

HAMILTON BOARD OF HEALTH
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2013

Present: Board of Health members Lindle Willnow, Susan Wilfahrt and Karen Zagorski, Health Agent Leslie Whelan and Board of Health Administrative Assistant Nancy Stevens.

Meeting Opened: Lindle Willnow called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. at Hamilton Town Hall

Discussion – Mosquito/EEE Update

Health Agent Leslie Whelan had researched information about sprays used for mosquito control relative to toxicity to the environment and efficacy in terms of reducing disease in humans. She had spoken to a representative at the Toxic Use Reduction Institute at UMass Lowell and someone at Mass Audubon and she has received information from them. This has revealed a different response than what has been received from the Mosquito Control District (MCD). She noted that not everyone was in agreement that adulticide sprays should be used just because there are disease carrying mosquitoes in a community.

Whelan mentioned that on March 7th in Gloucester at Cruiseport function hall at 6 p.m. there would be a panel discussion with MCD's Jack Card and his entomologist, three people from Mass. DPH, and an Audubon representative to advance the conversation on Cape Ann mosquito control. Gloucester and Essex are looking for more information to determine whether or not they would join the MCD. Rockport is not going to join. All members agreed it would be wise to have a representative at this event.

She added that when Hamilton is notified that disease carrying mosquitoes have been identified in Town, MCD's Card offers the Town adulticiding. Whelan mentioned that MCD also does larvaciding in Hamilton and can dredge ditches. She noted that since adulticide spray is the only option for the Town once disease carrying mosquitoes have been found in samples the tendency is for the municipality to spray. Lindle Willnow said his sense is the response from the community would be just as great as it is when Hamilton sprays to control mosquitoes than if it opted not to spray. He thought the Board may want to take a more measured response when disease carrying mosquitoes are identified in neighboring towns.

Susan Wilfahrt said the Town pays \$40,000 a year for participation in MCD and she assumes there are mosquitoes carrying disease in Hamilton so the funding is to spray not merely for the identification of these mosquitoes in the two traps in Town.

She believes a broader discussion is needed with a Town vote on the matter of spraying for mosquito control rather than just the Board of Health making the decision. Discussion ensued about Town Meeting voters agreeing to pay to participate in MCD with Board of Health making decision to spray. Whelan said Cape Cod communities participate in MCD but no spraying is done.

Willnow noted that part of the MCD cost is larvaciding. Wilfahrt mentioned that some residents might oppose that action as well and she noted that the Town does not specifically notify residents about larvaciding. Whelan explained that spraying is included in the annual MCD cost and the agency does not allow communities to separately select services they want provided.

Willnow described the sampling from two traps in Town and if mosquitoes carrying disease are found then there is likely more in the area. He mentioned the importance for residents to take precautionary measures to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes similar to what precautions individuals can take to reduce risk of contracting Lyme disease. Wilfahrt mentioned that there may be a strong likelihood that there would be disease carrying mosquitoes in areas of Town other than those identified where spraying was done.

Discussion ensued about how 40% of Town is wetlands and that mosquitoes go to areas where there is water and food. Also discussed was that MCD sprays wetlands and DPH website says that action would not be taken. Whelan reported to Board about a conversation she had with a MCD representative who said language would be changed in frequently asked questions section on DPH website so there is no confusion about whether or not MCD sprays in wetlands.

Discussion focused on how there is little definitive information regarding whether or not spraying is effective or not at killing mosquitoes and protecting people from disease. Whelan offered to forward information she had gathered on the matter to Board for its review. She said there is so much information on both sides of this issue, that it becomes a philosophical issue. He suggested in the spring the Board will publicize to the residents through the local media the benefits of removing standing water and keeping lawns mowed short.

Discussion – Title 5 Supplement Regulation “Covers-at-Grade” Update

Whelan noted that Board of Health passed regulation in the fall. Renewal applications have been sent out to pumpers and a new form asks for specification about whether the cover at a resident site meets regulation. And if a light-weight cover is located at grade that customers should be informed about requirement that a safety grate be installed. Health department had sent a letter asking pumpers to offer to sell the safety grates to customers. The Town typically has 20 household septic systems pumped per month. Karen Zagorski noted that DEP recommendation is to pump septic systems every three years. Willnow mentioned that there can be variability amongst households as to when septic systems are pumped.

He suggested if the health department gets a form back from a pumper notifying the Town that a property does not have the compliant cover at grade, then a mailing could be sent to the homeowner informing them that the cover does not comply and consideration should be given to purchasing a safety grate. Whelan recommended that she could call pumping companies to understand what health department could do to help them offer safety grates to customers.

Discussion ensued about how information on where safety grates could be purchased was included in the cover letter with pumper permit application mailing. At Clearwater on Mitchell Road in Ipswich the safety grates can be purchased for \$20. Whelan noted that calls to 12 permanent pumpers in Hamilton could provide an opportunity to get feedback on understanding obstacles for customers buying the safety grates. Whelan said she would update the Board on this at its next meeting.

