



**CITY OF GLOUCESTER
Board of Health
Minutes of the Meeting
August 6, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
Harbormaster Conference Room &
Hybrid Meeting Via Zoom**

Board members present: Chairperson: Joseph Rosa; Vice-Chairperson: Dr. Eric Kaplan; Jesse Dole; and Thomas Markert. Absent: Erin George.

Also present: Health Director: Dominique Hurley; Regional Prevention Director: Chelsea Goldstein-Walsh; Assistant Health Director: Gabrielle White; Public Health Excellence Program Manager: Danielle Larabee; Public Health Nurse: Cindy Juncker; Administrative Assistant: Alison Battle.

The meeting started at 5:30 p.m.

Public Oral Communication

There was no "Public Oral Communication".

Approval of Minutes

MOTION by Dr. Kaplan to approve the Gloucester Board of Health minutes of the meeting of July 9 th, 2026 as amended. **Seconded** by Mr. Dole. **Carried 4-0.**

Nicotine and Tobacco Retailer Report

Ms. Hurley stated that a letter went out in early June to tobacco retailers reminding them that if they have products that are not FDA approved, they can't sell them. She stated that the FDA has a product database that retailers can use to confirm if they can sell a product or not. She stated that at the last Board of Health meeting the Board asked the Health Department to ask retailers to provide an inventory list of all the nicotine and tobacco products currently being sold that do not have an FDA marketing order. She stated that of the 29 retailers that were contacted 12 responded and those that responded were adamant that they were not carrying any of the products on their shelves with the exception of 3 retailers all with the same owner. She stated that they have documents from their manufacturers in China, one being an acceptance of the application to the FDA for consideration (but not with any sort of approval) however there is an approval letter that is cut by the manufacturer. She stated that they visited three of the retailers that did not respond, including one owned by Sunny Patel, who attended the July Board of Health meeting, and they had several products out that are not allowed to be sold and products on the counter (which is a violation of State law). She stated that Mr. Patel's lawyer contacted the Health Department and told them to stop all enforcement or risk being added to a pending

lawsuit. She stated that the Attorney General's office responded saying they could add them to the lawsuit if they wish and added the following:

- "First, to the extent that paragraph 2 on page 2 of your letter implies that DPH has advised non-defendant municipalities to proceed with imposing fines or permit suspensions, that is not the case. DPH has not offered any such guidance to non-defendants. If asked, DPH would advise non-defendants to consult their own counsel. I hope this clarifies things for you.
- Second, it is DPH's position that the motion and briefing schedule submitted to the Court bind the parties, but do not bind non-parties. So far as I know, the parties have honored the agreement on both sides. But for the avoidance of doubt, we do not see it as binding on the 336 other cities and towns in the Commonwealth that are not defendants in this case.
- Third, recall that the defendants to the litigation agree not to take action against the permits of plaintiffs or similarly situated business or to impose any fines arising out of the issues identified in the Enforcement Notices. That does not, in DPH's view, extend to other regulatory activity such as conducting inspections or sending additional notices of potential future enforcement. I just want to make sure we're clear on this, because in the event that defendants prevail on the PI motion, the municipalities will want these products off the shelves and will expect retailers to move quickly. I think it's only fair to your clients and other similarly situated businesses that they have reasonable notice of the defendants' position, even while they are not at immediate risk of enforcement pursuant to our agreement."

Ms. Hurley suggested that the Board consider updating their local regulations to more explicitly require that retailers comply with federal, state, and local law. She suggested that they amend the regulation to require that the retailer demonstrate attention to federal law as part of their application process and they could accomplish this by having the retailer submit inventory reports with documentation and attestation showing how they are compliant to federal, state, and local law, with that inventory list. The board discussed amending the regulation to explicitly condition it upon compliance with state, local, and federal law.

