Board of Health
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Wednesday September 2, 2015
6:30 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

Call to Order:
Chairman Patrick Menges called the meeting to order at 6:31 P.M.

Present:
Patrick Menges and Dean Cronin

Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited by all.

Approve Minutes:

Motion Dean Cronin to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 5, 2015, step down second Patrick Menges. Is there any discussion, if not
All in favor Aye Motion Passes
Motion Dean Cronin to approve the special meeting minutes of August 25, 2015, step down second Patrick Menges. Is there any discussion, if not?
All in Favor Aye Motion Passes

Correspondence:
Chairman Patrick Menges read a lengthy bulletin from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency regarding Power Outage Safety Tips.

Chairman Menges also read (2) two bulletins from the Health and Homeland Alert Network. The first dated August 18, 2015 regarding positive West Nile Virus mosquito samples in Fall River and Somerset and the second bulletin dated August 25, 2015 stating that positive samples of West Nile Virus were also found in Swansea and Somerset Massachusetts.

Selectman Dean Cronin read the announcements:

Old Business:

Options for a Public Health Director: Mr. Ron O'Connor Southeast Regional Director from both the Office of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Office of Local and Regional Health. He stated that the Office of Local and Regional Health was created about (2) two years ago to assist the 351 cities and towns in the state that all meet their public health challenges differently. The levels of support they receive varies with funding and the capacity of the staff to deliver the services that are needed. Massachusetts is unique in that we have the most complex public health system at the local level in the country.

He stated one of the ways they look to address that is through what is called a regionalization initiative. It is to support the formation of public health districts, relationships among communities, agreements among communities to provide public health services to achieve economies of scale, more efficiency and better services without losing local antonym. These initiatives are merely shared service arrangements to promote public health at the local level.

Many of the small towns can't support their public health obligations with the funding level that they have, the staffing level that they have and services can be better delivered through the economies of scale that you get with other communities sharing.

Mr. O'Connor stated that public health is challenged by a lack of understanding of what it does and if it is doing its work the health of the public is well protected and people in the community are healthy and our restaurants are inspected on a regular basis ect.. Your efforts here to recognize and to take your responsibilities seriously and to address the need for improved public health services should be commended.

Mr. O'Connor handed out packets that include background material on the formation of public health districts. The coalition is supporting and encouraging local public health to move forward with its interests in meeting its obligations for the statue for public health services. He explained what was enclosed in the packet and told to Board to contact him with any questions.

Chairman Menges spoke about what the board was shooting for and I think it is number (1) one is someone who can guide the Board and provide continuity in spite of changes in membership. No matter how the Board is constituted be it Selectmen or a separate board. The membership of a political policy making body is apt to change. The members will not be compensated in such a way that they will make a career of it and if it remains an elected board the membership will change. We have to be prepared to have continuity. The Board needs professional guidance no matter who the members are so that if we are pursuing a particular initative it is not lost simply because the board members change, that's one. The other part is the individual who provides the guidance and is engaged in these initiative's we would like to have the same person wear the hat of supervising the operations of the health department. To oversee the training, reports, payrolls, be able to write a consolidated budget for the health department and ensure that the support is there for things like administrative warrants and support our personnel in the different facets of public health.

As far as separating the boards I'm ambivalent concerning whether or not to separate the boards. I don't think that a separate board is a guarantee of a better board but I will say if we began the process today of creating a separate elected board it would take (2) two years. An annual town meeting has to vote to place it on an election ballot. Between June of 2016 a lot of time would elapse while we are still waiting for a vote on a ballot to take place in April of 2017. We have a good year and three quarters here where we have to have some kind of over sight in this department in its present state run by the Board of Selectmen. As far as the inter-municipal aspect I think what you have said is very important. I wouldn't be surprised to find at all among our counterparts in neighboring towns a similar honesty about the need and I believe that we could all benefit by exploring a shared service. If each of us pitched in and had a piece of the director so to speak we could provide a reasonable salary.

Mr. O'Connor stated that the minimum population size that the coalition thinks would be an effective public health district is 50,000 people.

Chairman Menges asked Mr. O'Connor about sending a letter of interest asking for an expression of interest, if any, or inviting some response from our sister communities or should we visit them? Can you suggest a better approach maybe we should simply ask them if they would be interested in exploring this with us.

Mr. O'Connor I would ask them and he stated that he would be happy to meet with representatives from each board. As communities express interest I be happy to meet with each town individually. The more of these public health districts or intermunicipal agreements in support of public health that we see the better it is for the commonwealth overall. I would be happy to give the board a draft letter and give you some documents that might help you to make that case.

Chairman Menges: We cannot thank you enough for your time tonight. Let the record show that we will act to invite Dighton's sister communities' in the area to engage in a conversation with us about possibly engaging in a regional or inter-municipal director of public health based upon a draft letter that Ron O'Connor will supply.

New Business:

Minimum Standards of Fitness for Human Habitation

Chairman Menges stated that the Board has referred to town counsel the question of whether or not non-criminal enforcement automatically follows from the CMR. You have the noncriminal disposition that you use in Freetown and what we are verifying with town counsel right now is that provision is available to us to implement without any further action by this Board or a town meeting. Attorney Gay has told us today that he will have a response for us soon.

Health Inspector Kevin Bernardo requested that the response be forwarded to him as well.

Inspector Reports:

Food Inspector Kevin Bernardo stated that the administrative assistant had informed him that (2) two food establishments that have not completed all there paperwork and are operating without the proper licenses. He asked the board to send correspondence to them. He stated that in the past the Board sent an officer with letter in hand saying 2-3 days to comply or they couldn't operate.

Motion Dean Cronin step down second Patrick Menges to prepare a letter for delivery in hand warning of possible license suspension if the requirements documents for licensing are not received. Is there any further discussion? If not

All in Favor	Aye
Opposed	No

The Ayes have it. Motion Carries.

Public Input:
None

Adjournment:
Motion Dean Cronin second Patrick Menges to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 PM

All in Favor	**Aye**
Patrick Menges	Dean V. Cronin
Chairman	Member

Respectfully Submitted
Rosalind Grassie/ Administrative Assistant