



## Town of Fairhaven Board of Health

Town Hall · 40 Center Street · Fairhaven, MA 02719

Telephone: (508) 979-4023 ext. 8125 · Email: boh@fairhaven-ma.gov

June 17, 2026

PRESENT: Justine Frezza, Brian Meneses, Barbara Acksen, David Flaherty

**1. Call to Order**

- a. Chair Frezza called the meeting to order at 5:01pm. Chair Frezza welcomed everyone.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Welcome and Media Notification**

- a. Chair Frezza read the media and recording notifications.

**4. Minutes of the Meeting**

- a. **Motion:** Vice Chair Meneses made the motion to accept the minutes of the Public Meeting June 3, 2026. Member Acksen seconded. The vote passed unanimously (3-0-0).

- 5. Discuss and Vote on the Organization of the Board Members** – Chair Frezza explained that the Board has traditionally reorganized its officer positions periodically to provide members with the opportunity to serve as Chair. **Motion:** Brian Meneses nominated Barbara Acksen to serve as Chair of the Board of Health. Justine Frezza seconded. A roll call vote was taken: Justine Frezza in favor, Brian Meneses in favor, Barbara Acksen in favor. The vote passed unanimously (3-0-0). **Motion:** Justine Frezza moved to retain Brian Meneses as Vice Chair and appoint Justine Frezza as Clerk of the Board of Health. Barbara Acksen seconded. A roll call vote was taken: Justine Frezza in favor, Brian Meneses in favor, Barbara Acksen in favor. The vote passed unanimously (3-0-0).

**6. Health Agent Report**

- a. COVID positivity rate remains at 0% for the past two weeks.
- b. Blood pressure and wellness clinics offered every Wednesday at the COA from 1-3 pm.
- c. Measles, pertussis, other childhood diseases, influenza, and RSV are still prevalent. Please consult your physician regarding vaccinations.

- d. Tick and mosquito season has begun. Bristol County Mosquito Control Project has begun. Residents are advised to remain vigilant and check themselves, children, and pets for ticks after spending time outdoors. There is a tick PSA on the webpage and FB page. Chair Acksen asked if there is any information being provided on the new tick born illness. Agent Flaherty noted that in Massachusetts it has been found on Martha's Vineyard and the disease is called alpha gal for the protein it affects. This disease causes a person to become allergic to meat and dairy. Currently there are no local cases.
  - e. No Perc tests were witnessed and one Title 5 inspection was witnessed.
  - f. Rodent complaints are still coming in. Please be vigilant with trash and birdseed on your property. Consult a licensed exterminator for property treatment in conjunction with neighbors if it seems overwhelming.
  - g. Agent Flaherty followed up on four Chapter II housing complaints.
  - h. Seasonal beach water testing showed one exceedance for this week's testing at Pope's Beach located on Manhattan Avenue. This beach will remain closed until another test can be performed.
  - i. The Southeastern MA Public Health Collaborative has provided medication disposal bags, sharps containers, CPR masks, and pill containers (these are available in English and Spanish). The Health Department is awaiting more tick removers and sunscreen. Please visit the Health Department for any of these free items.
  - j. One Impact Form has been received in the past two weeks for the Wastewater Treatment Plant.
7. **Beach Water Testing** – Agent Flaherty noted Seasonal beach water testing showed one exceedance for this week's testing at Pope's Beach located on Manhattan Avenue. Discussion ensued regarding testing and causes of an exceedance. This beach will remain closed until another test can be performed.
8. **Wind Turbine Status** – Agent Flaherty and the Board reviewed the current lease agreement. Discussion ensued regarding the decommissioning of the wind turbines once the contract is completed. The Board of Health agreed to try to reach out to Select Board members to discuss the contract.

**9. Discussion on Kratom** – Member Frezza reviewed that Agent Flaherty drafted a Kratom Regulation for the Board’s consideration. The Board discussed the draft regulation. The Board requested Agent Flaherty advertise the Public Hearing regarding the proposed Kratom Regulation, which will be held on July 15, 2026.

**10. Public Comment** – 2 Minute allowance by Chair on Public Health Issues

**a. Melody Woolf, Kalamazoo, Michigan** – Ms. Woolf thanked the Board for proposing to ban 7-OH while keeping natural kratom legal. Speaking as a 12-year kratom consumer, Ms. Woolf shared her personal experience using kratom for pain management and expressed appreciation for the Board’s efforts to preserve access to natural leaf kratom.

**b. Heidi Sykora, DNP, Volunteer Chief Scientific Officer, International Plant and Herbal Alliance** – Dr. Sykora thanked the Board for its work regarding the kratom regulation and offered compliance resources to assist with implementation. Member Frezza noted that the Board had already received the materials provided by Dr. Sykora.

**c. Lora Romney** – Ms. Romney informed the Board of emerging resources related to kratom, including a recently announced National Institutes of Health human study on mitragynine and its pharmaceutical potential. Ms. Romney also referenced the American Medical Association’s statements regarding the dangers specifically of 7-OH and thanked the Board for its work.

**d. Shannon Lee** – Ms. Lee thanked the Board for its efforts in developing kratom regulations and for considering input from advocates throughout the process.

**e. Tracey Hudson, Amsterdam, New York** – Ms. Hudson expressed support for maintaining legal access to kratom and shared her personal experience regarding its benefits.

**f. Eleanor Chew, 180 Main Street** – Ms. Chew inquired whether individuals speaking during public comment are required under Town policy to state their full name and address. Ms. Chew noted that this practice appears to be followed at other Town public meetings and asked why it has not been consistently observed at Board of Health meetings. The Board noted it would review the applicable policy and procedures to ensure compliance with Town requirements.

- 11. Invoices, Correspondence and any other business that may properly come before the Board not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of the meeting**
  - a. Invoices reviewed and approved.
- 12. Next Meeting Date – July 1, 2026 at 5:00pm**
- 13. Meeting Adjourned – Motion:** Vice Chair Meneses motioned to adjourn the Public Meeting. Chair Acksen seconded. The vote passed unanimously (3-0-0).