Ms. Hurley commended the 12 of our 29 retailers that did exactly the right thing and were quite clear in their willingness and the actions that they took. She stated that she has had a few calls from retailers complaining that they have done the right thing and other retailers aren't doing the right thing and they're losing sales to other retailers because of that. *Chairperson Rosa* suggested that they put something together that those retailers could post in their windows that says that they're in full compliance with the rules and regulations of Gloucester. The Board also discussed putting something in the newspaper. *Ms. Hurley* suggested that the Board wait until September to take any action. She stated that she will have a draft amendment to the regulation for the Board to review at the September meeting.

Health Director's Recap

Presented by Dominique Hurley

Ms. Hurley stated that one of the Health Department's goals is that they have to improve on compliance to local and state regulations through educational outreach. She stated that they're continuing with their septic compliance campaigns of 709 properties in Ward 5 that have no record of a pump out in three and a half years. She stated that they had 175 properties in Wards 1 through 4 that were outstanding and non-compliant and 149 of them are now in compliance and of the 26 remaining, 21 are inactive.

Ms. Hurley stated that the Health Department is conducting active managerial control food trainings, distributing temporary food and vendor information packets, and performing courtesy walkthroughs in collaboration with the Building Department. She stated that their food inspector, Ms. Vorias, is actively educating food operators on legal requirements.

Ms. Hurley commended Mr. Williamson and Ms. Vorias for their work on these campaigns, not only in helping people understand the requirements but also for building relationships.

Ms. Hurley stated that the next goal was to increase compliance with state sanitary code. She stated that they've isolated a lot of the other things that the Housing Inspector, Ms. Turko was doing so that she can really focus on housing. She stated that the rental registry has an entirely new approach where they are focused on education of the law, not necessarily the inspection, with the thought that the Building Department would be doing the inspections.

Ms. Hurley stated that their third goal was continuous quality improvement through public health excellence. She stated that they have been digitizing several different types of files and they're at the end stages of getting that work done and in the beginning stages of QAQC on the quality of it, and making it available to the public.

Ms. Hurley stated that the fourth goal that has yet to be completed is advancing opioid abatement and efforts by driving down internal costs and improving deployment operations. She stated that Carla Dellaporta is the program manager and is making some good progress on improving those operations. She stated that the mayor recently made the decision to fund three more community organizations that are focusing on prevention and harm reduction for opioid use disorder. She stated that they are working on getting agreements in place, to support that fund deployment right now.

Ms. Hurley stated that the last goal was to fill two open Board of Health seats, which they have done. She stated that they are in the process of giving the Mayor's office an update on all of the goals.

SAPHE 2.0 Performance Standards Survey Results

Ms. Larabee gave Board members results that provided an overview of Gloucester's results from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Office of Local & Regional Health Performance Standards Survey. She stated that the overview shows where the Health Department is meeting state expectations, identifies areas that need improvement, explains the reasons for any gaps, and outlines the steps planned in FY27 to address those gaps. She reviewed items in the survey that covered various aspects including foundational public health services, permits, complaints, and environmental health establishments, with responses ranging from limited to comprehensive on many questions. She stated that the State will use the survey results to make recommendations for future funding, grant opportunities, and training in the fall, marking the first year of this required statewide assessment process. *Ms. Hurley* stated that the Health Department conducted a similar self-assessment survey for the last two years with questions, not as detailed, but this is the first year that it is a statewide common survey for all as a requirement. *Ms. Larabee* stated that this survey will be required every year moving forward.

Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant Reporting

Ms. Larabee gave Board members a brief overview of the projects that she is managing with Gloucester and Manchester under the Public Health Excellence Grant. She stated that one project is file digitization with the hope to eventually have a public portal, where people can go in and pull their septic records, hazardous waste records, well records, and then in the future, potentially more. She stated that another project is the septic compliance software on which Mr. Williamson and Mr. Smith have been working really hard. She stated that this allows all of the pumpers and haulers to submit their O&M reports and pump reports in the field. She stated that the third project involves Berger Food Safety Consulting, which started two weeks ago to help with the summer surge of food inspections, with weekly reports being provided and Ms. Vorias handling reinspections. She reviewed a strategic assessment project led by Aldrich Tobin Partners focusing on health and human services needs in both Manchester and Gloucester, with data collection underway and recommendations expected in early fall.

