also take more items and do home visits at no cost to the town. The Board of Health gave Mr. Flaherty the authorization to sign the MOU.
  - g. Mr. Gallagher discussed ways to be a bit more aggressive with COVID awareness to reach those who aren't following the right thing. A suggestion was made to use the RAVE system with a link of a weekly update video to be sent out at a specific date and time. The Board asked Mr. Flaherty to reach out to both Chiefs (Fire and Police) for their input on using the system.
5. **Community Nurse Communicable Disease Update**
  - a. Leanne Costa, the Public Health Nurse was present at the meeting and she discussed how they conduct the surveillance for communicable diseases in a program called MAVEN. She stated that currently we are in a worse off position for COVID than we were last year at this time for positive cases. Community Nurse has been working tirelessly due to the States cut back in contact tracing

for towns and cities. Fairhaven Community Nurse is now doing all of the contact tracing and giving guidance as well as answering in depth questions for residents.

- b. A short discussion followed by Mr. Flaherty and Mr. Gallagher about how the smaller communities such as Fairhaven is not receiving much assistance from the State and all the resources are going to the larger communities. Mr. Flaherty said that there was a grant that New Bedford, Acushnet and Fairhaven are working together on for Public Health Resources and that hopefully this will help alleviate the weight for the Public Health Nurses.
- c. Mr. Gallagher stated a mask mandate should come back and possibly try it regionally, Mr. Flaherty said it could be enforced but it would be difficult, and it should be tried locally and then regionally.
- d. Leanne Costa stated many of the calls they are making are of vaccinated persons who are positive and the symptoms are less severe but it can still be spread, the past Monday (December 13<sup>th</sup>) there were 15 cases just in that one day. Mr. Gallagher also stressed that the hospitals are becoming overwhelmed again.

**6. Title 5 Inspection Review- 8 Charity Stevens**

- a. Mr. Flaherty witnessed the inspection with Mr. Buker of Buker & Sons. The system failed due to surcharge into the d-box which is considered a failure. Mr. Flaherty will write a letter to request engineering to correct the issue. Mr. Ristuccia said he would like an update at the next meeting. Mr. DeTerra made a motion to accept the failure of 8 Charity Stevens, Mr. Gallagher seconded, vote passes.

**7. 28 Cherrystone Rd- Discussion of sewer tie in.**

- a. A letter from Mr. Vincent Furtado, Superintendent of Public works was read out loud by Mr. Flaherty stating, "You should be aware that the Board of Public Works voted to allow this property to tie into the West Island Sewer System as a documentation submitted and reviewed, coupled with the attestation of the Towns former Health Agent, demonstrated that this property complies with the covenant established between the Town and State, some 25 years ago. In addition, based on the review of the same documentation, Town Council concurred, that allowing this property to tie in, will not violate the stipulations set forth in the covenant." Mr. Flaherty said it was allowed a few years ago and we are doing this for housekeeping purposes. Mr. DeTerra made the motion to approve the sewer tie for 28 Cherrystone that has met the qualifying factors that the Town entered to in agreement with the state, Mr. Gallagher seconded, vote passes.

**8. Discussion of Warrant Article by Sustainability Committee**

- a. Ms. Ritz, Ms. Drumm and a student from Fairhaven High school was available to discuss the Warrant Article by the Sustainability Committee. They gave their overview of the paperwork that was provided, discussing how dangerous plastics, and single use materials are to the public. They would like Fairhaven to have the choice of using biodegradable or other options. They also mentioned that with the Board of Health leadership it would enact, what they feel would be appropriate.
- b. Cathy Melanson was also on Zoom and mentioned how she was a previous restaurant owner and now is just not the time to enact something like this. Business are still struggling and the cost of everything is going up which is making it harder for businesses.
- c. Mr. Gallagher said he can see the spirit behind the proposal and it's great to always look at ways to better our planet. There are a few items that need to be emphasized on. Stated Ms. Drumm talked about options, but he did not see language that reflected that. He recommends that due to date errors and a few other things that the text of the article needs to be addressed. The enforcement would also fall on the Health Agent which means extra time, and may need a salary adjustment for more responsibility. The anticipated cost to the Health Department would need to be clearly demonstrated.
- d. Mr. Ristuccia said that Ms. Melanson made a great point at how this is not the right time to do something like this. He would like to see feedback from restaurants and citizens. He would like to revisit this around the New Year, to have the topic a bit more comprehensive.

**9. Public Comment**

- a. Diane Hahn was present. She wanted to state how overwhelmed hospitals are becoming and now elective procedures are being cancelled. COVID is once again affecting people on a personal level.

**10. Invoices, Correspondence and Other Business**

- a. Bill's and permits are to be signed at the end of the meeting.

**11. Next Meeting Date: December 29 at 5:00pm**

- a. Mr.DeTerra made the motion to adjourn at 6:30pm, Mr. Gallagher seconded the motion, vote passed.