

TOWN OF STURBRIDGE, MA
BOARD OF HEALTH
December 12, 2023

Meeting Called to Order: 2:00 PM

Quorum Check: Confirmed

Members Present: Linda Cocalis (LC), Dr. Louis Fazen (LF), Richard Volpe (RV)

Members Absent: None

Others Present:

Kenneth B. Lacey, Jr. (KL), Health Agent

Laura Sherris (LS), Health Department Administrative Assistant

Justin Stelmok (JS), Blueberry Hill Estates

John Stelmok, Blueberry Hill Estates

Denise Morgan (DM), Brush It Off Paint & Sip Bar

2:00 PM – Meeting called to order.

2:02 PM – Review Minutes – Minutes from the November 14, 2023 Board of Health (BOH) meeting are reviewed.

2:07 PM – LC motions to accept the November 14, 2023 minutes as drafted; RV 2nd. AIF: LC, LF, RV; unanimous.

2:08 PM – New Business – Office, Charlton Coalition for Public Health (CCPH) updates – KL states there are no new CCPH updates since the last BOH meeting. KL states that the BOH permit renewal process is going extremely well; he states that departments throughout town are now reviewing and signing off on common victualler and liquor licensure and have been able to catch some issues from past years.

2:13 PM – New Business – Public health updates – LF states he would like the Board to look into health education in public schools; LC and RV express support of the idea and state it would be helpful to know what is already being provided and identify gaps that the BOH may be able to address. KL states that he spoke with the Burgess Elementary School administration and the Health Department will be providing handwashing education during the next school year. LC inquires about anything being done for the junior and senior high schools; RV states that the Police Department historically presented education regarding drug and alcohol use; KL states he can speak with the police department regarding any current education being provided to the junior and senior high schools. LF states he attended a State of Massachusetts Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP) Recycling Dividends Program (RDP) meeting earlier in the day and learned about ways RDP is changing. KL, LC, LF, and RV discuss potential areas of focus to align with updated RDP criteria; all agree it is a larger discussion than can be accommodated during today's meeting.

2:30 PM – Hearing – Blueberry Hill Estates – LC opens the hearing for the construction of the manufactured housing community at 6 Berry Farms Road. KL states that the hearing is to review plans and potentially grant BOH permission to move forward with the construction of a 55+ manufactured housing community, permitted annually through the BOH. KL states that the Stelmoks previously appeared before the Board in anticipation of the hearing to seek the Board’s input on the planned community, and that the Board had suggested emergency sheltering measures. JS states that as a result of the Board’s input, they have updated plans for the community center to include sheltering capabilities. JS states that since the last appearance before the BOH, the plans have been adjusted to accommodate other Boards’ and Committees’ requirements, and the planned number of units has decreased from 71 lots to 63 lots. JS states they plan on completing construction in phases, with the first phase complete and individuals moved into Phase 1 units by the end of the summer in 2024. LC inquires if the plans include a management office; JS states that they plan to have a staffed office with a manager; they also plan to have 24-hour water and sewer monitoring, generator backup, and curbside trash and recycling pickup with bins provided to residents. LF inquires if any issues may be posed with housing code; KL states that housing code is limited to rentals; JS clarifies that residents will purchase, not rent, the structure and lease the land from the company. LC inquires if the community center is accessible if being used for sheltering; JS states that the building is accessible and ADA compliant, and that emergency vehicles have access to the building; additionally, all residents and staff will have access to the building and emergency responders will have all needed codes, etc. for access; the center will also have a generator in case of power loss. KL states that the community will be on town water and sewer, so there are no concerns regarding septic or well placement.

2:47 PM – LC closes the public hearing. RV motions to grant Board of Health approval for the construction of the manufactured housing community at 6 Berry Farms Road; LF 2nd. AIF: LC, LF, RV; unanimous.

2:53 PM – New Business – Brush It Off Paint & Sip Bar – KL states that this year’s annual permitting is being completed in a more consolidated manner, and that this has identified some instances of previous years’ licenses being granted without all requirements being met. KL states that Brush It Off Paint & Sip Bar’s liquor license renewal was denied because of a regulatory issue, as no food is offered at the business, a condition of liquor licensure. DM states she has held a liquor license since 2012, at which point she was required to provide prepackaged food at minimum; she states she has continued to offer shelf stable, non-refrigerated foods. KL states that the granting of the liquor license in recent years has been an oversight, as prepackaged snacks such as chips no longer fulfill the M.G.L. requirements to be considered substantial food. LC states that if the business changes to a “bring your own bottle” (BYOB) structure the food requirement no longer applies; DM states she would not like to transition to BYOB as she feels that the ability to provide customers with the ability to purchase an alcoholic beverage is beneficial to her business, and also allows her to control the amount of alcohol consumed on the premises. KL, LC, LF, RV, and DM discuss potential options to satisfy the food requirements of liquor licensure. All agree that the Health Department will visit the business to gather more information for potential options; DM will attend the January 2024 BOH meeting to discuss further.

3:41 PM – New Business – FY25 Budget Review – KL presents the Board with the proposed budget amounts for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25). Regarding the proposed Board of Health budget, KL states that the proposed training budget amount was decreased as training funding is available through the CCPH. RV notes that the BOH Purchased Services line item amount for Legal Ads has increased, as publishing prices have increased; KL states that there are potential upcoming updates to regulations and other matters that would require advertisement. LF inquires about the lack of salary information in the proposal; KL states that salary amounts are calculated by the Finance Department each year. LC, LF, and RV all state approval of the proposed Board of Health FY25 budget. Regarding the proposed Landfill budget, RV notes that the Finance Committee will likely ask about the increase in the Disposal Trucking line item; KL states that there were substantial price increases for both Casella and Tom Berkowitz Trucking, Inc., which are the two most-used haulers at the landfill. KL states that the increased amount for the groundwater well monitoring line item is based on a hard quote from EA Engineering, who will fulfill all state-mandated monitoring and reporting. LC, LF, and RV all state approval of the proposed Landfill FY25 budget. LC, LF, and RV discuss preparation of a warrant article for the Annual Town Meeting to request funding for a safety study of the Recycling Center.

4:14 PM – Set Next Meeting – LF requests that the next meeting be scheduled for January 16, 2024 at 2:00pm instead of the proposed January 9, 2024 date; all agree.

4:17 PM – LC motions to adjourn the meeting; RV 2nd. AIF: LC, LF, RV; unanimous

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Sherris
Health Department Administrative Assistant