



TOWN OF BURLINGTON, MA
BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING

Town Hall Main Hearing Room

TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021

Board Members Present: Ed Weiner, PhD, Chairman; David McSweeney, Vice Chairman; and Dr. Wayne Saltsman, MD, PhD (Remote Access); Maribeth Welch and Andrea Sheehan

Board Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Susan Lumenello, REHS/RS, CHMM, Director of Public Health; Christine Mathis, Environmental Engineer; and Marlene Johnson, Health Agent

Dr. Weiner called the Board of Health meeting to order at 7:42 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chairman's Introductory Remarks:

Dr. Weiner stated that this special meeting is being held to discuss PFAS in the drinking water. They are being joined by Town Administrator Paul Sagarino, DPW Director John Sanchez, Water Treatment Plant Manager Russ Makiej, Select Board Chairman James Tigges and Select Board Vice Chairman Nicholas Priest.

Dr. Weiner stated that PFAS is a chemical in a class with over 5000 chemicals. It is found in Teflon, food packing, fire suppression foam and commercial airport and military applications. PFAS does not break down and 95% of residents in the United States have PFAS in their bodies. Burlington has PFAS in the water that is in the parts per trillion.

Discussion

Presentation by Susan Lumenello, Director of Public Health on "PFAS in Drinking Water"

Ms. Lumenello gave a presentation explaining the PFAS in the drinking water. PFAS has long and short chains and is considered a forever chemical because it does not biodegrade. There is a health advisory for PFAS. The EPA has a threshold of 70 parts per trillion (ppt) but the DEP's threshold is 20 ppt. Burlington has two water supplies that have had PFAS detected, Vine Brook and Mill Pond.

The timeline for the Burlington PFAS notification is as follows: 6/4/21 Mass DEP issued a non-compliance notice to Burlington for PFAS in the water; 6/17/21 notification was sent out the residents; 7/6/21 is when



TOWN OF BURLINGTON
BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 22, 2021

the DPW must submit a letter of plan of action for compliance to MassDEP. There are short term fixes and long term goals. These include the completion of the MWRA connection and installation of filters at the Water Treatment Plant at Mill Pond. A portion of the town is already hooked to the line in Lexington. Pregnant, nursing and auto immune compromised individuals should drink bottled water that has been tested and approved by MassDEP.

Mr. Sanchez stated that the notification to the residents went out as soon as possible with the press release. A follow up letter was sent out by the Select Board. They have retained a consultant to help the Town get into compliance. Burlington has two Tier 1 facilities. They have reduced the volume of water to Vine Brook and have opened up the connection to the MWRA so there is a consistent flow of clean water. Mr. Makiej stated that there is no temporary solution for Mill Pond. They have sent out an RFQ for engineering firms. DEP has issued emergency authority for \$8 Million to construct water filtering systems. They have also received ARPA funds for engineering of that system. Our goal is to have the design phase through the summer and get the funding in the fall to start construction next year. The biggest issue is there is a 20 month lead time for PFAS filters. The Vine Brook will be abandoned once the connection to the MWRA is complete.

Mr. McSweeney asked if the filters can be installed at Mill Pond. Mr. Sanchez replied yes, there are other ways to remove PFAS such as reverse osmosis but he doesn't recommend it because it wastes a lot of water. Mr. McSweeney asked what residents can do in their homes. Mr. Sanchez replied that they have information and links on the DPW website. He would not recommend Brita filters because they do not achieve the required removal levels. Mr. Sanchez wanted to point out that Burlington water meets the EPA standards.

Dr. Weiner stated he has had residents call him and ask where the PFAS has come from and how long it has been there. Mr. Sanchez stated that the water aquifers are surrounded by contaminated sites. It is hard to tell where it came from and they found it in wells 1 & 2 which was surprising that PFAS would show up at Mill Brook. They are going to do additional testing with DEP upstream in the river to try to locate the source.

Ms. Welch stated that holding this meeting is great for transparency and she would like to get updates throughout the process. Mr. Sanchez stated that quarterly reports will be going out to all residents.

Mr. Tigges stated that this is not just a Burlington issue, this is all over the Commonwealth. We are working as a team and have already joined the MWRA. He asked that residents only spread factual information and know that the Town takes this very seriously.

Mr. Priest stated that the State has re-regulatory various chemicals and we need to look at what is coming down the road. Currently Europe is testing PFAS at 2.6 ppt so that may be coming. We need to continue to work together to protect the citizens.

Ms. Lumenello stated that there are a lot of upcoming contaminants of concern that we still don't know what they are. They are still researching them. We are given the drinking water standards by MassDEP. Ms. Lumenello stated that we do not know the value of the PFAS for the past years because Massdep did not test for it. Mr. Sanchez stated that in the past there weren't testing methods for parts per trillion. Ms. Lumenello stated that we need to reduce use of these chemicals in our everyday products. Mr. Sanchez stated that we don't know exactly how many communities are affected by this because the map on the DEP website is not



TOWN OF BURLINGTON
BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 22, 2021

updated. Ms. Lumenello stated that it is safe to shower in the water, just don't drink it. There was a question on why we are not using just MWRA water. Mr. Sanchez stated that the Town Meeting had a committee and they wanted redundancy in case something happened. The MWRA had issues with their water years ago also. Ms. Lumenello stated that people who want to get the alert system, you can go onto the Town website and sign up for email or phone calls.

Shari Ellis – Ms. Ellis asked if there is a list of items that contain the contaminants that could be posted so people could be aware of items that contain PFAS. Ms. Lumenello stated that it is a great idea but the list would be very long.

Ms. Sheehan asked if there were other manufacturers of the filters that may not have such a large lead time. Mr. Sanchez replied that there are many companies but they are all in the same time frame.

Dr. Saltsman left the meeting at 8:30 PM.

Mr. Tigges thanked Dr. Weiner for his service to this community for over 30 years.

Dr. Weiner thanked everyone for participating in this important discussion.

Adjourn

MOTION: Ms. Welch moved to adjourn the Special Board of Health meeting at 8:42 PM. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sheehan unanimously approved 4-0-0.

*Respectfully Submitted by Dawn Cathcart,
Recording Clerk*



TOWN OF BURLINGTON
BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 22, 2021

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AT THE SPECIAL MEETING – TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021

Agenda

Discussion:

- ***Presentation by Susan Lumenello, Director of Public Health on “PFAS in Drinking Water” dated 6/22/21***