

Town of Concord
Board of Health

Minutes of the Meeting
Wednesday, January 20, 2021

1. **OPEN MEETING**

Dr. Deborah Greene, Chairman opened the public meeting at 7:00 p.m. stating that it was held on the Zoom Platform in accordance with the Town of Concord's Policy Directive and Guidelines on April 1, 2020 as amended. She read a brief statement outlining meeting protocol and noted that the meeting was being recorded and would be available for later viewing on the Town's website. All Board votes will be taken via a roll call. Dr. Greene introduced herself and conducted an attendance roll call.

Roll Call for Meeting: Dr. Deborah Greene, Chairman – present
Jill Block, present
Mark Haddad, present
Alma Healey, present

Susan G. Rask, Public Health Director, present
Karen Byrne, Administrative Assistant CBOH, present

Audience: Jane Hotchkiss, Select Board, Liaison; Patty Keane, COA, Liaison;
Stuart Sinclair Weeks, resident; Tanya Galius, resident; Karlen Reed,
resident/observer; Mark Farrell, PE, Green Hill Engineering for 171
Hawthorne Lane.

1. **PUBLIC HEARING – ONSITE SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM**

171 Hawthorne Lane – Local Upgrade Approvals/Variance Requests

Mark Farrell, PE met with the Board for his client David Cacavarro, owner to discuss a request for variance and Local Upgrade Approvals in accordance with Title 5 310 CMR 15.211 and 15.402 through 15.405 as follows:

- To construct a leaching field 5.1' to a property line, instead of 10' as required CMR 310.15.405(1)(a)
- To construct a leaching field 13' to a foundation/cellar wall instead of 20' as required by CMR 310.15.405(1)(b)
- To construct a septic tank 6' to a foundation, instead of 10' as required by CMR 310.15.405(1)(b)
- To allow a sieve analysis instead of a percolation test as required by 310 CMR 15.405(i)

Mr. Farrell provided the Board with a summary of the requests they were noting due to wetlands and limited space. Board members asked general questions relative to the location of the new system to the street property line (Town) and leaching field to foundation. Mr. Farrell noted that the existing system was in failure and that a new system with variances designed under current criteria would provide necessary protection of the environment.

Staff noted that Assistant Public Health Director Stanley Sosnicki had reviewed the plan for compliance to Title 5 and that it met the requirements of maximum feasible compliance due to the lot constraints of the property and recommended approval of the variances.

Following a brief discussion, Mark Haddad moved to GRANT the variance and Local Upgrade Approvals as requested. Alma Healey seconded it. All VOTED in favor. Roll Call for the Vote (Block, Greene, Haddad, Healey – YES; Motion carried 4-0).

2. REQUEST TO BE HEARD

Concord resident, Stuart Sinclair-Weeks reached out to the Public Health Director and asked for an opportunity to be placed on the Board’s agenda to discuss his concerns relative to orders and advisories pertaining to face masks/coverings as well as restrictions on family visitation at health care facilities.

Mr. Sinclair-Weeks thanked the Board and Health Division for the opportunity to obtain the Board’s responses to what he expressed as real concerns about “...the illegalities of the orders and advisories, regarding face masks...”¹ issued by the Governor noting that the information gathered to make many of these decisions was from the CDC whom he believed was a subsidiary of “Big Pharma” as well as the mounting evidence of their adverse effects on “our health, above all, our children and elders.”² He expressed deep concern and regret at not being able to visit his own 98 year old parent who resides at Newbury Court due to the Covid-19 visitation restrictions particularly over the Christmas holiday.

The Chairman asked Mr. Sinclair-Weeks if he had a specific question or request of the Board of Health because she did not think this forum was appropriate to discuss or debate mask wearing or visitation mandates. Mr. Sinclair-Weeks asked if not the Board of Health then where should he go; after a pointed exchange directed towards Dr. Greene, the Chair countered that she had the deepest empathy for his situation relating to visiting his parent and understood completely how difficult visitation restrictions during the pandemic had been for everyone in 2020. She recounted her personal experiences holding the hands of people dying alone in the hospital more times than she cared to recall and that those moments would haunt her always.

Dr. Greene stated that she understood his frustrations about weighing mask wearing with public health and civil liberties. She provided the analogies of wearing a seatbelt and tobacco use; for years people did not wear seatbelts and smoked without thought but after decades of research it is now second nature to wear one because times had changed. Dr. Greene succinctly stated that she would argue that masks were saving lives because she wears one as a hospital ER physician but she was not willing to debate the topic at this meeting nor willing to suggest the Board of Health over step Massachusetts Department of Public Health Visitation Guidance during Covid-19.

She asked other members if they had comments; there were none. In closing, Dr. Greene said she truly understood the tragedy of not being able to be with people while they are in the hospital or in another congregate setting during the pandemic and suggested contacting the facility again directly as policies are changing daily.

