



Town of Mendon Board of Health Minutes for June 10, 2020

Andy Fiske, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Alan Greenberg -Vice Chairman Tom Fichtner - BOH Member, Missy Kakela-Boisvert Sr. Administrative Assistant to BOH, Select Board member Lawney Tinio, Dan Byer of the Parks Department and Kim Newman Town Administrator.

Location – **Join Microsoft Teams Meeting** +1 347-467-1434 United States, New York City
(Toll) Conference ID: 434 492 707#

Andy opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending all these meetings. He has had an opportunity to speak with two different Health Agents (not from our town) but in other areas. Both individuals had the same comments about how this pandemic has been handled by both the Department of Public Health and CDC. They feel the same way that we do in many ways. This is all new territory for all of us. Constant changes to what is put out by the DPH and we look like fools sometimes. Local Boards of Health are given direction to go one way and a day later the DPH amends the original guidelines. Folks point fingers at the local Boards of Health saying the Boards of Health do not know what they're talking about but it is the DPH at the State level making these guidelines. It is not the local BOH and we are doing the best we can. So, I just want to thank you to Tom, Alan and Missy, Lawney and everyone else concerned. It's a very tough time for all of us.

Andy then asked Tom if he had an opening statement for COVID-19. Tom responded that he did not & turned it back over to the Chairman.

Andy turned to Alan next. Alan commented on his recent re-election to the Board for another 3-year term and is looking forward to it. Alan expressed great gratitude to the residents of Mendon for supporting him. He feels that we have done a good job. In referring to the pandemic, Alan stated that this is the first time we have handled something of this scale and he has heard some positive feedback. He is seeing good things like restaurants putting up tents and trying to follow the guidelines & was grateful to all for doing their part. Alan then turned it back over to Andy.

Andy said he is very proud of this Board and the members he sits with along with Missy. We are all doing the best we can and proud of the way we are doing things. You can't always please everyone. Andy then asked Missy if she had anything to add.

Missy agreed with Andy that it has been a tedious and confusing time. There are many times she has been on calls with other Health Departments and they are equally upset and frustrated. They are getting ready to throw their hands up also. Guidance comes down for us to do something in one direction and the State changes it all or in many cases the guidance is not written clearly. For example, the State actually admitted on one call that the guidance written for outdoor dining

was not written correctly. Instead of keeping distance from seat or person it was written as 6 feet from table to table. Missy added that Lenny has been going to food establishments. We made packets up and sent them out to food establishments. So far, the establishments have been very receptive. We just hope they understand that Lenny is only doing his job and that's all she had.

Next, Andy asked if Dan Byer was on the call. Dan said he was here.

Lenny and Missy met with Dan to go over his plan for opening the beach, rec. program and snack shack. Things looked good. Lenny wanted Missy to just double check one thing regarding PPE and employees. Who will be providing it? Dan stated that all they can supply is the blue surgical masks. If an employee wants more than that they will have to bring it themselves. Missy asked the Board if they had any comments regarding the Parks Department's plan to open. She sent out emails to the Board Members for their review. Andy was all set. Tom was all set with what was presented. Alan stated that although he had not had the opportunity to review the plan, he trusts Dan's judgement & that Dan is on the ball and will do what needs to be done so that they can open safely. Dan thanked the Board and told them if they do have any questions to reach out to him.

Andy asked if there were any other people in attendance. Missy replied that only Lawney Tinio (Select Board) and Kim Newman (Town Administrator) were on the call. Andy said ok and asked if Kim had anything for the Board. Kim stated that her reason for attending was to see if anyone had any follow-up questions with the licensing aspects. Kim commented how well everyone came together working quickly to get the businesses open that could, based on the Governors' Orders. She thinks it was really important to everyone. Kim was really glad and proud that Mendon was able to do that so quickly and work effectively together. That really says something about how we have been handling this. Kim and Missy were on a conference call on Friday with small towns. The expectation is that because we are surrounded by bigger communities, there are some higher standards and expectations that go with that but thinks that for a small town, we have been able to keep up with those larger communities. Kim continued stating that if you are getting negative feedback, it's really important to remember things do change day by day. That's a 100 percent true. People don't always understand the amount of work that we are doing during this pandemic and what it takes to operate a community. She feels after this is done the Town will owe the BOH a debt of gratitude for the amount of work, especially Missy. Kim won't forget and she's sure a lot of people won't forget. Andy thanked Kim for her input & feedback.

Andy asked if Lawney had anything to add to this. Lawney simply commented that it was great to see restaurants and other businesses open such as the Drive-In.

Andy asked Missy if there was anything else COVID-related. Missy explained she had spoken to all the Board Members individually regarding Lenny (Health Agent). Because of all that is going on, Lenny has had a hard time keeping up with all the septic inspections. She reached out to Tom Ryder (BOH Engineer) and Andy reached out to another gentleman who might be able to help out. This would only be to help Lenny until things calm down a little. Right now, Tom R. would be willing to help out with some of the inspections for a little while. A gentleman by the

name of Steve Donatelli was contacted. Steve had been with Shea Engineering but now has his own business. Steve has submitted a proposal.

Should the time come when Lenny would no longer be able to continue doing septic inspections and Tom wouldn't be able to be available, we would then have to go out and advertise that position.

Alan T. (Highway Department Surveyor) reached out to Missy about doing a CODE-RED for notifying people regarding the availability to use the metal dumpster. Missy reached out to Kim about doing a call about the metal dumpster and other services that had resumed, such as the Bulk Pickup and the Simple Recycling (pink bag) Program. Also, the Library will be open for no-contact drop off and pick up of books. Missy reached out to Dan to add some things from the Parks Department. Missy sent the wording to Tom F. and hoping to have it out to the residents by Friday. Tom F. will look at it and get back to Missy.

Alan had a few questions; do we have a current count of COVID active cases and how is Ann from the VNA doing? Missy stated that as far as she knows, Ann is doing well. Missy did get a few questions in the office which she sent to Ann and Ann took care of them. The last time Missy talked with Ann, we only had two active COVID-19 cases.

The Board moved on to scholarships. Our office received two Scholarship Applications from Nipmuc Regional High School and one from Blackstone Valley Tech. Tom asked when would the Board need to make a decision by. Missy told them the sooner the better. The Board wanted a bit more time to review and will look to make a decision at the next meeting.

Missy talked a little about what she already has going for the next BOH Agenda. One item will be a Local Upgrade Request for 18 Taft Ave and the other will be a Variance Request for 8 Hastings Street. Missy posted the Agenda so that the abutter notifications could be sent out.

Next, there was a discussion about being able to pay Steve Donatelli should he in fact come on temporarily. Andy was wondering if Steve will be able to accommodate even on a temporary basis & Missy responded that Steve would be willing to do that.

Missy is waiting to hear back from Connor at CMRPC regarding the \$3,000.00 that the BOH received. Missy deferred to Kim to confirm if any of the CARES Act money could be used. Kim jumped in and said the deadline is this Friday for the Town to submit for the CARES Act. If the BOH needs additional funding, then we should submit something but she also said if the BOH does need funding for a service for the Town, Kim is going to find a way to make that happen. Kim & others would look at the budget and find a funding source.

Next meeting will be June 24, 2020.

Tom made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alan seconds the motion. Both members agreed. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.