



## **Acton Board of Health**

Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2023

7:30 PM.

VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS VIA ZOOM

### **Present:**

Virtual Members Present: Mark Conoby, Dr. William Taylor, William McInnis and Michael Kreuze. Dr. Rekha Singh was not present.

Virtual Associate Members Present: None

Virtual Staff Present: Sheryl Ball-Health Director, Matt Murphy, Jill Salamon, Public Health Nurse, Matthew Dow and Felix Garcia.

Others Present: Himaja Nagireddy, Select Board Liaison, Alma Sandman, Josh Lariscy, Nicole Graham, Michael Schulze, Helena Chan, Janice Ward, Mark Buxbaum, Kimberly Kuhn, Erich Kronewett, Rachel Rubin, Stephen Liu, Aam, Alissa Nicol, William Klauer, Rachel Wulsin, Marcy Hoban, JDM, Kathleen Pagano, Sharon Tchon Gruet, Ed, Elaine Newsham, David Martin, Teri Henderson, Tony G, Michelle Paquette, Cynthia Spitzenberger, Mohamed Kassanali, Rachel Rubin, Mark Kellenberger, Michael, Kinina Kong, TM Ryan, Nick Warner, Anglea Morrison, Rob Ritchie, Michael Bowes, Nigam Trivedi, Drew Vardakis, Dudgeon, Gari Gatwood, TDM, Lyn Ferguson, Mary Lynn Miller, Mike, Tris W, Roxanne Warniers, Angela Morrison, Elizabeth, Fran Arsenault, Michael Bowes, Michele Holland, Michelle Paquette, Sharon, Nathanais Madea. Alyssa Rautenberg and Martin Pitwood.

### **1. Opening**

Chairman – Mark Conoby opened the meeting at 7:33 P.M. A script was read that was provided by the Town stating why the meetings are virtual and this meeting of the Board of Health was called to order.

### **2. Regular Business**

#### **Colleagues**

#### **Board of Health Future Agenda Items:**

The Board asked staff to invite the Acton Water District to a future meeting and would like to hear an update on sodium and PFAS levels in our water. The Board also would like Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project to attend a future meeting as well.



## **Health Director Update**

Ms. Ball stated that she met with local business owners today to hear feedback on Town processes and was provided helpful information to help our local businesses navigate opening in Acton. Ms. Ball also mentioned that Acton received another allotment of Covid Home test kits and they are available free of charge.

The Board stated that President Biden announced all COVID sanctions will be ending and questioned whether Acton has any in place. Ms. Ball stated that its been quite a few months but she would check to ensure that the Board is consistent with both Federal and State.

## **Nursing – Update**

Ms. Salamon was un able to attend this evening so Ms. Ball presented her update.

## **Flu Numbers**

2/1-2/7: one reported case

1/1/23-1/31/23: 34 reported cases

## **COVID Numbers**

2/1 - 2/7: 10 reported cases

1/1 - 1/31: 72 reported cases

No information regarding variants of concern on MAVEN which means none of the Acton cases have been tested for variants.

## **Robbins Brook**

Currently has no positive residents.

One positive staff, close contacts have been tested.

## **Life Care Acton**

Currently no positive residents. Last positive was 1/18/23, fully recovered.

December - January they had 26 cases. All were mild illness or no symptoms and fully recovered with negative tests on days 6-8. No one went to the hospital.

Currently one positive staff member but they were on vacation and did not have any contacts at Life Care.

I spoke with Chris Foyle, Executive Director. They are working with Omnicare (pharmacy- part of CVS) and MADPH to get their own fridge that meets the requirements so they can have single unit dosing of Pfizer vaccine.

**Hazardous Materials Control Permit Application– Continued from 1/17/23 – Bluewave - 100 Discovery Way.**

Ms. Ball stated that at the last Board of Health meeting, questions were posed to Blue Wave and those responses are in your Board packet and also located on docushare. Ms. Ball stated that



both the Board of Health and the Select board asked to have the trees that are proposed to be removed flagged and that has been done but there is still some question about two larger trees which both have been flagged just in case. Mr. Lariscy, representing Blue Wave went over BlueWaves responses to the BOH questions and indicated that Blue Wave will agree to those conditions. Mr. Lariscy also stated that Nick Warner, representing the Energy Safety Response Group (ESRG) is present this evening to discuss battery safety and the emergency response plan. Mr. Warner stated that his company would recommend that the Fire Department have 4-5 handheld gas meters as well as thermal imaging cameras. Mr. Lariscy stated that Bluewave could assist the Fire Department with purchasing any equipment or gear that is identified in the emergency response plan that the Fire Department does not possess. Mr. Warner stated his company has a non-certified testing lab but they do have one of the only large scale energy storage sites and he spoke to some tests he has conducted on these types of batteries. Mr. Warner stated that he recently set fire to these batteries by drilling holes into the batteries and using a methane burner similar to a small rocket engine to ignite the batteries. Mr. Warner further stated that during the testing a construction crew approximately one quarter mile away from the testing site complained about odors during that fire so they were given sensors which determined that the odor was diesel from their construction vehicles and not from the fire. Mr. Warner further stated that all fires are toxic, however, he believes the fire burning from these batteries is no worse than a structure fire in terms of off gas emissions and stated he has not seen anything of concern while testing these batteries in a fire scenario. Ms. Nagireddy, Select Board liaison stated that the Select Board is awaiting Board of Health approval prior to their vote to see what the Board of Health decides for safety conditions.

Mr. Conoby asked that any public speaking tonight to ask new questions only to keep their comments to a minimum so that we can accommodate all that wish to talk. Matt Murphy from the Town will be assisting staff with fielding concerns from the public.