Discussion – Health Implications of Bi-weekly Trash Barrel Pickup

Willnow explained that he had spoken with Town Manager Michael Lombardo and Selectperson Jennifer Scuteri about this issue. He added that Spokane, Washington had done a similar bi-weekly solid waste trash barrel pickup as Hamilton and they did find a greater incident of flies. He suggested that during periods of elevated temperatures the Town should remind residents to use blue bags on non-barrel pickup weeks and to avoid placing biodegradable wastes in their barrels, if possible. . Residents may also select to spray trash barrels with insecticide .

Discussion ensued about how the problem with maggots occurs when the weather is above 80 degrees. Willnow suggested that he or Whelan could contact Lombardo about when the DPW sends out water bills in the spring to include a written reminder about steps residents can take to avoid maggots in their trash. Town officials thought this could cost an additional four cents per mailing. Also addressed was presently the Town does not have any social media or has not used its email notification mechanism for communicating with residents on these issues. Discussion also ensued that the Board would send notices to the local media later in the spring to remind residents of trash barrel sanitation measures that could be taken.

Discussion – Missing Minutes of Prior Years

BOH Administrative Assistant Nancy Stevens informed the Board that minutes for prior Board meetings were missing in the files beginning with May 2009. Willnow suggested emailing former Board members (i.e., Steve Druschel) to see if they had copies of draft minutes from years past.

Discussion – Request of one additional hour per week for Health Agent

Discussion ensued with Whelan about how she had been working with Lombardo and Finance Director Deborah Nippes-Mena who had added an hour a week to the number of hours she works for the Town. She was not given a cost of living increase since her hourly rate was above the appropriate rate. However, her hourly rate no longer includes reimbursement for training and mileage which is paid to Whelan separately now. Whelan is now working ten hours a week. After discussion, the Board agreed that Whelan should ask for another additional hour of work per week (11 hours) since her work load is demanding more time (i.e., mosquito control and regulation writing), especially since the budget process is currently underway.

Discussion – Community Health Needs Assessment

Whelan described how she had met with Public Health Nurse Kim Paskalis and representative from Beverly Hospital about Community Health Needs Assessment. She explained how the assessment is done every six years by Beverly Hospital and consulting firm John Snow had sent out a survey to communities. Survey information has been compiled and data analyzed that could be used for organizations interested in applying for grants.

Whelan noted that obesity and substance abuse such as alcohol were identified as areas of concern for Hamilton. She said there would be opportunities to collaborate with local YMCA or HW Recreation Department to address the concerns. The representative from Lahey Health (Beverly Hospital) could provide the information discussed with Whelan and Paskalis to a larger group. Whelan suggested the data should be given to the police chief. She added that the representative had said in more affluent communities there are heavy drinking issues and illegal substances being abused relative to socioeconomic status. Willnow noted that the survey respondents had volunteered their answers and the issue of younger binge drinkers may not be included in assessment statistics.

Discussion ensued about how assessment data would be used relative to grants. Whelan described examples from representative such as YMCA coming into Council on Aging facility once a week. She thought it was possible police department was already applying for grants and this data could enhance or direct that process. Board members noted that there was a 50% response rate to the survey.

Discussion focused on how to disseminate the information to a wider audience including having representative come to public library, and inquiry to Town manager about how to get the data to a large number of people. Whelan mentioned that she and Paskalis discussed how public health nurse could take on more projects based on the data. Willnow mentioned that perhaps Whelan and Paskalis could possibly be paid through grant funds.

Discussion – Influenza Update

Whelan updated the Board about 11 confirmed influenza cases in Hamilton residents since November 1st ranging from four months to 82 years of age. Discussion ensued about how there are a lot of cases that are not reported since patients are not visiting physicians offices. Whelan noted that Joanne Hobbs, school nurse for the district's middle and high schools, has said absenteeism rate has dropped to 8.7% from 9.4% in past week and illness in children is 8th grade through high school and there is a low absenteeism rate amongst school staff.

Board discussed how the health department held two flu clinics where there were 405 attendees. The Town does not have any more flu vaccination doses and Paskalis is working at other clinics where residents could receive doses. Also

mentioned was minute clinics at CVS pharmacies where flu shots are available. The Board noted that the influenza is a statewide versus local issue.

Review – Board of Health Minutes dated October 24 & December 20

The Board reviewed Board of Health minutes dated October 24 and December 20, 2012 and provided amendments. Willnow moved that the minutes of October 24 and December 20, 2012 be approved as amended. Wilfahrt seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Other business

The Board reviewed information on Local Upgrade Approvals for 81 Old Cart Road, 191 Asbury Street and 315 Essex Street.

Discussion ensued about beavers causing high water situation in Asbury Grove near tabernacle building and if the high water could present a safety issue for children living in the area. Whelan suggested that Conservation Commission could be approached for installation of a beaver deceiver or if the circumstance is causing damage to the building a request could be made to the Board of Health for an emergency trapping permit.

Meeting Adjourned:

Wilfahrt moved at 8:44 p.m. to adjourn. Zagorski seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous. The Board's next meeting is on Wednesday, February 27 at 7 p.m.

ATTEST:

cc: Selectmen, Planning Board, Town Clerk, Conservation