

**CITY OF SALEM
BOARD OF HEALTH
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
October 9, 2018**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Kirby, Chair, Dr. Jeremy Schiller, Kerry Murphy, Geraldine Yuhas, Datanis Elias

ABSENT: Beth Gerard, City Council Liaison

OTHERS PRESENT: Elizabeth Gagakis, Acting Health Agent, Suzanne Darmody, Public Health Nurse, Maureen Davis, Clerk of the Board, Dr. Brita Lundberg, David Rowand, SAFE, Dr. Nathan Philips, Barbara Warren, Salem Sound Coastwatch, Patti Kelleher, Salem’s Preservation Planner, Councilor Steve Dibble, Michael “Loki” LaChapelle, Owner of Salem Ink Tattoo, Attorney Ed Moriarty, Patrick Schultz and SATV (video to air at a later date)

TOPIC

DISCUSSION/ACTION

1. Call to Order

7:01pm

**2. Dr. Brita Lundberg for SAFE -
Presentation on gas leaks and
health**

Dr. Brita Lundberg came to advocate and speak out about the health risks of natural gas infrastructure. There are direct and indirect effects. She reported that in the Berkshires in April of 2017, more than 2,000 trees were cut down to put in a gas pipeline.

A very water-intensive technology is used. A million gallons of water was used just to hydrostatically test the pipeline before they put it into use.

There has been a natural gas boom in the last 15 years because it was advertised that natural gas was healthier than other sources of energy. It is only clean when it is burned. In truth, coal is cleaner.

In 2002 a new method of drilling, or fracking, was introduced.

Dangerous chemicals are used to extract natural gas. Fracked gas is mostly methane, but also contains lead, radio-active radon, mercury, toluene, benzene and others.

Methane is an unbelievably potent greenhouse gas which has an indirect atmospheric effect and causes climate change/disruption. It has increased to 250% of its pre-industrial levels. We should stabilize and decrease methane production, as in the 1970s with the passage of the Clean Air Act.

There is no safe level of benzene.

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers.

Mercury is corrosive to the materials the pipelines are made of.

The black powder left behind coats the inside of the pipelines and is full of dangerous, unhealthy particulate matter that penetrates deep into the lungs.

The drilling fluid used to extract gas comes down through the water table and will be in the water of whoever lives in the vicinity and contaminate the water.

In a study conducted by Harvard School of Public Health, over 100 volatile organic compounds were found in homes, one of which was benzene.

The chemicals are there throughout the entire process, from drilling to

home delivery.

Venting in kitchens is helpful to lessen the effects in the home and has a protective effect against kids developing asthma.

The direct effects are safety risks such as accidents, like the explosions we heard of recently in Lawrence, Andover and North Andover. There are 60-70 "incidents", or explosions, in our country every year. There is 1,500 psi of pressure in our gas pipelines.

We have 2.5 million miles of pipeline in the U.S., including gathering and transmission pipelines, compared to Canada and Europe who have only one or two pipelines. The pipelines are massive and can measure up to 48 inches in diameter.

In 2004 integrity management was instituted to require operators to re-inspect pipelines every seven years. Limited to only 7%, so only 21,000 miles of pipelines are actually inspected. Not very reassuring.

Compressor Stations increase horsepower and pressure in the pipelines. She referenced a couple of horrific explosions across the country.

This is a public health concern.

We should be incorporating renewable technologies into our construction. At the request of J. Schiller, she will provide the Board with a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and a testimony.

Dr. Philips, a professor at BU, carried out much of the research and mapping of the gas leaks in Salem. He reported that 2.7% of the gas delivered to Salem is leaking. There are a handful of high-volume leaks in Salem.

Dr. Lundberg pointed out that residents can look up the leaks online and can see the leaks on their street.

K. Murphy asked how responsive the gas companies have been to the reports of leaks.

Dr. Lundberg said if it's not inside someone's house, they don't have to do much about it and they haven't since the 1990s. It's a huge problem. J. Schiller asked what roles boards of health have played with innovative ways of addressing the issue.

Dr. Lundberg referred to a summary she provided regarding, for example, gate stations that would be a place where the pressure would change. New construction causes higher risks because when new pipes are put in that is when incidents are most likely to occur. This infrastructure is literally all over our country.

Other countries are pursuing alternative energies. Paris brings hot water in pipes from their local power stations to drive all their heating and other needs all around the city.

