

Shutesbury Board of Health  
September 17, 2025, 7 pm  
Virtual meeting

Members present: Catherine Hilton, chair; Wm Levine, Norene Pease, Garrett Simonsen.

Members absent: Arleen Read

Guest: Mike Hugo, Massachusetts Association of Health Boards

Minutes of previous meeting were approved by all present (motion Garrett, second Wm).

**Discussion:**

A Montague Road resident has requested an air quality evaluation of dusty conditions on the road during the drought. The board agreed that Cat would respond saying that such an evaluation is beyond the scope of this board and suggesting that the request be taken to the Select Board and that the person take measures to mitigate dust exposure (closed windows, air purifier, etc.).

Norene reported on the recent actions of the Collaborative: two new inspectors have been hired and are in the process of getting their certifications: Jim Albert, full-time, has a degree in public health; Anna Daford, part-time, has a master's degree in chemistry and some experience with battery storage system failures. Corey Hartman is applying for the full-time position in Greenfield but according to Norene will still be available to Shutesbury.

Norene further said that SAPHE funding from the state is guaranteed through FY 27, and that an advocacy day to lobby the legislature is scheduled for October 23.

Cat reported on the status of the health agent search within the district: no action has been taken, no candidate has been interviewed, not all the applications have been distributed, and no future meetings have been scheduled. Shutesbury has paid in advance for six months of services, and three months have elapsed in which no services have been received; leaving the district and relying on the collaborative for services is a real possibility (so is asking for our money back). Norene said in order for the collaborative to receive funds from towns, a separate account within the collaborative would have to be opened but she believes that this is possible.

Garrett reported on upcoming MAPHCO meetings with FRCOG staff to review proposals for this preparedness grant period. There were enough changes to require new bids on coordination services and on management of project-based services relating to a coalition-wide exercise. The previous provider of coordination services, RSI, has not bid on either of the two contracts. MAPHCO's updated bylaws, which Garrett wrote together with Ryan Paxton, call for moving away from a steering committee in the direction of monthly meetings of the full committee, attended by a delegate from each town. These new bylaws have been adopted by other coalitions as well. Garrett is our delegate but an alternate has yet to be identified.

Mike Hugo joined the meeting at 7:30. He spoke generally about the need for public health to be involved at the earliest stages of any permitting process for Battery Energy Storage Systems and said that the local Board of Health can prevent such installations and can even stop a project that has been approved by other boards. He said MAHB can provide scientific evidence of the dangers inherent in these systems, that it has now been included in state-level discussions as guidance is being prepared, and that he would be able to provide language for a BOH regulation very soon. If we want to base a regulation on aquifer protection alone, he said, we would need an aquifer study; Cat will ask Al Werner what is available.

A possible joint meeting with the Planning Board is envisioned for after Special Town Meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm. (Norene moved, Garrett seconded, unanimous.)