

Board of Health Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2023

Present: Holliston Board of Health (BoH): Josh Mann (*Chairperson*)
Jay Leary (*Vice-Chairperson*)
Peter Liffiton (*member*)

Scott Moles, *Health Director/Agent, and Holliston Animal Inspector*
Kristin Abraham, *Health Department Clerk*
Ann Adams, *Health Department Clerk*

Dona Walsh, *Holliston Animal Inspector and Animal Control Officer*

Cherie Hafford, *Holliston Agricultural Commission Chairperson*
Nancy Dubin, *Holliston Agricultural Commission Vice-Chairperson*
Diana Phillips, *Holliston Agricultural Commission Clerk*

Josh Mann, BoH, Chairperson, opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.
Scott Moles read the Remote Participation Statement.

Board of Health roll call: Josh Mann – present, Jay Leary - present, Peter Liffiton - present

Public Comment: None

Holliston Agricultural Commission (AgCom):

- Cherie Hafford, chairperson of the newly repopulated AgCom, thanked the BoH for working together for what is best for Holliston.
- Cherie wondered why the BoH felt Holliston needs animal regulations. Scott explained that the Health Department gets complaints from residents related to rodents and nuisance farm animals. The AgCom could help the Select Board, Zoning Board and BoH with resolving these animal complaints.
- Cherie doesn't want to step on any toes. Dog complaints belong to the Animal Control Officers (ACO). Scott explained that some complaints can be resolved by other Boards. Farming issues can sometimes be resolved best by an AgCom as they are experienced farmers, helping other farmers. It is important to respect that Holliston is a Right-to-Farm town.
- Cherie asked about the Animal Registration Form and why the Health Department was involved collecting them. Scott explained that the Animal Registration Form is information for the Animal Inspectors. Scott is one of the 3 BoH appointed Animal Inspectors, with Dona Walsh and Justine Grassey. The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, Division of Animal Health requires the local Boards of Health inspect and report all farm animals annually in the Barn Book. The Health Department does the paperwork for the BoH.
- Cherie asked if animal registration was required. Scott said there is no penalty for not registering, but animal owners in Town may get a visit from the Animal Inspector.
- Cherie inquired if there was any difference to the State with a large commercial farm versus a small "6 chicken" farm? Scott said no difference as far as the Barn Book is concerned; animal welfare is the State's focus regarding public health, disease outbreaks or emergency evacuations.
- Cherie asked why bees aren't in the Barn Book. Scott explained that the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, Division of Animal doesn't require bees in the Barn Book.

- Cherie asked if there would be an animal registration fee. Scott said there was no farm animal registration fee in the foreseeable future. Some towns require fees for farm animals, but Holliston doesn't. Another example, some towns require fees for submitting Title 5 inspection reports, but Holliston doesn't.
- Dog license fees are paid to the Town Clerk. The Animal Control Officers (Dona Walsh & Justine Grassey, appointed by the Select Board) enforce the dog regulations (in the Town By-laws).
- Cherie asked which residents received Animal Registration Forms. Scott explained that the Animal Registration Form is available to all residents on the Town website, and was sent to some animal owners in Town.
- Cherie asked what issues the BoH feels regulations would help with. Scott explained that we get rooster and rodent complaints. Dona and Justine are ACO's for Ashland and Holliston. Ashland has Animal Regulations. When there is a noisome rooster complaint they have a regulation that they can enforce. Regulations make sense, and give the ACO's something to work with.
- Cherie felt the draft regulations were an overreach regarding space requirement for certain animals. Scott explained the regulations were drafted based on animal regulations from surrounding towns. The AgCom should generate regulations that work for Holliston.
- Jay suggested the AgCom generate animal regulations they think works for Holliston, so it doesn't inhibit Holliston's Right-to-Farm policy. Now that the AgCom is repopulated they can assist the BoH, ACO's, Select and Zoning Boards in addressing farm animal issues. If there is a new animal owner in Town, the AgCom is best at guiding them collaboratively to ensure vibrant farms in Town.
- Josh agreed with Jay.
- Cherie had no further questions and asked if other AgCom members had any.
- Diana Phillips said she was wondering if there are "bad players" in Town.
- Dona Walsh said there have been complaints of neighborhoods with small lots that have issues with farm animals not in adequate housing, roosters stored in a basement, and a goat in a storage facility, for examples. Having a rooster policy would be helpful. There have been people complaining about roosters for 2 years. Without animal regulations there can be little resolution.
- Cherie said Holliston is a Right-to-Farm town so animal noises are to be expected.
- Dona said regulations help animal owners understand how to mitigate noise, and help rooster owners in close neighborhoods understand the effect rooster noise at 4 AM.
- Cherie said the AgCom will try to figure out how best to proceed.
- Dona thanked the AgCom for reforming and getting together with the BoH, as they fill an important role in Town.
- Cherie thanked Dona and the BoH.
- Peter said he understood that the draft could seem over the top, but when dealing with the many situations, the intent was straight forward.
- Peter asked if Zoning regulations wouldn't resolve some of the animal complaints; requiring specific acreage for owning certain animals. Scott explained folks with small lots, for instance half of an acre own chickens. Jay said that people can own 5 chickens on a half-acre and make it work.
- Scott said he could attend the next AgCom meeting if that would help.
- The BoH thanked the AgCom for a productive meeting.

