



## **TOWN OF TISBURY**

*office of*

### **THE BOARD OF HEALTH**

PO Box 666, 66 High Point Lane  
Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts 02568

#### MEETING MINUTES – July 25, 2023 – 4:00 PM

The Board of Health (BOH) commissioners met at the Tisbury Town Hall Annex, 66 High Point Lane, on Tuesday, July 25, 2023, at 4:00 PM. The meeting was also available virtually by Zoom (meeting ID: 828 4395 7902 and passcode: 671769) or by phone at 646-876-9923.

Commissioners in attendance were Chairman Malcolm Boyd, Dr. Michael Loberg, Vice Chairman, and Jeff Pratt, Clerk. Maura Valley, Health Agent, Catie Blake, Assistant Health Agent, and Valerie Soushek, Administrative Secretary, were also in attendance.

Chairman Boyd called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

In-person visitors: Louise Clough; Louisa Hofstader, Vineyard Gazette; Mike Stoto; Patrick Rodin-Reynolds

Visitors via Zoom: Scott Horsley; Sherri Caseau, Martha's Vineyard Commission; Dr. James Butterick; Tom Zinno

The meeting minutes for June 27, 2023, were approved and accepted as written.

#### APPOINTMENTS

4:00 PM Patrick Rodin-Reynolds, Guest presenter on ticks, tick-borne illnesses and prevention

Mr. Rodin-Reynolds spoke about the three main tick species on Martha's Vineyard, including transmitted diseases, life stages, identifying features, characteristics, habitats, geographical range, hosts, and predators.

The three main tick species on the Island are the Lone Star, deer, and dog tick. There are other species, but they don't bite us or make us sick. Each tick has a unique pathogen that it will transmit; for example, the Lone Star Tick (LST) has Ehrlichiosis, Tularemia, STARI, and Alpha-Gal, a food allergy, and a relatively new illness.

LSTs showed up on the Island 10-12 years ago, on Chappy, Cape Pogue, and Aquinnah near the Gayhead Lighthouse. In that period, they've slowly moved northward and become a more

significant Island-wide concern than the other species due to less familiarity and no treatment for Alpha-Gal.

All three species have three life stages—larval, nymph, and adult. The females and nymphs tend to feed longer and spread disease, while the male's primary goal is to breed and move on. The adults carry more sickness, but due to their tiny/undetectable size, the nymphs cause the most disease in humans.

Ticks are at risk of drying out and desiccating from hot, dry heat, not cold winters, as many believe. Based on Patrick's research this year, he's collected double and triple the amount of dog ticks over last year. This year seems particularly bad due to the rainy summer and/or the mild winter, enabling them to emerge sooner. The abundance is also attributed to their host populations--deer, mice, skunks, and raccoons, all thriving on the Island.

Alpha-Gal is a mammalian product allergy, primarily to beef, pork, venison, and lamb, but also dairy and beef by-products, some medications and personal care products. The average onset of symptoms is 4 hours or more, usually after dinner, including hives, rash, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, red and swelling in hands, and, in severe cases, anaphylaxis. It is diagnosed with a blood test, but there is no treatment. Symptoms can last 3-12 months, and they should disappear as long as there are no additional bites.

Deer Ticks are found in leaf litter and forested areas. They transmit Lyme, Babesiosis, Hard Tick Relapsing Fever, Anaplasmosis, and Tularemia.

Dog ticks are in the fields. Skunks are their primary host.

LSTs are everywhere and travel primarily on deer. They prefer medium-large-size host animals.

Dog and Lone Star Ticks crawl after their hosts.

Resources for the public include local health boards, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has an excellent website for the most information.

Patrick conducts tick sampling from March – October. Adult deer ticks will be active all year, while the other species go away from October until March.

Permethrin-treated clothing or insect repellent on exposed skin are the most effective repellents. Conduct tick checks. Patrick did not recommend using any chemicals indoors.

The most common transfers occur while hanging out in the backyard, hiking the local trails, and from pet transfers.

Opossums for controlling ticks is a myth. Guinea fowl, quail, and turkeys don't eat enough ticks to manage the population. They're just another host, mainly.

