

JOHANNA RAVENHURST, Chair  
TONY JUDGE, Vice-Chair  
KAREN WALSH PIO, LICSW, LADC 1, Clerk  
JESSICA COLLINS  
CHRISTINE MCKIERNAN, MD

SHARON D. HART, Public Health Director

## Board of Health Minutes

October 26, 2021

As Approved – November 16, 2021

Present: Johanna Ravenhurst, Chair; Tony Judge, Vice Chair; Karen Walsh Pio, Clerk; Jessica Collins, Board of Health Member; Dr. Christine McKiernan, Board of Health Member; Sharon Hart, Public Health Director; Jennifer Jernigan, Assistant Public Health Director; Monasia Ceasar, Health Compliance Specialist; Michelle Theroux, Master Plan Implementation Committee; Nate Therien, Master Plan Implementation Committee

*The Board of Health Meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Chair Ravenhurst.*

### 1. New Business:

#### (A) Draft 2020 Master Plan

Chair Ravenhurst introduced the guest speakers from MPIC. She also mentioned that supplemental materials were provided in the agenda that listed action items assigned specifically to the Board of Health, notation of the progress made, and some discussion questions related to the draft 2020 Master Plan.

Nate expressed his gratitude to be invited to the meeting and proposed starting off the discussion with some history of MPIC and the Master Plan. Nate referenced a previous meeting with Chair Ravenhurst where difficulties in executing some of the actions items in the Master Plan were highlighted. The current Master Plan in place is from 2010. Master Plans are generated and approved by the town Planning Board. The 2010 Master Plan was developed under the leadership of the Planning Board following community consultation and review from an advisory panel.

Prior to the start of the pandemic, the town decided to update the 2010 Master Plan. Since 2010, MPIC's role has been to facilitate evaluations amongst the different Boards and Committees that are assigned action items in the Master Plan, to get an update on the progress made. MPIC also made notations about the difficulties encountered by the Boards and Committees when efforts have been made to implement the plans put forth by the Master Plan.

The 2020 Master Plan draft is in its final revision phases. The Planning Board is currently reviewing the revisions that were made following the community consultation. January 2022 is the anticipated completion date. MPIC has been executing an advancement of the pending 2020 Master Plan draft. They have been talking with the related Boards and Committees regarding their future plans in relation to the goals set in the 2020 Master Plan draft.

Nate then referenced his meeting with Chair Ravenhurst in which Ravenhurst highlighted some difficulties encountered when analyzing the 2020 Master Plan draft. Once approved, MPIC would like to receive feedback on how the Board of Health would like to see the implementation of the 2020 Master Plan draft executed. MPIC's role is to visit with related Boards and Committees and report back to those with decision making responsibilities. These parties include the Planning Board, the Select Board, and Town Administration.

MPIC is looking to create a process that identifies what the implementation strategies will be. In the past, MPIC has noticed there are some action items that have been assigned that require the need for multiple departments to get involved. There is a proposal to have a meeting in the spring where the logistics of these action items would be explored. The various Department and Committee Chairs would analyze their progress and establish the necessary partnerships to properly execute their assigned action items. Nate highlighted that MPIC is not an enforcement entity and is appointed by the Select Board and Planning Board. MPIC serves as a communication agency between the boards, committees, and decision-making parties.

Michelle reiterated that MPIC's role is to get feedback on the 2020 Master Plan draft from the related boards and committees and bring it back to the Select Board, Planning Board, and Town Administration. Chair Ravenhurst opened the floor for additional comments and questions.

Walsh Pio mentioned that the draft 2020 Master Plan is a rendition of the 2010 Master Plan that is done in ten-year increments. She questioned if there were assessments conducted on the 2010 Master Plan for feedback and status completion. Nate responded that reports are generated and issued to the Select Board annually that reflect that year's progress on the Master Plan. There is a spreadsheet that depicts the Board of Health's progress on their assigned goals. MPIC is looking to implement a system that tracks the progress on cross-committee connections.

The assessment took place between 2010-2018. When reviewing the 2010 Master Plan, there were conversations about the errors addressing goals and feasibility. The 2020 Master Plan will be less of an audit and more of a plan. MPIC acts as a transmuted of the work done by the committees and departments. Hart recalled working with a MPIC representative every year to review the Department's objectives and to record what had been done.

