

September 2, 2026 BOH draft minutes

Board members participating: Chair Celia Bird, Jenny Tomczak, Jane Seymour and staffed by Health Officer Bill Ward.

Board Chair Celia Bird called the meeting to order at 5:51 pm.

Agenda

Jenny made a motion to amend the agenda to remove the vote on item 4's syringe report since Bianca would not be present at the meeting. Second by Jane. Unanimous vote in favor. Jenny then made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Jane. Unanimous vote in favor.

Draft minutes

Celia asked that her comments about extreme heat and cooling centers be edited to only say that she started the outreach to other city staff and is hoping to have them attend a future Board Meeting. Jenny made a motion to amend the minutes according to Celia's suggestion and approve the minutes as amended. 2nd by Jane. Vote was unanimous in favor.

Public Forum

There was one member of the public present, Ben Bosley who introduced himself as a Democratic candidate for Vermont House in Chittenden-15 (Burlington). He said he was attending to better understand the Board is doing and the issues they believe deserve greater attention at the state level.

Substance Abuse and Safe Syringe Disposal

Celia suggested the group continue the discussion on work on Bianca's report on substance abuse and safe syringe disposal, with plans to reach out to city councilors to understand their needs and provide support for the safe syringe report review process.

Bill discussed ongoing collaboration with the Peace and Justice Center, which will provide additional cleanup services for City Hall Park on Tuesday mornings to help address city staffing gaps on Mondays and Tuesdays. Celia will reach out to Kason at the Peace and Justice Center about the syringe clean-up efforts and syringe drop box placement efforts.

Health Equity

Celia discussed the BOH health equity initiatives, focusing on serving vulnerable communities through substance abuse programs and translation services for diverse populations. Bill highlighted a new mobile health unit deployed by UVM Medical Center in the downtown area to provide services to people who cannot easily access the hospital. Bill will report back to the BOH on funding information after reaching out to the Fire Chief.

Problem Property update

Bill gave an overview on vacant building compliance and public health initiatives. He explained the city's efforts to address non-compliant properties, including monthly problem property meetings with department heads, increased fees and interest rates, and the potential for tax sales.

Chair Report

Celia reported on her communication with Victor Prusak, who's the Director of Engagement in K-12 Registration for Burlington School District, about a draft playground design procedure. The School District was interested in having the Board of Health look at it. Celia will share the draft review with the board members for their thoughts.

Public Outreach/Communications

The group discussed strategies for public outreach, including water safety and mosquito-borne disease prevention messaging. Jane said she would repost previous health alerts on mosquito-borne disease prevention. Celia asked that we set up an organized system for cataloging past public outreach postings and budget documents for use in ongoing messages seasonally. Bill will work with his administrative staff to organize this.

Jenny asked about future railroad pesticide notifications and finding the best system to alert neighbors of the railroad when we get notifications from the State of Vermont that they have approved an application. She asked that we consider an election campaign style sign that would be easy for the board to use when posting these multilingual signs along the railroad in the future. Bill will work with DPW traffic staff who could produce signs for this effort.

Adjournment

The next meeting was scheduled for September 30th at 5:45 PM.

Jenny made a motion to adjourn the meeting, 2nd by Jane.

Celia noted the meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m.