Prevention Team Reporting

Presented by Chelsea Goldstein-Walsh

Ms. Goldstein-Walsh stated that they are waiting for the final data report from the Risk Behavior Survey. She stated that she does not yet have permission to share the data in a public forum.

Ms. Goldstein-Walsh stated that with the new school year starting, they have really been focusing heavily on recruitment. She stated that they have a cohort of students who are transitioning to high school, and will be joining their high school group and they've spent the last couple of weeks visiting the O'Maley Academy Move Up Camp for incoming 6th graders, to orient them to the Gloucester Youth Leadership Council and share what they do. She stated that they also have an open house scheduled for later this month on August 27th, at Cape Ann Lanes from 4 to 6.30. She stated that it's a free bowling event with free food, and it's open to all.

Ms. Goldstein-Walsh stated that they have been holding planning meetings for their parent program that will be launching in the fall. She stated that the program is funded by their Prevention and Early Childhood Grant, focused on the transitional age from elementary to middle school, supporting both youth and their caregivers. She stated that they will be offering a free 6-week parent cohort program for parents of that transitional age, parents and caregivers of transitional age into middle school.

Ms. Goldstein-Walsh stated that another parent-focused effort that they are planning right is educational outreach to parents and caregivers on how to have those conversations with their young people, with their teens and their kids around challenging topics, such as mental health, substance use, digital safety, and just trying to provide information using evidence-based resources to make sure that parents feel equipped and confident on how to have these conversations and where to find accurate information.

Ms. Goldstein-Walsh stated that Action, Inc. will be managing the financial management of recovery housing for the RIZE Mosaic OAC grant and they submitted their Year 2 progress report on July 31st.

Communicable Disease Reporting

Ms. Juncker reported that in Massachusetts there have been 147 Cyclospora cases reported and less than five in Gloucester.

Ms. Juncker stated that a Salmonella outbreak has been reported connected to jalapeños grown in Mexico.

Ms. Juncker stated that measles cases are continuing to grow, but not in the state of Massachusetts. She stated that only two cases have been reported in Massachusetts.

Ms. Juncker stated that they still have not seen Triple E cases in Massachusetts of either animal, human, or mosquito. She stated that they have not seen any animal or human cases of West Nile virus but mosquito samples have increased.

Ms. Juncker stated that there is a new tick-borne virus that was seen in New York called Bourbon virus. She stated that they will probably see it around Massachusetts in a couple of years. She stated that there is no commercially available test to test for this so doctors are having a difficulty identifying it.

Ms. Juncker stated that she sent out letters and emails regarding the water quality report to the VP of Lahey, and the Associate Chief Medical Officer and VP for Medical Affairs at Mass General Brigham. She stated that she gave them information regarding the law, Gloucester's sodium levels, what it means to the patients with sodium restrictions, and a link to facts on sodium and drinking water and resources for patients.

Regulatory Reporting

Ms. Hurley reported on the implementation of a new ticketing system called Spiceworks to replace C-Click Fix for tracking Department work, which will help with volumetrics and workload management. She thanked the IT Department for their help with the software implementation. The Board discussed concerns about the efficiency of maintaining two separate systems and the burden of preparing monthly reports. *Ms. Hurley* stated that while the reporting does require significant effort, they are working to automate some processes to reduce the burden on staff.

Ms. Hurley reported that Ms. Turko is working really hard right now to be as responsive as possible. She stated that she's proactively reaching out to property owners every week.

Ms. Hurley reported that they have had some common food violations. She stated that Ms. Vorias is doing some terrific work right now and her newsletters have a 51% open rate. She stated that the courtesy walkthroughs are very effective.

Concerns of the Board

Next Regular Monthly Meeting Board of Health- The next regular Board of Health meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 3, 2026 at 5:30 pm.

MOTION by Dr. Kaplan to adjourn.
Seconded by Mr. Dole **CARRIED**.
MEETING ADJOURNED – 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bobbi Orlando

Accepted by:

Joe Rosa, Chairperson

Documents Referenced:
August 6, 2026 Board of Health Agenda
BOH Minutes of July 9, 2026
HD July Monthly Report

