



Acton Board of Health

Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2024

7:30 PM.

Hybrid Meeting Room 9 Acton Town Hall and via Zoom

Present:

Members Present: Mark Conoby – Chairman

Virtual Members Present: Dr. William Taylor and William McInnis

Staff Present: Penelope Funairole – Health and Family Services Director

Others Present: Alissa Nicol – Select Board Liaison, Kim Kastens – Chair of Green Acton's Water Committee and Brewster Conant

Others Present Virtually: Corey York – DPW Director, Matthew Mostoller – Acton Water District and Peter and Nathalie Daniel – Rapscallion

1. Opening

Chairman – Mark Conoby opened the meeting at 7:33 PM. A script was read that was provided by the Town and this meeting of the Board of Health was called to order.

2. Regular Business

Any Board Members Future Agenda Items

Board members discussed potential future agenda items; Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project, Household Hazardous Waste Day and some open projects which need to be addressed.

Environmental Health Director Update

Mrs. Funairole gave an update in Mr. Dow's absence that the Health Division is now fully staffed and that Health Inspector Wei Sun is out doing inspections on her own and working diligently. She continued that she spoke to Mr. Dow about the failed septic systems at Dover Heights and Gould's Plaza. No update at this time regarding Gould's Plaza. Regarding Dover Heights, the State is preparing a letter to the Board.

Nursing Service Update

Mrs. Funairole informed the Board that over the last month the Nursing Service treated 9 COVID cases, 5 Influenza cases, and 1 anaplasmosis case.



Health and Family Services Director Update

Mrs. Funaiole updated the Board that she will be working on a respiratory virus education campaign; Pertussis, RSV and COVID.

She continued that today, Tuesday 11-19-24 the COA had a Thanksgiving luncheon with almost 80 people in attendance and the Assistant Secretary to the Executive Offices of Elder Affairs was present. Mrs. Funaiole wanted the Board to know that from now on we will be using "older adults", we will not be using the term "elder".

Mrs. Funaiole updated the Board that her and the Community Resource Coordinator Laura Ducharme has taken over Transportation and that they wrote a Grant for \$250,000 for the regional dispatch unit.

She continued with a loud thank you to the Veterans Services Coordinator James MacRae for his work putting together the Veterans Day ceremonies.

3. New / Special Business

Corey York – DPW Director, Kim Kastens – Chair of Green Acton's Water Committee and Matthew Mostoller – Acton Water District, Discussing Road Salt

Corey York provided an update on winter road operations:

- They no longer use sand in their mixtures, having switched to a deicing agent mixed with salt around 2005-2006
- The deicing agent improves effectiveness at lower temperatures
- They use segmented plow blades and "belly scrapers" to better clear roads
- They calibrate spreaders annually to target about 240 pounds of salt per mile
- Staff receive ongoing training on proper application techniques
- They monitor weather conditions closely to determine appropriate treatment
- They have considered but not implemented pretreating roads

The board discussed concerns about salt impacts:

- Matt from Acton Water District noted increasing chloride levels in groundwater since 2010
- Higher chloride levels are making water more corrosive, potentially leaching metals
- Kim from Green Acton presented data showing rising salt concentrations in surface waters over 50 years
- The board discussed potential ways to reduce salt use, including designating low-salt areas near wells

The board requested that DPW:

- Look into best practices from other towns
- Consider creating low-salt zones in sensitive areas
- Explore pretreatment options again
- Obtain data sheets on materials used



- Track salt usage per storm if possible

Rapscallion Update/Enforcement

Penny provided an update on Rapscallion:

- An order letter was sent on November 7th regarding violation of the 54-seat limit
- During an inspection that evening, 91 seats were observed - 37 over the limit
- The approved floor plan shows 54 seats inside and 54 outside, with sections to be closed when others open

Natalie and Peter from Rapscallion responded:

- They acknowledged being over the limit but disputed some past counts
- They committed to removing seats to get down to 54 inside by the next day
- They requested consideration of the original approved plan allowing 54 inside/54 outside in the future

The board discussed enforcement:

- They emphasized the need to strictly comply with the 54 total seat limits inside for now
- They requested follow-up inspections to verify compliance
- They indicated stronger enforcement would be taken if non-compliance continues.

The Board decided to table further discussion until the next meeting to allow review of new documentation.

Boardwalk School – Update

Mr. Conoby summarized new data received on the Boardwalk School septic system:

- October samples showed high specific conductance and total nitrogen levels in wells near the system
- Water usage is often over 4,000 gallons per day
- No reclaimed water is being used yet as planned

The board discussed concerns about the high nitrogen levels and water usage. They requested:

- Another round of sampling before winter if possible
- Review of water conservation measures
- An update on plans to implement water reuse

The Board decided to table further discussion until the next meeting to allow review of new documentation.

Minutes – September 6, 2024

On a motion made by Mr. McInnis, seconded by Dr. Taylor, the Board unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes from September 6, 2024. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

Minutes – October 29, 2024



On a motion made by Mr. McInnis, seconded by Dr. Taylor, the Board unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes from October 29, 2024. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

Adjournment

On a motion made by Dr. Taylor, seconded by Mr. McInnis, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 10:05 PM. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Health meeting will be on Tuesday January 14, 2025

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting:

- Town of Acton script for boards and committees opening meeting
- Board of Health agenda
- Rapscallion Letter 11/7/24
- Boardwalk School Water Records
- BOH Boardwalk Water Usage
- Ransom Report MW Testing
- BOH MW Test Results
- Board of Health meeting minutes from 9/6/24
- Board of Health meeting minutes from 10/29/24

Respectfully Submitted,

Matthew R. Dow
Matthew Dow
Environmental Health Director

Mark Conoby
Mark Conoby, Chairman
Acton Board of Health