Millis request for Title V services: Scott explained that the Millis Health Director John McVeigh requested Scott's services as a Health Agent for 89 Spencer Street as the property owner is a member of the Millis Board of Health. Millis doesn't have an alternate Title 5 Agent like we have Paul Saulnier. The Board agreed with Travis Ahern, Town Administrator that it was good to help our neighbor towns.

Josh made a motion for Scott to provide Title 5 Agent services for 89 Spencer Street, Millis. Jay seconded. Roll Call: Josh Mann- Aye, Jay Leary-Aye, Peter -Aye Passed.

COVID-19 Update:

- There is zero active cases (reported to the State) of COVID-19 in Town bringing the cumulative total to 3102.
- The Health Department has 15 cartons of COVID-19 test kits (180 tests per carton) to distribute to residents free of charge. They are available at Town Hall, Library, Senior Center, Pantry Shelf and other locations.
- Scott said that the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has reduced the requirements for tracking COVID-19 cases as of April 1st. Scott has reached out to Salmon VNA about this change. This will reduce the costs that are currently being covered by the American Rescue Plan Act.
- Remote participation of Board meeting has been extended until 2025.

Housing:

- **164 Westfield Drive:** Scott will be going to Housing Court tomorrow with the Assistant Attorney General regarding receivership of the property as the owner died and there are no heirs.
- **33 Chery Lane:** Sheri Parsons is setting up to resolve the issues at that property.
- **53 Wingate Road:** Scott spoke with the new owner who will be upgrading the septic and fixing the house. Scott will keep the Board posted.

Mosquito Control: Larvae control began on April 3rd. There are summer jobs available at the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project; they are looking for biologists.

Soil Tests: Scott has witnessed 14 soil tests so far this year and has 3 more scheduled.

Minutes: Josh made a motion to approve the BoH meeting minutes from March 28, 2023. Jay seconded. Roll Call: Josh Mann- Aye, Jay Leary-Aye, Peter -Aye Passed.

Bills: The following bill was discussed and approved:

Josh made a motion to approve the Salmon VNA bill for: Total = \$971.50

All are COVID cases, paid by American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA)

Jay seconded. Roll Call: Josh Mann- Aye, Jay Leary-Aye, Peter-Aye. Passed.

Board Comment: Jay thanked Scott for his efforts with the AgCom.

Josh made a motion to adjourn the BoH meeting at 7:44 PM. Jay seconded.

Roll Call: Josh Mann- Aye, Jay Leary-Aye, Peter -Aye Passed.

Respectfully:

Ann Adams, Health Department Clerk

Approval Date: 4-25-23