The public and Board raised the following concerns:

1. The Board questioned if alarms are both local and remote? It was stated that need to have some sort of strobe and alarm at the site and also questioned if an alarm signal would go directly to local emergency services plus the remote monitored location? Mr. Lariscy stated that any alarms would be signaled to both the remote and local emergency services.
2. Residents are still concerned with the location close to prison, schools, residences and businesses and how an evacuation may take place. The Acton Police and Fire would be the primary on any potential evacuation. Mr. Warner stated that they have never been asked to include a shelter in place in all the years he has been doing these emergency response plans and have conducted hundreds of medium and large scale fire tests going back to 2016 and have collected a lot of data and stated that have not seen anything in the off gas that would be of concern. Mr. Warner further stated that these batteries actually burn cleaner than a plastic fire.
3. The residents also asked where these batteries are produced and it was stated China.
4. The residents also asked for clarification on failure rate of these batteries and also stated that the town is not ready for this technology. Mr. Lariscy clarified that the incidents of



battery failure is per 1 million operating hours, not per 1 million units or a 1 million systems.

5. It was confirmed that the tenants of 100 Discovery Way were notified about this proposed project.
6. A concern was raised about what Mr. Warner stated regarding how these batteries burn in the event of a fire and that the gases aren't toxic. Mr. Warner clarified that based on all the data available to industry to date, a fire from these batteries is not worse than any other that the fire department deals with on a regular basis in terms of off gas emissions. Mr. Warner further stated that any odor present is typically ethylene carbonate, or dimethyl carbonate.
7. It was asked if BlueWave plans to sell these once installed. Mr. Lariscy stated that is not BlueWaves intention.
8. The Board clarified that they would require and O & M plan to include Operations, Maintenance and 24/7 Monitoring which would be subject to review and approval by the Health Division prior to permitting.
9. A resident also questioned where the sound study was conducted as they are concerned that the ambient will be different once the trees are cut down. The Board added to the sound study condition to reflect that it be done again once the trees are cut down.
10. A resident also brought up the time it would take for a technician to arrive on site and was concerned with the length of time.
11. A resident brought up scientific research on the gasses that are emitted in the event of a fire which contradicts what Mr. Warner stated about gasses. Mr. Warner again stated that all fires produce toxic gasses.
12. A resident stated that is thermal runaway were to occur and is put out with water then the water becomes toxic and asked if a retention area for that water is proposed. The Board added a condition to include a retention containment basin for this water. Mr. Warner stated that there are layers in place to hopefully prevent thermal runaway from occurring the system should shut down prior to that occurring as the sensors will detect the heat or gas. It was also noted that these systems are extensively tested prior to approval.

The Board stated that some concerns identified this evening are not within Board of Health control and that they fall under the Select board control. The Board stated that they would like to continue until the next available meeting. The Board was in consensus.

### **Hazardous Materials Control Permit Application– Nexamp – 75 Spruce Street**

Ms. Ball stated that the Health Division has reviewed an application submitted by Nexamp for a proposed energy storage system located at the Boardwalk school at 75 Spruce Street. Ms. Ball stated that they are proposing lithium ion batteries at this site utilizing a few different chemicals. Ms. Ball noted that we are still in need of an emergency response plan, review by Acton Fire and a sound study. Rob Ritchie and Mohammad Kassanali were present from Nexamp and presented the Board with an overview of the project stating that Nexamp has over 15 years of experience. Mr. Ritchie showed the Board the proposed location and also provided technical documents and Tesla's O & M. Mr. Ritchie also spoke about the savings the school will experience as well as



assisting them to be net zero. They also spoke about the proposed mega pack and how they are designed to comply with industry standards and are certified and validated by a nationally tested lab and Tesla's energy storage systems are all over the world. The Board asked if there was an inverter and if a battery storage system is truly needed with this proposal. Mr. Ritchie stated that this project is eligible for net energy metering and they plan to participate in the States' smart program to encourage them to deploy electricity from the energy storage of the batteries. This project is expected to save the schools 3 million dollars over the course of the battery's lifespan. They also are looking to reduce fossil fuels and gas emissions.

The Board reviewed the proposal and mentioned they did not like the location of the proposal due to being near student bus drop off, wetlands and the need for abutter notification to ensure awareness of this proposal. The Board stated they have been provided with proposed conditions and that these should be addressed prior to coming back to the Board for approval. The Board asked staff to reach out to the applicants to make sure that these are done prior to rescheduling. The Board also asked if Nexamp would like to bring a representative from the schools to the next meeting and questioned whether they have done other school projects and it was stated no.

Nexamp asked about the next steps. Ms. Ball stated that they will need to submit the documents the Board spoke about this evening and once Health staff can review it will be rescheduled.

#### **Minutes – January 17, 2023**

On a motion made by Dr. Taylor, seconded by Mr. McNnis, the Board voted to accept the minutes of January 17, 2023. The Chair took roll call and the vote was 4-0.

#### **4. Adjournment**

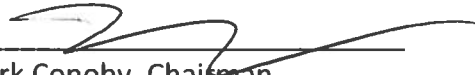
On a motion made by Mr. McNnis, seconded by Dr. Taylor, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 10:14 PM. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

#### **Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting;**

- Town of Acton script for boards and committees opening meeting
- Board of Health agenda
- 100 Discovery Way, Health recommendations, BlueWave response to Board's concerns, application, O&M plans, sound study and risk analysis.
- 75 Spruce Street – Health recommendations, application, Nexamp responses to Board's concerns, SDS sheets,
- Minutes from 2-7-23

Respectfully Submitted,

  
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Sheryl Ball  
Acton Board of Health

  
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Mark Conoby, Chairman  
Acton Board of Health