

Stockbridge Board of Health

March 10, 2023

Minutes

Present: Henry Schwerner (zoom) , Charles Kenny, John Loidodice, James Wilusz Director, Jonathan Pierce, The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kenny at 10:00 AM.

New business: Dr. Kenny gave a short overview of the roll call vote process. 1st order of business was approval of meeting minutes from 6/16/22. Hank asked that his first name be fixed. A motion from John to approve minutes, as amended, seconded by Dr. Kenny. Roll call vote approval of minutes.

The second order of business was citizen speak time. Chair Kenny went over citizen speak time rules for the public. Denise Forbes from Housatonic spoke on her experience on Housatonic Water Works (HWW) and spoke about her frustration and thank the Stock BOH for at least speaking publicly about the ongoing water issues. She said that she is being told the water is safe to drink and was tested but that she had her water independently tested for HAA5 and HWW does not test for HAA5. The lab told her it was in exceedance. Also spoke on the frustration of being charged and there is no oversight. Bill Nappo lives at 1081 Main Street in Housatonic spoke that he submitted a citizen's petition for GB to take over the HWW systems and asked to see if Stockbridge can support his effort. Debra Herman resides in Housatonic and spoke that many people are affected by the brown water. Users are not aware that HAA5 causes cancer and are not aware of the health risks. Even if GB takes over the HWW it won't immediately fix the issues and they need to be accountable. Fred Coleman lives in Stockbridge and is a current user of HHW. There are 12 Stockbridge residents on the water system and he has to privately purchase water for usage and his filters only last 3 weeks. Mya Shulta (sp) for Housatonic spoke about her experiences with the HWW. Elizabeth Rockefeller lives in Great Barrington spoke about the ongoing HHW for 50 years and has been progressively getting worse over the years.

Jim asked the board to move agenda #4 next due to people being in the audience that wanted to discuss. Hank made a motion and seconded by John to adjust the items. Roll call vote to approve. Dr. Kenny opened up the conversation among board members and Director Wilusz gave a short overview about communication with Stockbridge and asked the town for a list of residents served on the system. Jim explained that Stockbridge does not have any jurisdiction over HWW as it resides in Great Barrington. Dr. Kenny gave an overview of HAA5 which is a byproduct of chemicals used to assist with disinfection. He spoke to DEP bureau chief and received a synopsis of their conversations. DEP recommends testing per quarter. DEP has asked for a list from HHW of remediation actions to help reduce the HAA5 levels. DEP is working with HHW on addressing discoloration and other areas of concern. He is still concerned that there are Stockbridge residents on this system. John who also sits on the Sewer and Water Commission has concerns as well and has 23 families in Stockbridge on the system and he did not recall any concerns previously from residents but will take any complaint seriously. Jim spoke that we have met with town counsel and have advised us on our role and jurisdiction and that it is limited. Jim mentioned a thought about sending a letter to Great Barrington to include the town on any correspondence coming from HHW and that we could be a liaison to town residents on future information. Dr Kenny asked for a motion from the board to send a letter. Hank made a motion seconded by John, roll call vote approved to authorize Jim to send a letter. John explained that Stockbridge controls the distribution lines but that is about it and would be willing to bring an idea about rerouting lines to the Sewer Commission but laid out concerns on cost. Jim asked the board to see if there were resources or grants to help Stockbridge residents on filters.

Dr Kenny moved to speak about the Opioid settlement funds distribution. Jim gave an overview on how the settlement funds came to be and what other towns are doing. Many towns are voting to give these settlement funds to the Rural Recovery Center as they are the organization that is best suited to use the funds to serve the residents in need. The state is asked that towns should seriously think about pooling their money to ensure the best outcome. Rural Recovery Center has submitted a formal request to the Town of Stockbridge Board of Health. Dr. Kenny asked that no action be made until next meeting to give the board time to review the ask.

Jim gave an update on department operations that include the budget, town meeting, update on Pinewood housing complaint, other housing update on Main Street, spoke about the Household Hazardous Waste event schedule for May 20, 2023.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Kenny at 11:05 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

James Wilusz, RS, Executive Director

Cc: Town Clerk; Town Administrator; Selectboard