S. Dibble said Salem has 250-300 gas leaks. By state law, gas companies have five years to repair a gas leak. Leaks permeate to surrounding areas, including playgrounds where children play. He reported that the air around March Street, which is near the Carlton School, was measured as containing 40-50% gas.

Not only are trees dying, but if trees are replanted where some died from natural gas, the new trees are dying within a year or two because the soil is so contaminated. If the soil is contaminated it can get into our food. The drilling fluid is now also being used in 13 states as a de-icing agent and a dust control agent. Just because we don't live directly near the

drilling sites doesn't mean we are immune.

S. Dibble asked what action the Board of Health will take locally.

J. Schiller suggested we provide a unified front of action with all MA Boards of Health to say this is unacceptable and inquire what kind of action can be taken.

P. Kirby suggested we publicize the leaks on our website to inform people so they have the opportunity to complain about them.

B. Warren said she is on the Lorax Committee and they are protecting the health of trees by not planting trees where there are known gas leaks.

P. Schultz asked if there was any way for municipalities to get the gas company to fix the leaks, at least the worst leaks.

Dr. Philips said it has to be at the State level. Cities have the power to issue permits for new gas work, so that gives them some leverage to push them to do better.

P. Kirby thanked Dr. Lundberg and others for the information.

3. Patti Kelleher - Request for temporary closure of Charter Street Cemetery

P. Kelleher distributed a fact sheet of the Charter Street Burial Ground Restoration Project. The City received a MA Cultural Council grant of \$125,000.00. It is a matching grant, so it is a \$600,000.00 project. They will be putting in a new pathway system to keep people in a contained pattern so they are not walking across gravestones. They will also be adding lighting and benches. Arborists will be pruning and adding trees. The City must get a permit from the State Archeologist at the MA Historical Commission. The archeologist will survey the site to make sure there will be no disturbances of the grave sites, etc. They will need to close the cemetery to visitors for approximately a week to a week and a half. The temporary date is November 11th. Once the archeologist approves the project, it will go out to bid. It will take six to eight months, and possibly up to a year, to complete.

P. Kirby pointed out that when the project begins the Board of Health will need to have a public hearing and post a notice in the newspaper.

D. Elias moved that the Board of Health, exercising its authority as defined in Mass General Law Chapter 114, Section 38, permit the closure of the Charter St. Cemetery from November 8th through November 16th to allow an archaeological survey in advance of the Charter St. Cemetery restoration project. This closure is pending issuance of a permit from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Should the Commission not issue this permit in a timely manner, this motion will be considered null and void, and the Board of Health will re-consider the issue at its regularly scheduled meeting on November 13th. K. Murphy 2nd. All in favor. Motion passed.

4. Loki LaChapelle, Salem Ink - Discussion of tattoo regulations

Loki would like to make a change in the fee structure for guest tattoo artists. He said he has been open for eight years and has never had a guest artist, but recently he has missed out on quite a few opportunities to have a guest artist due to the fee schedule. The current regulation states the guest artist fee is the same as the year-long practitioner fee. The guest

artist permit is limited to 30 days in a calendar year at the same shop. Some of the guest artists are only in town for a couple of days, so it is not worth it to them to pay the current fee.

S. Darmody looked at surrounding towns and found that most of them do not have guest passes.

Loki agreed that a \$50.00 fee for guest artists is reasonable.

K. Murphy feels the fee is reasonable as long as it covers the cost of our time.

Loki said criteria is not state governed and some cities require anatomy and others don't. He suggested maybe, in the future, we can make core requirements universal.

G. Yuhas asked if Loki was insured. Loki said his shop is insured for liability and guest artists would be covered.

P. Kirby said Loki had some other issues with the regulations and asked him to specify some of them. We could take action on the fee tonight and discuss the other issues at a later date.

Loki pointed out that we require a high school diploma, but background checks for violent or sexual crimes are not required. There are a lot of young girls who are alone in a locked room for hours and it would be nice to know that background information. He feels we should update the regulations.

P. Kirby thanked Loki for bringing these issues to the Board's attention.

J. Schiller suggested Loki solicit some information from the other shops and discuss the changes that they all agree would work for them.

G. Yuhas motioned to amend the Body Art Practitioner permit to include a guest artist for 30 days and the fee will be \$50.00.

