

Administrator's Report
Board of Health Meeting of September 28, 2023
Report covers from 08/08 – 09/25/2023
Items requiring Board vote are noted with an asterisk ()*

A. Inspection Report Reviews

(1) 51 Lufkin Point Road, Weller, Map 109, Lot 4*

I have reviewed the report for the Title 5 inspection conducted at this property by Jamie Prescott on July 19, 2023. The inspector has noted there are 2 private drinking water wells within 100' of the SAS; however, the inspector provided well water analyses indicating there is no bacteria present in either well. The septic system does not meet the failure criteria and therefore passes the Title 5 inspection.

Recommendation: I recommend the Board of Health send a letter to the property owner stating we are in agreement with the determination of the inspector, Jamie Prescott and that the system passes the Title 5 inspection conducted on July 19, 2023. The system is designed to serve a 3-bedroom dwelling and is not designed to accommodate a garbage grinder. In addition, an operations & maintenance contract shall be on file to ensure annual inspections for the life of the system.

(2) 166 Conomo Point Road, Walker, Map 108, Lot 45*

I have reviewed the report for the Title 5 inspection conducted at this property by Jonathan Granz on July 31, 2023. The inspector has noted that the tight tank is functioning as intended and passes the official Title 5 inspection.

Recommendation: I recommend the Board of Health send a letter to the leaseholder stating we are in agreement with the determination of the inspector, Jonathan Granz and that the tight tank serving this dwelling passes the Title 5 inspection conducted on July 31, 2023. The tight tank is designed to serve a 3-bedroom dwelling and the pumping contract with Essex Septic Service is current.

(3) 208 Southern Avenue, Warner, Map 209, Lot 13*

I have reviewed the report for the Title 5 inspection conducted at this property by Michael DeCosta on September 7, 2023. The inspector reported that the system passes the official Title 5 inspection, but failed to include all required information in the report. Specifically, the drawing does not show the location of the private well, and it does not show where the water line enters the dwelling. In addition, the inspector noted that the ESWHT is measured at 4' as shown on the "soil logs on design plans"; however, the soil logs at this location show the ESWHT ranging from 12" to 36". The inspector will need to provide the date of the design plans referenced in his report, as well as the depth of the bottom of the leach pits, to ensure groundwater is not interfacing with the SAS.

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Recommendation: I recommend the Board of Health send a letter to the property owner stating we have received the report for the official Title 5 inspection at this location, conducted by Michael DeCosta and dated September 7, 2023. The report cannot be accepted as submitted. A sketch included as part of the Title 5 inspection report is required to show the location of the private well serving this dwelling, as well as the location of the water line entering the dwelling. In addition, the information pertaining to the estimated seasonal high groundwater is incomplete and/or inaccurate.

B. Private Wells

(1) 35 Lufkin Point Road, McKeen, Map 109, Lot 26

The owners of this property have submitted a well drilling application due to their existing (seasonal) well failing. The approved location was determined to be unacceptable due to the water being too brackish. I conducted a site visit with George and Amos Rollins to find an alternate location that still met the setback requirements outlined in Title 5 and in our local well regulations.

Recommendation: None at this time.

C. Septic Inspections and Other Field Work

(1) 158 John Wise Avenue, Storey, Map 106, Lot 2

I witnessed soil testing at this property in anticipation of possible new construction.

(2) 16 Lowe Hill Road, Hersey, Map 134, Lot 31

I inspected the distribution box replacement for the septic system serving this property.

D. Complaints and Other Updates

(1) Tobacco Compliance Check – Essex Energy North*

During a recent routine compliance check conducted by the North Shore/Cape Ann Tobacco Policy Program, Essex Energy North had a sale to a minor, in violation of M.G.L. Chapter 270, section 6. This is considered the first violation for this retailer, and the penalties outlined in both the MGL and our local regulation include a \$1000 fine and a 3-day suspension of the tobacco sales permit. We are required to hold a hearing declaring the intent to suspend the

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tobacco sales permit, and we are also required to give the retailer an opportunity to speak or otherwise provide testimony at this hearing.

Recommendation: Discussion, and possible vote to institute the minimum penalties of \$1000 fine and 3-day suspension of the tobacco sales permit for Essex Energy North. In the event of a suspension of the tobacco sales permit, the dates of the suspension shall be decided at the hearing and the information provided to the tobacco retailers in writing.

(2) Tobacco Compliance Check – Urvee Corporation*

During a recent routine compliance check conducted by the North Shore/Cape Ann Tobacco Policy Program, Urvee Corporation, d/b/a Schooners Market had a sale to a minor, in violation of M.G.L. Chapter 270, section 6. This is considered the first violation for this retailer, and the penalties outlined in both the MGL and our local regulation include a \$1000 fine and a 3-day suspension of the tobacco sales permit. We are required to hold a hearing declaring the intent to suspend the tobacco sales permit, and we are also required to give the retailer an opportunity to speak or otherwise provide testimony at this hearing.

