

## Sturbridge Board of Health Meeting

### MINUTES

November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012 7pm

Members present Linda Cocalis; John Degnan; Dan Chaput; Health Agent Alyssa Rusiecki.

7 PM the meeting is opened.

**Discussion:** *105 CMR 445.000 Minimum Standards for Bathing Beaches (State Sanitary Code VII).*

Ms. Cocalis states that we will be discussing the testing procedures and fees regarding public and semi-public beaches in order to become more efficient and consistent; we would like to have one person responsible for the beach testing, who shall report to the Board of Health. The fees shall be collected by the Board of Health and the proposed consultant will be paid from the Board of Health revolving account.

#### **Comments are requested from the public and responses of the Board:**

Jim Damien states that he has lived on the Lake for 31 years. He would like to know how much the cost would be for the Board of Health sampling. And he also recommends that a time and day of the week be set for sample collection under the current program.

Kate Alexander states she is the seventh generation to take care of the Lake, she understands the regulations are not changing but the price will double and she disagrees with the Board of Health entering on to private property to do the testing. Ms. Cocalis reads the regulations that give the Board of Health authority.

Mr. Chaput states that nothing has changed - we need to receive consistent reporting and the Board is supposed to receive a report every seven days; we don't have the resources to follow up and chase down the reports. He states that we are here to hear your concerns and suggestions.

Kate Alexander states The Trail contains 18 households and that they are very responsible and have not broken any regulations and that The Trail cannot be compared to The Host property; we have a revolving list of volunteers. Ms. Alexander says, you're telling me that we have to let you onto our private property? Ms. Cocalis repeats that the definition of a public beach or semipublic beach and that the Board of Health has the right to go on and do the testing. Ms. Cocalis states that this is why we advertised and publicized; we only want to hear your suggestions so that we can follow the State regulations properly. Ms. Cocalis states that there are other zoonotic issues with dead birds, etc. that must be reported to DPH or the Division of Agriculture, (Animal Health); so a Board of Health

representative would report all of these issues to the Board of Health as required. Ms. Cocalis states we need consistency or a volunteer to do the testing so that we have consistency. She asks if there is a volunteer here to do the work. No one answers.

Mr. Degnan states that the new contractor will be used by multiple users, but will report to the Board of Health. It is explained that we only have the office administrative assistant for fifteen hours per week and we do not have the resources to post beaches or follow-up on deficient testing results, including results that are missing, failing, or late. The typical season is from Memorial Day through Labor Day, which consists of fifteen weeks, but the beach operators set their own season, so they need to indicate the opening and closing dates on their application. Mr. Degnan states that when we license the beach the town assumes the liability; to go out and put a sign up that's difficult for the limited staff in the Board of Health office - one person doing it consistently will get it done properly for everyone, and they shall be accountable to the Board of Health. Ms. Cocalis states so we have so few resources; we only have the administrative assistant for only 15 hours a week; so having one person to ensure regular compliance is just like we have one person to review the food hotels and pools, etc. Mr. Degnan states the Board currently relies on senior volunteers to look at issues such as tight tanks and their pump out schedules and to send the enforcement letters; we just don't have the resources.

Jim Copland of the Big Alum Italian Club knows that he has been delinquent in testing and when there was a sample he shut down the beach. He also wants to know "If would it be like a retired MWRA person at one hundred dollars an hour? This is not rocket science."

Ms. Cocalis further states that the other local Boards of Health have been queried and the cost shall be between fifty and seventy dollars for the one test a week, including the collection and lab testing.

Kathy Harrington asks if they don't close the beach how would the Board of Health know or enforce it. Ms. Cocalis states the risk is great and it's at your liability. Mr. Degnan states the Board of Health is here to avoid sickness and to protect the owners of the beach against any health issue or liability – and this is why we need someone who is accountable to the Board of Health.

Joel Casaubon says he wishes that the Board of Health would approve a penalty; if there was full compliance then we wouldn't be here. He re-iterates that a penalty is what he recommends.

MaryAnn Riley states since there are seven beaches there is no way one person can get a sample within two hours and going to the lab; the Health Agent states she will check on the timeline issue.

Jean Campbell states she would like to know about any additional fees in advance; she didn't know that the fee was going to be \$50/year last year. Ms. Cocalis confirms that everyone will be notified.