Collins introduced the use of health metrics as a way to compare information with other towns. There is legislation currently being pushed that would allow for state funding to be used for municipalities in Massachusetts to collect and use specific municipal data. Collins speculated this to be several years down the road. There are currently some regional reports available that highlight data in various counties. Hospitals are required to conduct community health needs assessments every three years. Collins questioned what the Master Plan is looking for in terms of establishing health metrics in town. Is it looking for a baseline to be created with the understanding that Massachusetts is working towards setting up municipalities to be able to do so on a regular basis?

Nate responded that is the intended long-term goal. The goal is to be able to widely communicate across regions. It is good that this initiative is underway statewide. Nate mentioned one of the challenges would be identifying what the Board of Health wants to measure and the scope of comparison.

Collins highlighted the work done by the Drug and Alcohol Coalition as there are health metrics and trend data available for years. She also raised the question on what action would follow the data collection. If areas of concerns are discovered, is the Board prepared to provide a follow-up action. Collins proposed exploring the feasibility of data collection and the efforts associated with it.

Walsh Pio added that the focus of the Drug and Alcohol Coalition is targeted solely on youth ranging from teenagers to the legal drinking age. There are years of data on related trends that are compared to other towns with the Valley and the state. There are systematic mechanisms implemented to generate the data. This does not seem to be the case with other topic areas, so discussion surrounding the implementation of such systems is important.

Michelle mentioned that from MPIC's perspective the responsibility would be left to the Board of Health to determine topic areas for data collection as well as how to use the metric results to implement related initiatives. Nate added that the Planning Board did not come up with the metrics. They were suggested by the Advisory Board. Planning Board is questioning the logistics and specifics of data collection with the ultimate decision lying on the assigned committees and boards. The Advisory Board considered metrics as a way to encourage committees to identify ways to measure their work and discover issues as they arise.

Dr. McKiernan mentioned the need for this discussion as the Board has previously tried to set clear goals and objectives. The Board should have their own set agenda opposed to just responding to complaints and community concerns. Dr. McKiernan referenced concerns brought forth by Collins regarding what should be done following the collection of data. After reviewing the 2020 Master Plan draft, Dr. McKiernan noticed there were very distinct action items listed such as water safety as well as very broad action items that would require a collaboration across many committees and boards. She was eager to learn that Nate and Michelle will act as liaisons amongst the different parties. This will help offset the

limitations of these parties as they only meet once a month. The liaisons will help identify everyone's role towards the collective effort. Dr. McKiernan is interested in seeing how the groups will work together to accomplish their assigned goals.

Walsh Pio suggested analyzing and reviewing the South Hadley response to the pandemic as a guide to be used for future situations. The analysis would cross over several departments as it would also include Emergency Management. This would be a moment to capture strategies that did work as well as those that did not to compile reference points for likewise situations that may arise in the future. She would not like to move forward without documenting what was learned.

Collins agreed with the sentiments shared by Walsh Pio and mentioned the Board of Health had invited Mike Sullivan to a previous meeting in hopes of getting clarification on the decision making surrounding COVID-19. Unfortunately, that never took place. It would have been good to outline the delegation of communication strategies used that could have been shared with the town. In her experience on the Board of Health, there has been a lot of discussion on what to keep out of water. She questioned Director Hart if the Quabbin in District 1 has fluoride and if the aquifer in District 2 does not.

Director Hart shared that in 2004, Dr. Nelen, who was the Board of Health Chair at the time, made efforts to try and get fluoride put into District 2 water. District 2 water also services Granby, MA. His proposal was shot down with concerns about the impact on adults, although beneficial for children. Hart mentioned she would verify the amount of fluoride in District 1 water and get back to Collins.

Nate noted there are issues that cannot be addressed solely by the Board of Health. He referenced the mention of reflecting on the strategies used to mitigate the pandemic and making South Hadley a welcoming community as examples of that. Responsible parties should request additional means of collaboration to get more information. Related committees and boards will have to identify their limits and call for necessary support. MPIC will help mitigate those collaborative efforts. The implementation strategies will allow for more interaction amongst the decision-making parties, committees, and boards.

Collins mentioned there are town issues that she believes should incorporate input from the Board of Health but do not. She proposed traffic calming and developments that present to other town boards for consideration as examples of this. The Board of Health should be able to contribute to the discussions and review these situations as they do impact public safety. The Master Plan may allow room for the Board of Health to gain involvement in issues not originally appointed to them.

Nate mentioned that it was the Board of Health who identified racism as a public health issue. The Board of Health can bring forth issues to the attention of related parties for the necessary follow-up action. Chair Ravenhurst mentioned that the board has been revisiting racism as a public health issue and has

been confused on what the next step should be. The Board could begin articulating areas that need follow up and call on others to provide the information. This would help the Board gain sense of what has been done and how to move forward. Chair Ravenhurst asked if there were any additional remarks regarding water testing.

