



## **TOWN OF TISBURY**

*office of*

### **THE BOARD OF HEALTH**

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

#### **MEETING MINUTES – October 26, 2021 – 4:00 PM**

The Tisbury Board of Health (BOH) held a meeting on Tuesday, October 26, 2021, at 4:00 PM.

**Due to ongoing efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, this meeting was held virtually via Zoom, ID 914 7718 9466, Passcode 175655, phone 646-876-9923.**

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

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

The meeting minutes of October 12th and 19th, 2021, were unanimously approved as written. Commissioner Boyd abstained from the vote.

#### **APPOINTMENT(S)**

4:30 PM – Gerry Hokanson and Melinda Loberg representing TWI, Dr. Stephen Jones, UNH  
Re: microbial source testing of stormwater outflow from West Spring St.

The meeting was called because of research and analysis conducted by Gerry Hokanson and Melinda Loberg.

Ms. Loberg described the project's scope – TWI has a long history of conducting water testing at the Tisbury water bodies to ascertain the level of pollution that stormwater might carry during rainstorms. The recent focus has been more on the old system on West Spring Street because TWI had historically created a solution to stormwater pollution that resulted in the installation of catch and first flush basins. They recently began retesting them for fecal coliform because the basins didn't appear to be working as originally intended. There are always high counts during a rainstorm. The goal was to determine what was contributing to the high count by using DNA testing to identify the source.

Mr. Gerry Hokanson presented a spreadsheet showing the results—a stormwater map drafted by Environmental Partners in 2017. The current focus is at the outfall on West Spring Street. One sample was collected right at the outfall, and the other was collected at the interface between the marsh and Lake Tashmoo. The samples were collected in duplicates—one was tested in Aquinnah, the other was filtered and frozen until the bacteria results were received. The testing included fecal coliform. The filtered sample was put on dry ice and transported to Dr. Stephen Jones in Durham, NH, who conducted microbial source testing. See attachment A for the results. The most alarming results are from humans, which at a benchmark illness rate of 30 GI illnesses per thousand swimmers occurs at a median concentration of 4200 copies of this human marker. The samples from Lake Tashmoo show 23 to 27 times higher than that statistic.

Dr. Jones explained that when you see human contamination elevated like that in the recent tests, it indicates a direct human source to that water body. Such water analyses are conducted all over New England, mainly at the Maine, NH, and Massachusetts coastlines. Such high levels are not seen in many places. They're well above a level that the EPA considers a risk to human health. Mammalian markers tell us whether the high levels of fecal coliform, in this case, are from mammalian fecal sources. For budgeting purposes, Dr. Jones explained that the primary source of the expense of this process is digesting the sample that extracts the DNA from the filter. Therefore, the base cost for just the human marker is \$120 per sample.

Mr. Hokanson explained that in collecting samples in the outfall area, Mr. Bob Landros collected some on a day when there was no rain. While the fecal coliform numbers were down, they were still present. Unfortunately, there is no data to show how quickly the contamination dissipates/dilutes. A sample was also pulled right at the Tisbury School, and over 2000 CFUs of fecal coliform were identified.

Ms. Blake confirmed no relationship between what is discovered during beach testing at the Sound and what needs to be addressed at Lake Tashmoo.

Ms. Valley confirmed that the recent samples taken by Ms. Blake last Thursday came back low at 1 and 42. So the numbers are not staying high.

All agreed that an investigation and tracing studies should be conducted for identifying the source(s) of the contamination by segmenting manholes, using cameras, cleaning catch basins, etc.

Ms. Valley stated that she would talk to Andrew at the Aquinnah Lab to establish a cost for fecal coliform testing, filtration, and freezing for budgeting purposes and a testing schedule by catch basin to narrow down the potential area contamination. She will report back to the commissioners with the information.

Mr. Kirk Metell added that he has catch basin funds available.

Mr. Jones stated the best way to save resources is to use fecal coliform analysis. It will be less expensive, and you can expect to receive the results the next day. Andrew at the Aquinnah Lab

could filter the samples along the process, retain them and just run the ones that show up with negative results. These could be used for the survey before the samples are sent to UNH for confirmation.

