



## TOWN OF GROTON

Board of Health  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

## BOARD OF HEALTH

Evan Thackaberry, Chair  
Robert J. Fleischer, Member  
Michelle Collette, Member

Date: Monday February 3rd, 2025  
Time: 6:30 PM  
Location: Groton Senior Center, 163 West Main St Groton, MA 01450  
Members Present: Michelle Collette, Robert Fleischer, Evan Thackaberry  
Others Present: Tom Delaney, Sarah Vular, Irene Congdon, Kelli Calo, Jim Garreffo, Jenna Montgomery, Kalene Gendron

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### **Evan Thackaberry called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.**

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**Nashoba Associated Boards of Health, Jim Garreffo, Director of Public Health, Jenna Montgomery, Public Health Educator/Communication Specialist, Nashoba Public Health Excellence Presentation** – Jim Garreffo was present and introduced Jenna Montgomery and Kelli Calo. Mr. Garreffo explained that with the public health grant, a work plan had to be created. One of the objectives of this plan was to improve communication with the board, which is why they are holding these annual meetings between the agency staff and the boards. Quarterly meetings are held at the Nashoba offices, and Robert Fleischer and Michelle Collette have been instrumental in ensuring quorum for these meetings. Ms. Montgomery provided an overview of the presentation, which included the state of the NABH, the Public Health Excellence Grant (PHE), Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS), the work plan and sustainability initiatives, and the Contact Tracing and Case Investigation Grant (CT/CI). Mr. Garreffo gave an overview of the state of the agency and presented a rundown of the budget. With Littleton leaving the NABH, the agency is facing a loss of income. The plan is to eliminate positions that are largely unfilled. Additionally, assessments and fees will be increased by 10%. Over the past 18 months, NABH has been working on revising its bylaws. Mr. Garreffo also addressed the issue with the State pension fund. The agency is now facing challenges due to a lack of knowledge about its contribution requirements, which were not communicated to NABH until 2014, despite dating back to 1967. The only resolution at this time is to implement legislation. Three new bills have been filed during this legislative session to potentially address this pension issue. Ms. Montgomery discussed the NABH Board's decision to increase board member engagement by holding annual meetings with the local boards. Ms. Calo then presented on the Public Health Excellence (PHE) grant, which is funded by the state through the Department of Public Health (DPH). The PHE grant is funding staffing and software for NABH. Further goals for the grant include formalizing training programs, focusing on environmental and food protection, and standardizing operating procedures across municipalities. Ms. Montgomery then presented the goals of the Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS), which are considered essential functions upon which the Board of Health should be built. NABH is currently assessing its financial and staffing resources for the FPHS adoption. Ms. Calo outlined the improvements being implemented at NABH in governance, sustainability, inspectional services, and disease control. The FPHS is funded through June 2028. The CT/CI grant was initially designated for COVID-19 tracing but was repurposed after the requirements for tracking were dropped. The CT/CI grant funds the hiring and training of staff for contact tracing, enhancing NABH's internal database for tracking health nursing activities, investigating trends, and exploring the region's community health profile and access to care. The CT/CI grant is funded through June 2026. Michelle Collette asked if NABH has a database that tracks vaccinations, similar to the Commonwealth's system. Ms. Montgomery confirmed that NABH uses software called "Color," which tracks vaccinations. Ms. Collette also asked on behalf of a local

resident whether NABH could create a program to inform people about available assistance programs for prescription medications. The resident's prescription copay had risen from \$40 to \$600, and after reaching out to the pharmaceutical company, they were informed that there was a program providing financial assistance for copays. Ms. Collette suggested that such programs should be presented to residents to help them afford their medications. Ms. Montgomery expressed interest in NABH becoming involved in promoting health literacy regarding these programs. Evan Thackaberry asked what potential high-level changes might result from adopting the FPHS. Mr. Garreffo responded that NABH is just beginning to understand these changes. There is a possibility of adopting national-level accreditation at the state level, but the specific changes remain unclear for now.

**MassToss, Sarah Vulgar, Director of MassToss Co-op, Irene Congdon, Central Municipal Assistance Coordinator, Proposed Private Hauler Regulations, New Requirements for Maximum RDP Grant Money-** Tom Delaney was introduced as the DPW Director. Sarah Vulgar shared that changes are being proposed to Groton's private hauler regulations. One of the key changes is that all trash haulers must provide recycling services alongside trash collection. It has been observed that businesses are often not being offered recycling services with their trash service. This is problematic as the Waste Ban Law is not being followed if businesses are disposing of recyclables in the trash. The proposed regulatory changes include mandatory recycling for all waste generators to comply with the Waste Ban Law. Haulers will also be required to offer trash and recycling services as a bundled package for one price. These changes will impact the RDP (Recycling Diversion Program) grant money. Other towns are facing similar regulatory changes. Irene Congdon presented model regulations for reference. It was noted that some businesses only have a dumpster for trash and not a separate container for recycling. However, the locations where this trash is being taken all provide recycling options, so there is no extra travel needed for recycling disposal. Some haulers are trying to charge more for recycling and present it as an optional service. The transfer station does offer recycling services for residents, but there needs to be parallel options available. Currently, fewer than 50% of Groton's residents participate in the curbside recycling program. To earn full points for the RDP grant, the town must update its hauler regulations. These regulations need to be passed by June 2025 in order to secure the full five points. The town could earn an additional three points, along with the possibility of more funding, for enforcing the new regulations. The RDP grant provides \$600 per point for maintaining recycling programs. Devens, which offers hazardous waste disposal twenty times a year, contributes two points toward Groton's grant. All private haulers are currently in compliance with commercial regulations, which is why the Board of Health (BOH) needs to implement these changes. Evan Thackaberry inquired about the procedure if a hauler is seen violating the regulations. Ms. Congdon explained that while trash and recycling may appear to be in the same truck, many haulers use split-box trucks to separate them. However, if anyone suspects otherwise, they should take a photo for investigation, which could lead to a fine. Ms. Congdon also introduced the "Beyond the Bin" website, which helps residents find locations for recycling textiles and other harder-to-recycle items. The website, [www.recyclesmartma.org](http://www.recyclesmartma.org), is linked on the Groton town page. Robert Fleischer asked whether the curbside recycling points were based on percentage or population. Tom Delaney clarified that the scoring is based on the percentage of total town residents participating. Ms. Congdon further stated that if 2,000 residents participated, the town would see an increase in grant funding. Michelle Collette expressed appreciation for the differentiation between residential, commercial, and multi-family residential properties. She mentioned the upcoming 200-unit apartment complex, which has been approved for construction but has not yet started. The discussions on trash and recycling were one of the most contentious topics during the planning process. Ms. Collette inquired whether the model regulations could be adjusted to better fit Groton's needs. Ms. Congdon confirmed that the town could personalize the regulations as desired. For example, Littleton only added a single line to their regulations for compliance. Ms. Collette asked if the new regulations could be reviewed for compliance, and Ms. Congdon assured her that they would provide feedback and assistance. Mr. Fleischer requested