The most critical takeaway is that LSTs are now found in all six Island towns. Of ten properties surveyed in Vineyard Haven, 4-5 had LSTs.

Tick spraying in yards can work well, but it should be the last resort. Permethrin and Pyrethroid-based sprays are the most effective. However, permethrin is toxic to bees and aquatic life and must be reapplied regularly. Cedarwood oil is the most effective organic option for repellency. Patrick did not recommend rosemary-based sprays. Clearing organic debris and using mulch is also very effective in yards.

4:30 PM      Ducan Veselinovic, LaStrada, 65 Main Street

Mr. Veselinovic has applied for a license to open a new food establishment at the end of August-La Strada, at 65 Main Street. It will be an extension of Salvatore's and run by the same owners.

While there is a small year-round kitchen, the food, including lunches, deli cheeses, and meats, will be primarily to-go and prepared at Salvatore's. They are requesting 30 seats for patrons and a variance for handicap access.

The commissioners voted to approve a license for La Strada unanimously.

4:45 PM      Golden Bull Restaurant re: license renewal – Postponed until August 8, 2023

The establishment opened before the owners renewed their licenses from the select and health boards. Therefore, Ms. Blake ordered them to close and come before the commissioners for approval to reopen once they complete their license application.

#### HEALTH AGENT REPORT

##### Targeted Wastewater Management Plan (TWMP)

Preparation of the targeted plan continues, although there have been some delays waiting for the required information.

Mr. Scott Horsley is working on the SRF (State Revolving Fund) grant due August 11th, supposing the paperwork is submitted for less than one million dollars and the Island joins the Cape and Islands Clean Water Trust. In that case, the Town can expect up to 50% loan forgiveness as a subsidy grant, i.e., 20 system upgrades at \$45,000 each and a total of \$900,000 for the application submission. And the shoreline systems within 1000' should be given priority under the grant.

Mr. Horsley confirmed that the TWMP is being presented to the Select Board tomorrow at 4:00 PM for their approval. Revisions are expected. He will be submitting the plan with the SRF application, potentially for a zero-percent interest loan for the Town to fund the systems. If approved, the funding must be depleted within three years.

Mr. Horsley needs to know how we size and focus the grant opportunity. For the quickest impact, he concurred with Maura--with a budget of one million dollars or less, the shoreline systems should be targeted for upgrade first.

Mr. Horsley confirmed that the SRF grant will cover the construction and installation expenses. Monitoring and evaluation will have to be funded differently, perhaps with a more specific grant. Many grant opportunities are available for which the Island is well-positioned.

A \$6,000 tax credit is available from the State for septic upgrades of failed systems. Ms. Valley stated that information on this, including the State's website link, will be added to the Board of Health Disposal Works Application-approval letter for upgraded systems.

The commissioners voted to authorize Ms. Valley to work with Scott Horsley on the targeted wastewater project.

#### Proposed Revisions to Tisbury's Nitrogen Regulations

During a water resources meeting on the CWMP and TWMP, potential revisions to Tisbury's nitrogen regulations were mentioned. The suggested edits to the triggers would essentially require enhanced denitrification for all new, upgraded, or expanded systems and property transfers (within a watershed):

5.2 The following situations are "triggers" for section 5.1:

1. A new wastewater system is required to serve a property (i.e., new construction).
2. The replacement, upgrade, or relocation of a property's existing wastewater treatment system.
3. Additional development on the property or a change in use or the intensity of use (or potential use) which would increase wastewater nitrogen discharge beyond the BOH-approved system capacity, irrespective of whether the existing wastewater treatment system has excess sanitation capacity.
4. At the time a property is transferred to another owner.

As explained by Mr. Horsley, based on data conditions will worsen in the ponds before they improve; such revisions are necessary. He further stated that Tisbury needs to partner with West Tisbury as they are a significant part of this issue at Lake Tashmoo, to which Ms. Valley confirmed that a meeting would be scheduled. It was agreed that attendees should include Sherri or Adam from MVC and Scott Horsley.

