

BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

Tuesday March 1, 2022 – 5:00 PM via Zoom

PRESENT: Tony Segal, Chair; Louise Maron; Andy Fisher; Peter Cohen; Fred Schubert; Valerie Bird, Berkshire Alliance Agent; Emilie Jarrett, Community Health Assn.; Claudia Ryan; Rick Bell

Tony called the meeting to order with a request for comments on the minutes of the February meeting of the Board. There being no questions, Andy moved that the minutes of the February 1, 2022 meeting of the Board of Health be accepted. The motion was seconded by Louise and passed by unanimous approval.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Rick Bell's Septic System Problem. Valerie reported that she had researched the problem and determined that the soils on Rick's property are not conducive to the type of septic system he has, which is very old. She sent Rick an email, outlining her findings and Rick said he had responded to that email, although Valerie had no record of it in her email system.

Rick then replied to the points Valerie had made in her email to him, addressing particularly his belief that when the system was installed, the water table was much lower than it is currently and that the reason for the rise in the water table is due to water drainage along the length of his property caused by an eroded drainage ditch that has not been repaired by the Town.

Berkshire Septic Systems was called in to check it out and their only comment was that the system needed a new outlet to replace the deteriorated one. Rick had Berkshire Septic Systems install one made of PVC piping. Rick noted that he is aware that the system would not pass a Title V inspection, but that it works for him. He maintains that once the Town repairs the road and the damaged drainage ditch, the water will not be draining onto his property and that the water table would subside to previous levels.

Val asked Rick how close the pit is to the road? Rick estimated some 30 feet away. Val is certain that the problem could not be caused by drainage that far away. She agreed to meet with Rick and inspect the situation sometime in the near future, when warming temperatures will have removed the snow presently covering the area.

Tony remarked that, regardless of the outcome of that inspection, the Board of Health carries no weight with the Highway Department in scheduling repairs but would be willing to recommend those repairs to the Highway Department if Valerie finds something that should be paved quickly.

Masking Directives: There was a discussion of what surrounding towns are doing about rescinding or continuing their masking directives and whether the Richmond Board of Health should consider terminating its directive. Andy noted his extreme discomfort with the idea of

ending masking in Richmond – not only for the obvious impact it might have on the incidence of new COVID cases, but because he feels Richmond should be a model for other Towns not to be too precipitous in ending masking. The consensus was that the Board will take no action at this time and will leave the masking directive in place as is.

NEW BUSINESS:

Fred Schubert announced that he has submitted a formal resignation of his seat on the Board of Health to the Town and is at this meeting purely in the capacity of a private citizen. By March 10th he will be moved into his new residence. That means there is a need for a new member to replace Fred. The Board members each thanked Fred for the many years of excellent service as a member of the Board.

Peter Cohen noted that he has asked his brother, Dr. Laurence Cohen, if he would be willing to step in as an interim member of the Board of Health. Dr. Cohen has given his approval of the idea and all that is required now is for Tony to ask Danielle Fillio, Town Administrator, to place the issue on the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Should Dr. Cohen decide to continue on the Board of Health at the end of this term, he will need to attend the Town Caucus and have his name placed on the ballot.

Community Health Association Close Down: Emilie reported that the Berkshire Alliance will pick up all public health nursing services of the Community Health Assn. after June 30th, when Emilie retires from her position. She will create a notice to alert Town residents of the change.

Tony noted that Emilie is going to prove to be a very hard act for the Alliance to follow.

Agent's Report: Valerie noted that there were relatively few issues this past month. Hilltop Orchards has complied with all requirements and she will check with them again tomorrow.

572 Dean Hill Road has had their septic system approved.

She is waiting for the Swamp Road tight tank design to arrive.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Board of Health will take place on Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at 5:00 PM. Tony will assess the situation with COVID concerns shortly before that date to determine whether the meeting will be held in person or via Zoom.

There being no further business before the Board, Andy moved that the meeting be adjourned. Peter seconded the motion, which was passed by unanimous consent.