K. Murphy 2nd. All in favor. Motion passed.

5. Approval of Minutes
(September 11, 2018)

K. Murphy motioned to approve the minutes. J. Schiller 2nd. All in favor. Motion passed.

6. Chairperson Communications

P. Kirby welcomed new Board member Datanis "Dee" Elias, Esquire. He and G. Yuhas attended her confirmation. We are looking forward to the perspective she will bring to the Board.

Health Agent hiring update - the hiring committee will interview three candidates on Monday, 10/15/18. He just found out that more people sent in materials, but he is not sure yet how we will deal with that.

P. Kirby thanked E. Gagakis for her patience during the hiring process. He has not heard anything further from the Mayor's office regarding the creation of the working group for the discussion of an ISD model.

7. Monthly Reports-Updates

**a. Public Health
Nurse's Report**

S. Darmody reported that thankfully there have been no flu cases reported yet. She has been attending lots of flu clinics. She assists in the flu clinics in surrounding towns and those nurses assist with our Salem clinics. She administered all the high-dose flu vaccine at the CLC flu clinic on 10/2/18, as well as many other regular dose vaccines. This week

she will hold clinics at the fire department every day to make sure she covers all the shifts.

She also completed her camp reporting.

She will continue blood pressure screenings at the CLC on Wednesday mornings.

Copy available at the BOH office.

b. Health Agent's Report

E. Gagakis reported that Household Hazardous Waste Day went great. We had about the same number of residents as last year.

The Food Truck Festival went much smoother this year because all the staff was available to inspect the trucks.

G. Yuhas reported that the children's carnival was moved to the Common instead of the old courthouse parking lot. She said a new rule was added to allow mechanical rides on the Common, so next year the carnival will be on the Common.

E. Gagakis reported that the Kokeshi noise complaint has been resolved. They installed something in the units. We will re-test to verify.

Residents are complaining that the new kitchen vents installed at the VFW on Derby Street are too loud. We have taken some readings and we will take more readings soon.

Clark Avenue residents have been complaining about dust from rock crushing for a subdivision. They have added a complaint about the noise from the rock crusher. We loaned a calibrated sound meter from the DEP. We will take sound readings and see what, if anything, we can do to help the neighbors.

Joe Reale, who works in Beverly and part-time for Salem, has been very helpful with septic issues.

P. Kirby asked if we will have someone trained for septic.

E. Gagakis explained there are two types of trainings for septic; systems inspector and soil evaluation. The soil evaluation is the expensive and time-intensive training. The systems inspector is for verifying the work is being done correctly. Training costs would be between \$200.00 and \$1,000.00. She will look into when trainings are available.

P. Kirby would like to move forward on providing training for E. Gagakis to be a systems inspector and soil evaluator.

Copy available at the BOH office.

c. Administrative Report

M. Davis simplified the calculation for temporary food permits.

Copy available at the BOH office.

d. City Council Liaison Updates

B. Gerard not present.

J. Schiller motioned to approve the reports. G. Yuhas 2nd. All in favor. Motion passed.

8. New Business/Scheduling of Future Agenda Items

J. Schiller suggested we give a follow-up of the conversation of the task force for the ISD model as it relates to the hiring of the Health Agent.

G. Yuhas feels the department needs a health agent to guide them through a possible ISD.

J. Schiller said in the interim he will do research on his own about ISD models and what the impact is upon the Board. He is a little concerned about giving up a huge authority given by the State without having a very good reason for doing it. He feels it would be a dramatic change.

G. Yuhas said the model we were given shows the BOH almost like the health inspector. She doesn't have the experience to do that. It takes a lot away from the Health Department and puts more on the Board.

K. Murphy said the Board of Health would have no oversight over any inspections anymore.

P. Kirby will reach out to the Mayor about the working group.

P. Kirby requested that K. Murphy and J. Schiller send their questions for the candidates to Lisa Cammarata by Monday, 10/15/18.

The Board will possibly interview finalists at the next meeting.

MEETING ADJOURNED:

G. Yuhas motioned to adjourn. J. Schiller 2nd. All in favor. Motion passed.

8:48pm

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Davis
Clerk of the Board

*Next regularly scheduled meeting is Tuesday, November 13, 2018 at 7:00pm
At City Hall Annex, 98 Washington Street, 1st Floor, Salem, MA*