Discussions for TWI funding assistance can be discussed at a future date per Gerry Hokanson.

## **HEALTH AGENT REPORT**

- Water complaint/private well water request – 44 Rogers Farm Rd.

Ms. Valley provided an update—under Title 5 regulations, Mr. Rogers cannot install a well because he would be limited to one bedroom per 10,000 square feet of land area. Mr. Rogers's lot is 19,000 square feet, so he is limited to one bedroom. Also, it would not be possible to get the separation of 100 feet between wells and abutting septic systems. This information has been reviewed with Mr. Rogers and Mr. Chris Cassidy, Tisbury Water Superintendent.

Mr. Cassidy is going to contact Mr. Rogers about the water quality. Mr. Rogers also asked about installing an irrigation well, which is allowed according to Ms. Valley.

- COVID update

Ms. Valley reported that the case numbers seem to be steady in the 20s. She's had conversations with other health agents about lifting the mask mandate and reverting to an advisory. All health agents agree that the three down-island towns must be consistent with the rule. Ms. Valley suggested waiting for the vaccination approval for the 5–11-year-old population. If the Island's average daily caseload could hold at four or less for two weeks and vaccines are approved for 5–11-year-olds, it would make sense to consider lifting the mask mandate. The health agents are meeting tomorrow, and Ms. Valley asked for the commissioners' thoughts on this proposal. It is believed that as residents start coming inside due to cold and inclement weather and holiday parties, the Island could see an influx of cases. The commissioners agreed to three cases for two weeks. Ms. Valley will share this information with the other health agents.

- Nitrogen regulations/DCPC process

Ms. Valley reviewed her notes from the public hearing, the latest of which was on October 12, 2021. Two issues had no public comments—

- The commissioners voted unanimously to adopt the proposed change to the maximum occupancy in the Coastal District from five to six bedrooms at two occupants per bedroom.
- The commissioners voted unanimously to adopt the following update--adding a division of land within a restricted area may not provide for an increase in the number of bedrooms beyond that allowed for the original lot; the divided lot size shall dictate the total allowable number of bedrooms.
- The last proposed change was the definition of a bedroom, which received the most public comments. There was some discussion at the previous meeting to add the phrase "notwithstanding insufficient privacy." However, Ms. Valley noted that adding said phrase will invalidate the provision that a wall could be opened to seven feet to prevent privacy,

making it not a bedroom. Therefore, the commissioners voted to adopt the proposed definition unanimously.

- Hoarding case

The property owner was given the approval to access the dwelling for three hours per day for cleaning on the condition that the windows and doors remain open for ventilation. Ms. Valley conducted a site visit yesterday and found that the property owner had made some progress. As soon as more stuff is cleared out, Mr. Ross Seavey, Tisbury Building Inspector, will be invited to inspect the home for other potential issues.

- Flu Clinic

The annual flu clinic was held last weekend. Four hundred people were vaccinated. Vaccines ran out just as the clinic ended at noon. The Oak Bluffs School worked well as a venue, but it is not ideal for a large clinic. It would be best for a small-scale distribution.

## **ASSISTANT HEALTH AGENT UPDATE**

- OpenGov

There have been some glitches and confusion internally and externally in the roll-out of OpenGov for the annual permitting process. Therefore, a meeting is planned with Mr. Ross Seavey and Ms. Alex BenDavid to clarify and synergize the process.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- Review of BOH (Draft) Regulations for Public Hearing deliberation (see minutes from October 19, 2021)
  - 1.2 - The commissioners voted unanimously to eliminate this paragraph.
  - 1.3 – No action required.
  - 1.4 – No action required.
  - 1.5 – The commissioners voted to accept the proposed change.
  - 1.6 – No action required.
  - 5.2 – No further changes are required.
  - 5.5 – No further changes are required.

The minutes of October 19, 2021 were approved unanimously.

The public hearing will be held on November 16, 2021. A venue is to be determined.

## **BILLS AND PERMITS FOR APPROVAL**

With no further business to conduct, the commissioners adjourned at 5:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Soushek  
Administrative Secretary

Document(s)

The Board of Health commissioners accept the meeting minutes, dated October 26, 2021, as presented.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_  
5E84E4309F87438...