Collins questioned if Director Hart was aware of the status on water testing and flushing of the fixtures at the schools. She referenced the regulation that allows the Board of Health to oversee the testing of water in town buildings. Director Hart mentioned that is currently on hold as the School Department has yet to respond to the request. The town facilities manager and Director Hart created a form that was sent out to the managers at all the town buildings asking them to identify which facilities would need testing. This would include drinking fountains and cooking appliances. All forms were returned except those sent out to the School Department. Follow up memos have been sent out by the facilities manager. There is money available that could be used to hire a company to conduct the testing once all fixtures have been identified.

Collins questioned if the fixtures that had been previously tested at Mosier School and deemed inoperable were still out of use. Hart responded that some fixtures were replaced, but she was unsure if additional testing had been administered following the closing of the schools. Dr. McKiernan asked if there was anything the Board could do to help the process along. Director Hart suggested Dr. McKiernan reach out to the School Department as she does have a good relationship with them.

Collins expressed her disappointment with the schools, as students have been filling up their water receptacles with no confirmation that the water systems have been flushed. Director Hart mentioned she has not received confirmation from the schools. Dr. McKiernan shared that this matter should be made a priority and the School Committee Chair should be contacted and presented with this to put on the agenda. With some pressure from parents, the Department may be inclined to report back with the requested information. Collins proposed that the systems may have been flushed out without notice to the Board of Health. Director Hart shared it was her understanding that the water systems were flushed prior to the reopening of the schools.

Dr. McKiernan questioned if the schools would be responsible for conducting testing independently or would that be facilitated through Director Hart. Director Hart mentioned that the facilities manager is facilitating the testing of the water fixtures in the town buildings.

Chair Ravenhurst acknowledged there was a community member present at the meeting and allowed them to speak. The community member expressed concerns about the water testing at the schools and mentioned she had left a comment in the google forum about the matter. She referenced the town regulation which required annual testing of the water fixtures in town buildings. She was happy to learn

that there is already established funding for such testing as she would have been willing to go to Town Administration to advocate for funding. She shared that the testing should be administered under the direction of the Board of Health as mentioned in the regulation. If the schools are not making the necessary effort to ensure that testing can be done, the Board of Health should intervene to ensure that the schools are abiding by the town issued regulation. The community member questioned if the schools were included in the regulation with the mention of town buildings or was there an exception of some sort.

Collins referred to the discussion held by the Board of Health this summer regarding the flushing and testing of the schools' fixtures prior to reopening the schools. This situation would be an example of not receiving information originally requested. The Chair of the Board of Health will reach out to the Chair of the School Committee to follow up on this matter and get the necessary information to move forward. The community member shared she had learned from a Mosier School employee that the fountains in the back of classrooms are not being used by students. This was reassuring as those faucets had previously tested for high levels of lead.

Director Hart shared there was 10,000 dollars put into an account to fund the testing of the water in town buildings. The schools have utilized some of the funding to replace some of the fixtures. There is still a substantial portion of the funding remaining. If depleted, the water testing would have to be proposed at Town Meeting to get additional funds allocated for the necessary services. At Town Meeting, the individual expenditures are not presented, so members are unaware of specific funding needs.

Walsh Pio reintroduced the question originally proposed by the community member as it was not previously answered. She questioned if the regulation addressed the schools when it mentioned municipal buildings and facilities. Collins confirmed that the schools were included in the mention of municipal buildings and facilities.

Chair Ravenhurst expressed gratitude to the MPIC speakers and mentioned there would be additional discussion on the topic. The Board of Health would be in touch if additional questions or areas of concern are raised. Nate mentioned MPIC would keep the Board of Health updated on the draft 2020 Master Plan as it undergoes the final revision phases and expressed his gratitude to the Board for all their hard work. To wrap up the discussion, Chair Ravenhurst mentioned she would follow up with the Chair of the School Committee on water testing to ensure that the testing can be done soon. Director Hart shared that District 1 does not add fluoride into the water. Fluoride naturally exists in the water at a very low rate ranging between 0.02- 1%.

## **2. Acceptance of the Minutes of the September 28, 2021, meeting:**

Chair Ravenhurst introduced the minutes from the 9/28/21 meeting and questioned if there were any changes to be made. No changes were brought forth and thus Chair Ravenhurst mentioned she would accept a motion to approve the minutes from the 9/28/21 meeting. Collins made the motion and Dr. McKiernan seconded it. A rollcall was taken.

