

HAMILTON BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES OF MEETING

June 19, 2019

Members Present: Giselle Perez, PhD., Walter Row, and David Smith (Chairman)

Health Agent: Leslie Whelan

This meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm in the Memorial Room, Hamilton Town Hall by David Smith.

Review of FAQ: Can I build an Addition on my House? Can I add a Bedroom?

Leslie Whelan said the document answered questions that were frequently asked. Nancy Stevens would hand out the document as well as post it to the webpage. Ms. Whelan added the requirement of a Title 5 inspection was not required for all additions and was dependent on the age and size of the system. The requirement could be added but could be waived by the Health Agent. The issue of a closet was discussed. Ms. Whelan thought the closet became a distinction between an office and a bedroom. Ms. Whelan has in the past asked for renovations to existing bedrooms, such as built-in bookcases, when converting a bedroom to an office.

Giselle Perez considered Leslie Whelan's hesitation with 2A and thought rewording the section might be helpful. Dr. Perez was in agreement with the closet discussion. Walter Row said the document needed to have more flexibility. Dr. Perez wondered what might happen if someone were to obtain a Title 5 inspection based on the published document to find they could have had the requirement waived. Ms. Whelan said the low cost of a Title 5 inspection would ensure the health of the system for the resident. Ms. Whelan described situations wherein the Title 5 would not pass.

New Septic Installer's License Application and Fees.

Leslie Whelan noted that a version of the application previously existed. The change was inspired by a homeowner who wanted to hire a non-licensed installer; homeowner had put excessive pressure on Board of Health staff to quickly review and approve. Ms. Whelan noted Board of Health has dozens of approved, qualified licensed installers. Ms. Whelan said there was a review process along with a potential exam. Ms. Whelan proposed to increase the fee for new installers. New applications received by April 1, August 1, and December 1, would be reviewed within one month. A list of approved installers was available on the website.

David Smith moved that the Board of Health put into effect this new application and fee for disposal system installers' licenses.

Giselle Perez seconded.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Update on public concerns regarding Town drinking water quality

David Smith said the situation started about two months prior when a flier from the DPW explaining violations was mailed to residents. A discussion had also ensued on the Hamilton Wenham Facebook page. The Hamilton Wenham Chronicle also printed a report submitted by the Hamilton DPW. A resident, Lorraine Miller was concerned and approached Tim Olson, who suggested that Mr. Smith address her concerns. Mr. Smith asked for the new monthly reports of TTHM levels and summarized them with a tabulation of what had happened since the violation.

David Smith explained that tri-halo methanes consisted of three substances: chloroform, bromoform, and bromo-diamethane. Chloroform was the main contributor to the high TTHM levels with the other two substances contributing in a minor way. Mr. Smith said the levels were reducing. Two readings indicated what levels were when water left the water treatment plant and the level at Goodhue St. at the end of the distribution system. Chlorine, which was needed to make the water safe, reacted to natural organics in the water to form tri-halo methanes.

David Smith praised the efforts of Tim Olson to restore the water treatment plant to its proper functioning after years of neglect. The water treatment plant's capacity was 650 gallons per minute and had been functioning at half capacity. Town Meeting had previously approve \$1.5M to install a new organics removal system at the treatment plant. Mr. Smith recalled that when one of the tanks had been drained, bolts had rusted and a broken flange had allowed water to recirculate back through the plant to pick up more organics. Reportedly, Mr. Olson was concerned about one of the Ipswich River wells but noted a flushing of the system could not occur until the system was operating at capacity. Idlewood II well had been turned off as it was contributing organics to the system. Mr. Smith would ask Mr. Olson what the average time would be for water to travel from the plant to an average residence.

According to David Smith, he wanted to communicate with town residents about water quality. Mr. Smith was concerned about how little the average resident knew about water quality and how rumors rather than little scientific facts fueled residents' fears. Mr. Smith added that residents were annoyed by the water ban, which was triggered by State Regulations because Hamilton's water came from the Ipswich River aquifer. When the Ipswich River dropped below a vertical threshold, it triggered a ban on water sprinkling. The other trigger was the water treatment plant not being able to run at design capacity for the last few years. DEP had issued a guidance document and the MA Board of Health had issued roles and responsibilities of local Board of Healths regarding water quality. When private wells were involved the Board of Health could take an active role for private wells. The Board of Health had no purview over public wells. Leslie Whelan noted that there might be about 200 private wells in Hamilton. Mr. Smith would ask Gail Hannibal in the Water Department what the private well count might be.

Update on Brick Ends Farm site visit.

No new complaints had been filed since Ann Walker had reported seagulls and odors. No specifics were received. The resident was asked to document when seagulls or odors were objectionable and provide the record to the Board of Health. Giselle Perez said the smell was

there when they walked the farm. Brick Ends Farm was doing what it was supposed to do and those around it would have that smell. It was strong where Dr. Perez lived. Complaints tended to be concentrated in November and December or March and April as the farm would be conducting changes in pre and post winter operations. David Smith would compare the weather with complaints. Dr. Perez thought complaints may or may not be associated with wind but questioned what could be done.

David Smith said he had been to the farm four times and never saw a seagull. Leslie Whelan thought the seagulls might have been foiled by wires that were present and flew somewhere else. Mr. Smith added that Nancy Stevens had recalled when a hoard of seagulls had landed on the Cutler School roof causing complaints. Ms. Whelan suggested that someone could be feeding them in the neighborhood. Mr. Smith said the Board of Health had little real power to enforce actions on Brick Ends Farm to alleviate problems but thought the Board had sensitized Peter Britton to the problems and helped him take actions to mitigate or ease the odor problems.

Health Agent Update.

Leslie Whelan said she would be on vacation the first week in July with the Essex Health Agent helping in emergencies. Ms. Whelan recalled that when she had vacationed in May, she was inundated with work upon her return. Ms. Whelan explained that she did not have enough time at 16 hours per week to handle busy times of the year but could have handled the work load if she were full-time. Presently, she was turning work around in a week. Ms. Whelan said she did not always need more hours but there is a wide array of work she does not attend to and could do with the extra time. Ms. Whelan, who works for Rockport on her off days in Hamilton, hoped to have the Hamilton position full-time so as not to be pulled away by the other town in the case of emergencies. Ms. Whelan hoped the Board would review and comment on the rationale in two and a half weeks. Patrick Reffett, who oversaw Ms. Whelan's work appreciated the need. Ms. Whelan noted that other departments were full-time.

Unanticipated Items/Announcements.

Lorraine Miller, a concerned local parent would be a candidate for the Board, according to David Smith. She would be invited to the next Board meeting and would submit an application. Walter Row hoped to return to the Board in future years.

Review May 15, 2019 Minutes.

Motion made by David Smith to approve the minutes of May 15, 2019.

Seconded by Walter Row.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

List of documents and exhibits reviewed.

FAQ: Can I build an Addition on my House? Can I add a Bedroom?

Application for Disposal System Installer's License

Rationale for Full-Time Hamilton Health Agent

2018 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report
Hamilton Drinking Water TTHM Results for 2019 compiled by David Smith
Minutes May 15, 2019

Adjournment

Motion made by David Smith to adjourn at 8:08 pm.

Seconded by Giselle Perez.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Prepared by: Marcie Ricker