Recommendation: Discussion, and possible vote to institute the minimum penalties of \$1000 fine and 3-day suspension of the tobacco sales permit for Urvee Corporation. In the event of a suspension of the tobacco sales permit, the dates of the suspension shall be decided at the hearing and the information provided to the tobacco retailers in writing.

(3) Title 5 inspection report review form*

In light of the confusion about the recent request for me to sign an approval letter for a Title 5 inspection, I have been evaluating this process to determine whether there is a more efficient, practical way to approach septic system inspections. The letters currently state that the Board of Health “agrees with the inspector’s determination”, even though the full BoH did not witness the inspection and has not fully reviewed the inspection report.

Recommendation: Discussion on the review process, and consideration of adopting the method that Gloucester, Hamilton, and Rockport have in place – acknowledging when we received the report, the status of the system as reported by the Inspector, and any necessary repairs/changes that are required (as well as the deadline to make these repairs or changes).

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(4) Online Board of Health Permitting*

The majority of the BoH permit applications are now available online, and we will be sending out renewal reminders within the next 2 weeks with instructions on how to navigate this new system. As we've recently discussed, we will no longer be receiving paper applications for renewals such as food service (restaurant), septic pumpers, keeping of animals, etc; all information and associated documents will be uploaded online and permits will be generated within OpenGov.

Recommendation: Discussion and evaluation of this process, to determine the most efficient way to review and approve annual permit renewals.

(5) Opioid Settlement Funds*

We have received \$5880.32 in opioid settlement funds to date. These funds are meant to be directed to programs working to address substance use disorder prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery. Examples include mobile intervention/treatment; withdrawal management services; wrap-around services such as job training/placement and childcare; supportive housing; transportation to treatment and recovery; and mental health first aid training.

Recommendation: Discussion. Many of the allowable expenses are cost-prohibitive for Essex, considering our population size and the funds we have received (and will receive), since we don't already have a structure in place to add on to. It may make sense to see if we can partner with an organization such as ONESTOP or the Regional Youth Prevention Network (which we are already part of) to supplement the services these organizations are already providing.

(6) Flu Clinics etc

Our 2 primary flu vaccine clinics will be held on October 5 from noon to 2pm at the Senior Center, and on October 21 from 10am to 1pm at Town Hall (during Clam Fest). I have also been speaking with Jessie Palm regarding having a Wellness Table at Clam Fest, as well as with Lacey Nattie regarding ONESTOP Harm Reduction having a table to advertise the services they're able to provide to our residents.

(7) Covid Vaccine

Covid vaccine is now available for pre-order from our supplier, at a cost of ~\$150/dose for Moderna. In addition, private insurers have not confirmed a reimbursement rate. At this time, it makes sense to wait rather than order this vaccine, since we only have ~34K in our

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PHN revolving account and it is typically several months before we receive insurance reimbursements.

Recommendation: Discussion.

(8) 92 Southern Avenue, Deus, Map 140, Lot 54-1-2

There are no recent updates on this on-going housing issue. We are currently waiting for a hearing date to be assigned in Housing Court.

(9) 50 Eastern Avenue, Hemeon, Map 136, Lot 32

I conducted a housing inspection at this dwelling in response to concerns expressed by EPD. A violation letter was issued to the property owner, and he is working with the Building Inspector to determine what permits are required prior to making the repairs. Our Animal Health Inspector is working with the occupant to obtain a Keeping of Animals permit, as well as ensuring the chickens on the property are not causing a nuisance by attracting rodents. Following this inspection I also received an additional comment/statement of concern that there were chickens living inside the dwelling, but I found no evidence of this during the inspection.

Recommendation: None at this time.

(10) Eastern Essex Regional Public Health Coalition updates

We have conducted a first round of interviews for the open Shared Public Health Nurse position, and will likely be conducting second interviews during the first week of October. Jessie and I also met with the MERSD Superintendent and other school officials about a possible IMA with the District to allow us to offer social work and public health nursing services through the EERPHC. Since Manchester is not a partner in this coalition, our regional work with school-aged kids and their families is limited to Essex Elementary School. If we are able to partner with the District, this would expand our reach and allow Jessie and the soon-to-be hired PHN to work together with our community partners in the Middle and High School.

Recommendation: None at this time. I am currently waiting on a response from Hamilton, Wenham, and Rockport regarding revising the IMA to allow MERSD to partner with us.

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(11) MHOA Mentorship Program

The Massachusetts Health Officers Association (MHOA) has introduced a new pilot program to pair experienced public health professionals with those who are new in the field. I have been selected as a public health mentor, and will be working with Marisa Morello, the new Assistant Health Director for the Town of Bedford. Our first meeting will be at the Annual MHOA conference, scheduled for mid- October, where we will be going over her goals and objectives for the course of the 9-month program.

(12) Covid Wastewater Data

Gloucester hasn't updated their website with new covid wastewater data since June, so they may have ceased tracking it. Essex County data is below, with the solid line showing the county concentration (copies/mL) and the dotted line showing the national concentration (copies/mL)