Karen Walsh Pio: Aye  
Jessica Collins: Aye  
Dr. Christine McKiernan: Aye  
Tony Judge: Aye  
Johanna Ravenhurst: Aye

Chair Ravenhurst said she would accept a motion to approve the minutes from the 8/31/21 meeting. Dr. McKiernan made a motion, Walsh Pio seconded it. A roll call was taken.

Karen Walsh Pio: Aye  
Dr. Christine McKiernan: Aye  
Jessica Collins: Aye  
Tony Judge: Abstaining  
Johanna Ravenhurst: Aye

### **3. Announcements and Open Forum:**

Chair Ravenhurst verified that there were no additional memos left in the open forum by the public and questioned if any of the members had anything to propose. Collins proposed the trash situation at the local High School as a topic the Board could look further into. Upon visiting the South Hadley High School's football field, spectators will observe trash dispersed throughout the field and bleacher area. This is both an environmental concern as well as a public health issue as it may attract vermin and rodents. Collins expressed confusion as to who would address this issue as many departments may be involved including the DPW, the Recreation Department, and the School Department.

Director Hart mentioned she was under the impression that trash barrels are no longer put out as the town has implemented a trash in, trash out policy. There have been no complaints since the implementation of said policy. Collins mentioned she was making a formal complaint about the situation and had supporting images if needed. She reiterated the confusion surrounding whose purview this would fall under. She also shared her pessimism about people carrying out the trash they bring with them.

Director Hart mentioned she would follow up on this matter and get verification on who's in charge. The trash barrels were taken out to accommodate the DPW staff shortage. If it's causing a public nuisance, something will be done. The increased risk of attracting rabid animals is a concern to the department. Hart will verify the responsible party and get back to the Board. Dr. McKiernan suggested that Chair Ravenhurst reach out to the School Committee with this matter and check if it was under their purview.

Jernigan introduced the condemnation of 33 Spring St, Unit F. Jernigan shared that the power was shut off. The unit was condemned and placarded by the Department. Director Hart mentioned the tenant is being evicted and is not occupying the dwelling. Chair Ravenhurst mentioned she would accept a motion to ratify the condemnation at 33 Spring St, Unit F. Dr. McKiernan made the motion and Collins seconded it. A rollcall was taken.

Karen Walsh Pio: Aye  
Jessica Collins: Aye  
Dr. Christine McKiernan: Aye  
Tony Judge: Aye  
Johanna Ravenhurst: Aye

Collins proposed traffic calming as a topic to be discussed by the Board at a future meeting. Dr. McKiernan questioned what traffic calming is. Collins responded that traffic calming is the compilation of various mechanisms that mitigate traffic to protect non-vehicular travelers. These strategies include traffic lights, speed bumps, sidewalks, and traffic signs.

#### **4. New Business (continued):**

##### **(B) COVID-19 Update**

Chair Ravenhurst introduced Director Hart to provide the COVID-19 update. Director Hart shared that the weekly case numbers have been gradually decreasing over the past three weeks. The incoming case numbers have gone from 31 cases to 25 cases, to now 14 positive cases this week. The amount of contact numbers has been fluctuating. With the holidays approaching case numbers are expected to change. Booster shots are now available for COVID vaccines. There has been progress made with approving the vaccines for 5–11-year-olds. Dr. McKiernan shared she is hopeful that it will get approved by the holidays, as this would provide families with an increased sense of security. There is already a plan in place for distribution.

Collins mentioned her organization will be hosting a webinar on November 2, 2021, discussing the vaccination of those ranging between 5 and 11 years old as well as the boosters. She asked Director Hart if this information could be shared on the Department's website. Director Hart responded it could be

done with approval from Town Administration and mentioned she enjoys receiving the organization's newsletter. Collins also proposed attaching the webinar recording to the Department website following the webinar. Director Hart agreed that was a good suggestion as well and would bring it forth to Town Administration.

Director Hart shared the Mass in Motion grant has been made available. The Health Department has signed on with support from both the Selectboard and Town Administration. Collins questioned if this was to send in a proposal or to receive funding. Director Hart clarified that a collaborative group is looking to partnership with several towns to provide programming. One of the potential initiatives include a mobile farmer's market. Chair Ravenhurst expressed her support for the collaboration and requested the Board receive more details as they become more available. Hart mentioned once the proposal is drafted up and the participants are finalized, she would provide the information to the Board.