The commissioners stated that they preferred to give the proposal some further review and consideration for discussion at the next board meeting. A public hearing is required for adoption.

#### Cyanobacteria Bloom at Mink Meadows

A cyanobacteria bloom was identified in two sites, one red (heavy) and one orange (mild), in Mink Meadows Pond. The pond is private with 5-6 homes, with a small public access point that was posted with a warning. Follow-up testing has shown lower algae and chlorophyll levels, but that doesn't represent reduced toxicity. To be safe, testing will occur again this week and the warning sign will remain in place for two additional weeks.

#### Proposed Septage Transfer Site

There is a need for more sites to stage frac tanks for holding septage waste pending off-island transfer, as the availability of pump-out services will be even more critical as the Town proceeds with its wastewater management plan improvements.

As such, Ms. Valley asked if the commissioners were interested in using the old septage lagoon property as a site for staging site. She recommended limiting the number of tanks and restricting trucks for storage, parking, or storage of other pump-out equipment and trucks.

The commissioners concurred with Ms. Valley's proposal. As such, she will present it to the Select Board as a next step.

#### ARPA Wastewater Funding

Ms. Valley provided a draft of an informational statement for Tisbury's website. It will accompany the link to the County's application for the engineering portion of the grant. The commissioners did not recommend any changes.

#### Eversource's 5-year Vegetation Management Plan

Eversource issued its 5-year Vegetation Management Plan as approved by Massachusetts' Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR). No action is required--as noted in their letter, it does not indicate that treatment will occur, just that it might happen in the future. Eversource's yearly operational plan for 2023 only confirms plans to treat in Bourne.

#### Natural Pesticide Near Waterbodies

The BOH office has received complaints regarding using natural plant-based oil pesticides (Oh Deer, etc.) near waterbodies with shellfish beds. As 25(b) exempt, such pesticide products are unregulated. Ms. Valley has inquired with Massachusetts' Department of Marine and Fisheries, who agreed to research the matter and respond when they have more information.

#### ASSISTANT HEALTH AGENT UPDATE

##### Vibrio Case

The case originated from one oyster out of 100 purchased at John's Fish Market. The State collected information, and they will monitor the fishing area, but otherwise no other information is available.

##### New Position

Ms. Blake is being appointed as the new Director at the Council on Aging by the BOS on July 27, 2023. Her last day in the BOH office is August 28th.

##### NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Valley recommended the following transition plan in preparation for her retirement on December 31st and Catie's last day on August 28th.

August – Bring Drew Belsky, shared services inspector under the public health excellence grant, over for 1-2 days per week to work with Catie and get familiar with the Tisbury restaurants and other license holders. He'll also assist with the Beach Road Festival. This partnership will allow Drew to provide inspection services to the BOH through the fall while we hire a new health agent. Hold off on replacing the assistant health agent until the health agent is hired.

September – Advertise the health agent position.

October – Interview health agent candidates. Decide and extend an offer by the end of the month.

November – Work to prepare for the new health agent to begin the first week of December (earlier if possible and necessary).

December – New health agent begins and works with support/training from Maura for the month.

January – Begin the process of hiring a new assistant health agent (this will allow the new health agent to choose their assistant).

The commissioners confirmed their support of Ms. Valley's proposal.

DISPOSAL WORKS APPLICATIONS APPROVED BY BOARD – N/A

BILLS AND PERMITS FOR APPROVAL

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Budget Category</u>	<u>Total Due</u>
Gremlin Fog Pest Control	mosquito control	\$1,570.00
Vineyard Health Care Access	public health	\$1,500.00
Island Health Care	public health	\$1,529.20
Wampanoag Environmental Lab.	water testing	\$ 210.00
Vineyard Gazette, LLC	advertising	\$ 70.00
Wright-Pierce	landfill monitoring	\$14,905.00
TOTAL		\$19,784.20

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, August 8, 2023, 4:00 PM.

With no further business to conduct, Chairman Boyd motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Soushek  
Administrative Secretary

Document(s)

The Board of Health commissioners accept the meeting minutes, dated July 25, 2023, as presented.

Date: 10/10/2023 Signed: 