clarification on single-polymer plastics. Ms. Congdon explained that plastics labeled as "1" and "2" are required to be recycled because they have the most established recycling markets. Massachusetts is processing its own recycling, and the transfer station can handle more types of recyclables compared to curbside services. Ms. Vulgar noted that the new regulations for RDF grant money were updated in December, and many municipalities are taking action to ensure they retain their funding.

**Tight Tank 14 Valley Road Escrow Bond Release** – Kalene Gendron informed the board that this agenda item is a formality. This type of permit requires a \$1,000 deposit to be placed into escrow for a tight tank. Michelle Collette explained that the letter to be signed is for refunding the previous owner, Traci Smart, the amount of \$1,011.37, as she was the original applicant for the tight tank variance. The new owner will establish a new escrow account under their name. Robert Fleischer motioned to release the funds in the tight tank escrow for 14 Valley Rd. due to Traci Smart. Michelle Collette seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. The letter was signed.

**45 West Main Street, Maxant-Schulz, Housing Code Compliance Updates, Continued** – Kalene Gendron stated that she had not heard from the property owner and presented points from the file to the board. At the last meeting, a motion was made for compliance by March 3rd, 2025, but Ms. Gendron had not received any communication from the owner. The Board of Health's decision from April 4th, 2024, was never formally recorded, meaning that Ms. Gendron's opinions are not valid or enforceable, rendering the decision null and void. Ms. Gendron recommended a motion to the board for the protection of public health. To her knowledge, there are three units at this property. The recommendation was that the utilities be transferred into the owner's name and that the health department be contacted prior to any occupancy inspections for compliance. This suggestion was made due to the lack of cooperation from the owner, as condemnation was not considered appropriate at this time. Evan Thackaberry inquired why the variances had not been recorded. Ms. Gendron explained that this was due to the owner's failure to file them. Michelle Collette added that the signed variances had been sitting at Town Hall for months waiting to be picked up. Ms. Gendron further explained that by having the utilities in the owner's name, there would be constant oversight, which is currently lacking. She also noted that she had not seen the paneling or metering, so she could not comment on their condition. Ms. Collette suggested reaching out to GELD (Groton Electric Light Department) to obtain information about the utilities. Ms. Collette then motioned that, for the protection of public health at 45 West Main St., the legal owner must place all utilities in their name and contact the health department to conduct an inspection for compliance prior to the occupancy of any rental units. Robert Fleischer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**Consider Approval of 2025 Tobacco Permit Submissions-** All permits, except for the one for Groton Market Inc., had been signed by Michelle Collette and Robert Fleischer at the previous meeting. However, the permit for Groton Market Inc. was signed by Evan Thackaberry at the current meeting. Michelle motioned to issue a tobacco permit for Groton Market Inc., located at 35 Main St., Groton, MA. The motion passed unanimously.

**Consider Approval of 2025 Trash Hauler Permit Submissions-** Michelle Collette stated that the outstanding trash hauler permits were for Waste Management and Republic Services. All other permits had been signed last week, except for Evan Thackaberry's signature, which was provided at the current meeting. Robert Fleischer motioned to grant trash hauler permits to Waste Management and Republic Services. Michelle Collette seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Michelle also motioned to grant a trash hauler permit to G.W. Shaw and Sons. Mr. Fleischer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

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**OLD / NEW BUSINESS:**

**Health Agents Report-** Kalene Gendron, Health Agent, informed the board regarding the bird flu. The Nashoba Associated Boards of Health (NABH) is keeping track of the situation, and information has been sent to be posted on the Groton website. The bird flu response is being led by Mass Wildlife and the Department of Agricultural Resources. The local DPW will assist with the pickup of sick or dead birds. The state only requires notification if five or more dead birds are found in one location. The second update is about Micaela Morre, the new hire, who has been on board for about two weeks. Things are going well so far.

**Sign permits/ invoices-** (1) invoice for Geological Field Services was signed by present members.

**Minutes-** Robert Fleischer moved to accept the minutes of January 6<sup>th</sup> 2025, as submitted, Michelle Collette seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Schedule Next Meeting-** The Board of Health will meet on Monday, March 3rd, 2025 at 6:30pm at the Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room 173 Main St.

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**Evan Thackaberry moved to adjourn at 7:38pm, Michelle Collette seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

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Minutes by Micaela Moore, Interdepartmental Administrative Assistant.

**APPROVED: March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025**

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