### **(C) South Hadley School Updates**

Dr. McKiernan questioned the status of the mold situation at the High Schools. Director Hart mentioned that she has yet to receive the assessment from the state. Dr. McKiernan referenced the previous discussion regarding the other schools being assessed and questioned if that was still scheduled. Director Hart shared that is still a possibility and the schools would have to work with the state to get that scheduled. Prior to do so, the original assessment must be received and analyzed. The additional assessments would have to be facilitated by the Superintendent, the Business office, and the principals of those schools in conjunction with the state.

Chair Ravenhurst shared she reached out to the School Committee Chair inquiring if there were any topics that needs to be discussed by the Board of Health. She has not heard back from the Chair but will follow up on that inquiry as well as the discussions on the water testing and trash barrel problems. Chair Ravenhurst added that she included updates on the COVID protocols in schools to keep Board members informed.

Dr. McKiernan questioned the likelihood of hosting a vaccine clinic once 5–11-year-olds receive approval. Director Hart responded that authorization to do so would have to come from the state. This would be dependent upon vaccine availability. Previously, the state opted for regional allocation of the vaccines. Northampton is currently set up for booster administration, not for 5–11-year-olds. The town belongs to Hampshire Public Health Preparedness Coalition funded by the state. Dr. Nelen helped to establish the coalition back in 2003-2004 as the chair. Director Hart followed as the chair successor for 10 years with Northampton leading the past efforts. The coalition hosts the regional vaccine clinics.

### **(D) Updates about the South Hadley Drug & Alcohol Coalition**

Walsh Pio referenced the October 13, 2021 meeting minutes to provide an update on the coalition. This meeting was held live at the High School. The coalition attended the open house hosted on October 7, 2021, at the Michael E Smith Middle School. The coalition's coordinator and director set up a table with educational material for parents. Families gave the coalition positive feedback as they had just received resource magnets in the mail the previous week.

There was a survey sent out to the parents and caregivers at the High School. A lot of information is sought out from families by the coalition. The data received is used to curate programming that tailors to the needs of the town. The survey is open until October 31<sup>st</sup>. The principal will be issuing out e-mail reminders encouraging caregivers to complete the survey. Dr. McKiernan shared she has personally received the reminders.

Walsh Pio also mentioned the Drug Take Back Day being hosted on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. This event has typically had a good turnout. Walsh Pio highlighted the work done by Sharon Hart, as this was the first take-back box program in the state and the second one in the country. The minutes were written prior to the event, so she is unaware of official numbers. Director Hart attributed the success of the program to the variance she applied for which allows the town to take back any prescription drug.

The take-back programs implemented by the DA offices have restrictions and cannot take prescriptions that are hazardous wastes as outlined by the Mass DEP. The 24/7 accessibility of the drop box being in the police station and the ability to take back without restriction helps get the prescription drugs out of the house and out of reach from children. This is important as teenagers are infamous for surfing through medicine cabinets and obtaining prescription drugs for illegal consumption. Neighboring towns can also benefit from this as teenagers often have wide network of friends.

Walsh Pio introduced Stickers for Safe Storage as another initiative the coalition is involved in. There are currently 2,500 stickers available for distribution. They help promote the safe storage of medication, alcohol, and marijuana which is now legal for use for those who are 21 and older. The coalition has discussed expanding their outreach efforts to reach different people. The proposed strategies included distributing the stickers at Ichiban, Mandarin Gourmet and McCray's farm if the establishments were willing to. The minutes did not specify what was decided besides the desire to expand their target audience.

### **(E) Mosquito control article for Town Reminder**

In the interest of time, Chair Ravenhurst quickly mentioned Christopher Craig (the representative from the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District) agreed to work on the article for the Town Reminder with her. She also reached out to the Town Reminder to confirm that the article could be published and to

get any content guidelines. She has yet to hear back from them and will follow up on that. She is hopeful to have a draft ready for the November meeting to be reviewed and discussed.

**(5) Set Next Meeting Date-(TBD) at 6:00 pm Virtual Using Zoom**

Chair Ravenhurst confirmed the next virtual meeting for November 16, 2021, at 6 pm. Chair Ravenhurst adjourned the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Monasia Ceasar  
Health Compliance Specialist

*Draft* – Board of Health  
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**ATTACHMENT A**

<b>DOCUMENT</b>	<b>RECORD LOCATION</b>
Master Plan BOH	BOH File
Bylaw Water Testing in Public Buildings and Municipal Facilities	BOH File
BOH Master Plan Discussion Items	BOH File
Regulation Water Testing in Public Buildings and Municipal Facilities	BOH File