Donna Rainville of Outdoor World states this would be a savings so they would be willing to try the town consultant. Ms. Cocalis states that the Host Hotel manager also indicated that they also would

see a cost savings if the Board of Health took it over at the proposed rates, so they have no problem with the Board of Health's proposal.

Lynne Girouard, the Town of Sturbridge Recreation Director, (who also works as the part-time administrative assistant for the Board of Health) states that she also might see a savings if the Board of Health had one person do all of the testing. From a clerical point of view, at the Board of Health office, it would be helpful if the testing was done consistently by one person and submitted by or on a certain day/time of the week.

Ms. Cocalis states it sounds like there are some takers and then some volunteers who are just paying for the analytical testing. She states that some people might want to take advantage of the reduced fees; the fee would be part of the permitting process. Ms. Cocalis states if anyone would like to apply for a variance they are able to do so, which may allow testing once a month, if they meet the criteria set forth in the State Code, (105 CMR 445.100).

The Board will take the comments under advisement; everyone is thanked for their input.

#### **The Health Agent's Report:**

In addition to the routine inspections and operation of the office, the Health Agent reports that she has drafted the letters to DEP about the various outstanding properties that have compliance issues. Ms. Cocalis states that she would like to write a letter of her own to DEP regarding the Southbridge landfill regarding the groundwater testing results surrounding the Southbridge landfill. Chromium has come up high - this is the same contaminant found in the Erin Brockovich case; we want special legislation to get them to do their job; Dan will help review it.

#### **New Business & Concerns of the Members:**

Ms. Cocalis has mentioned her concerns three times regarding the elevated groundwater results and she can't understand why DEP is not responding. She states that the groundwater enters the aquifer. Mr. Degnan asks can Veolia test the public water supply for Chromium baseline.

Mr. Degnan states it can't be that much money test for Chromium. Ms. Cocalis states it's not part of the regular water testing and she doesn't know who tests for Chromium. Mr. Degnan makes a motion to ask Veolia to take a sample of the public water supply and test for Chromium; Ms. Cocalis seconds; voted (3 – 0) APPROVED.

#### **Old Business:**

Mr. Chaput discusses Alyssa's vacation time; the Agent states that there was a hand written note found in finance office, with which the Agent was unaware. Mr. Chaput states that this is moot point since the Board has already agreed to ask for a salary increase for the Agent instead of additional vacation time. He will review the 10 town comparison and provide some documentation to send to Shaun for a salary upgrade. Ms. Cocalis states the MAHB survey might be a better survey

to utilize. The Health Agent hands out a copy of the salary survey from the MHAB and a synopsis of the 10 town survey done about a year ago. Ms. Cocalis makes a motion to ask Shaun to evaluate and upgrade the Health Agent's salary, the Board agrees, APPROVED (3 – 0).

**New Business:**

The Health Agent states that there are other budget issues to discuss. Mr. Degnan states that now is the time to discuss anything we need at the recycling center or the landfill, including roll offs, covers etc. Ms. Cocalis states that the only change is for the language for roll off cover. Mr. Degnan states to put it all in the budget. Ms. Cocalis states she said remember to put everything in the budget per the Finance Committee instructions from last year.

The Agent states that we should be level funded for community health. Ms. Cocalis asks if we should budget for the landfill gas emissions engineering and do we have to do it every year? We need to find out the cost and ask for supporting documentation. The Agent will follow-up.

The Recycling Center/Landfill engineering inspection was done by CME. Ms. Cocalis states that there was windblown litter and there should be a better fence according to CME. John Booth has a shortened week, based on requested vacation time; the Board asks how it is working out. Ms. Cocalis will visit the Recycling Center. Mr. Degnan questions the Recycling Center operations with this schedule. Ms. Cocalis states that the DPW is interviewing someone for the additional hire who will also work at the RC/Landfill; perhaps that can be reviewed in the future. Ms. Cocalis states that we need to get the new person cross-trained; John Booth needs to train the new person and we will wait and see how the new person works out for fill-in, when another person is out on vacation, etc.

The minutes of October 1<sup>st</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012 were reviewed; approved with minor corrections.

**Adjourned at 10:03pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Alyssa Rusiecki, Health Agent