Mr. Sinclair-Weeks thanked the Board for their time and volunteer efforts during these challenging times.

¹ Email from Mr. Sinclair-Weeks to BOH dated 12/30/20

² Email from Mr. Sinclair-weeks to BOH dated 12/30/20

3. DISCUSSION – COVID-19

Public Health Director Susan Rask was excited to inform the Board on the Covid-19 Vaccination Clinics held January 14, 15 and 16 to administer the first doses of vaccine to First Responders from the towns of Concord, Carlisle, Maynard, Bedford and Lincoln. She said that with coordinated efforts with Fire Chief Tom Judge, Concord Fire and Police, the Health Division staff, their partners at Emerson Hospital and lead Public Health Nurse Tricia McGean (as well as Public Health Nurses from the partner communities and trained EMT's) they administered nearly 500 vaccines and that it felt "good" to be moving in a positive direction. The vaccine administered was Moderna and the 2nd dose vaccination clinics would be held on February 12th and 13th.

Ms. Rask said despite a few hiccups along the way, overall the clinics went well. They were held at the temporary structure leased for this purpose at Concord Carlisle High School and the staged waiting area (recipients must wait between 15-30 minutes dependent upon health screening after receiving the vaccine) was in the parking lots where EMT's walked through monitoring recipients for unexpected medical issues.

Although it had been a labor intensive endeavor particularly for staff to plan, assist with the registration, and ensure sufficient vaccinators/personnel and had been overwhelming at times she was proud and pleased of the overall success.³

PHD Rask said that the Department of Public Health was likely going to open up Phase 2 which includes the 75 plus population and dependent upon vaccine availability from the State PHD Rask anticipated another large scale clinic the week of school vacation (February 22-26) but for Concord residents only. Noting that there were over 2,500 residents (75+) living in Concord (not in congregate care settings) the Public Health Director said it was not realistic to think all residents in the next phase would be vaccinated in Concord but would likely need to take advantage of other venues once the vaccine becomes more readily available (i.e., primary care physicians, pharmacies, large scale sites).

Several members, including COA Liaison Patty Keane of the Zoom Audience asked if there was a way to maintain a waiting list for the next phase when residents 75 or older to be notified when the vaccines were available. After a brief discussion, staff noted that it may be able to coordinate something with the COA but that nothing was currently in place. Currently it was impossible to make concrete commitments due to the ever changing MDPH guidelines and requirements it was placing on Local Health Departments to obtain large volume of vaccines.

Chair Dr. Greene stated that Emerson Hospital was open for surgeries and that the Covid-19 patients were steady but manageable; she did note as a point of interest that physicians were seeing more active cases of people in their 50-60's as cases start to increase.

4. BOARD CALENDAR & MINUTES

³ These clinics were staggered over 3 days, 6 hours each, 12 vaccinators per clinic (4 per 2 hour shift) plus security and staffing – for 500 vaccines

The Board reviewed and discussed the minutes from the November 17, 2020 meeting. Jill Block moved to APPROVE as submitted. Mark Haddad seconded it. All VOTED in favor. Roll Call for the Vote (Block, Greene, Haddad, Healey – YES; Motion carried 4-0).

The next regularly scheduled Board of Health meeting was confirmed for February 16, 2021 via Zoom.

5. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Dr. Greene attended the Chairs' Breakfast and advised Board members that as of this point, Concord Annual Town Meeting was tentatively scheduled for Sunday, June 13th and will be held outside again unless things dramatically change in terms of Covid-19. (Concord Carlisle High School).

No other reports.

6. STAFF REPORTS

Reported above in Covid-19 discussion.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

Zoom Audience Member Tanya Galius asked whether the Board of Health would consider taking action at the Beede Center relating to swimmers (unmasked) using loud voices and yelling which could increase the airborne spread of Covid-19. She said she did not feel safe in the pool and thought a policy to discourage yelling could be helpful.

Consensus of the Board was that it had to have faith in their fellow townspeople to follow the protocols in place for gyms and pools. If the Beede Center management felt persuaded to implement that type of policy then their members would have to abide by it; but the Board of Health was not inclined to make such a recommendation.

Audience member Karlen Reed wanted to thank the Board of Health and staff for the fine job it was doing during the Covid-19 Pandemic for the record.

Dr. Greene asked for a motion to adjourn. Alma Healey moved to adjourn the meeting. Mark Haddad seconded it. All VOTED in favor to adjourn. (Block, Greene, Healey Haddad – YES; Motion carried 4-0).

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:20 p.m.

Board of Health
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January 20, 2021

Respectfully submitted by,

Karen M. Byrne, Administrative Assistant
Concord Board of Health

Dr. Deborah Greene, Chair

Mark Haddad, Esq.

Alma Healey, RN

Jill Block