

DOVER BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES DRAFT
January 5, 2026
7:00 PM via Zoom

1. Call to order, roll call: Start time: 7:02 PM

Present: Chair Kay Petersen, Member John Quackenbush, Member Stephen Kruskall, Health Director Jason Belmonte, Public Health Nurse Gael Varsa, Administrative Assistant Sophia Kriegsman

Citizen comments: N/A

2. Next meeting: February 2, 2025

3. Approval and acceptance of minutes:

- December 1, 2025
- December 10, 2025

Member Kruskall made a MOTION to approve the minutes from the December 1, 2025 and December 10, 2025 meetings. Member Quackenbush seconded the MOTION.

All members voted in favor to pass the motion.

4. Open Meeting Law

Chair Petersen introduces the Open Meeting Law agenda item by summarizing key points from a recent conference, noting that Member Quackenbush also attended part of the session.

She explains that meeting minutes are not intended to be a verbatim transcript and that while AI may be used as a tool for drafting purposes, it cannot serve as the official minutes. She states that the purpose of minutes is to demonstrate how the Board reaches decisions, including the issues considered and how they were resolved.

Chair Petersen reports that remote meetings remain authorized through 2027 and is hopeful about the possibility of a permanent statute change allowing for their continuation. She reviews Open Meeting Law reminders, highlighting the importance of avoiding communication via email and the risk of unintentional violations by reflexively hitting “reply all” on an email chain in which the entire Board is included. In order to minimize risk, she recommends that staff blind copy members when emailing

the Board.

Chair Petersen emphasizes that Open Meeting Law violations can be weaponized even when technical in nature, making caution and adherence important. She discusses guidance on site visits, stating that Board members may attend together, as long as the visit is limited to the gathering of information and does not include discussion or deliberation. She notes that posting site visits as meetings is recommended when all members attend and that site visits are generally open to the public. Nurse Varsa raises the question of public identification of Board members, and the Board collectively agrees that members should wear identifiable clothing and should clearly identify themselves during site visits moving forward.

5. PFAS Discussion

Director Belmonte introduces the PFAS agenda item, noting that the current well regulations are nearly ten years old and that PFAS has become an increasingly significant issue, which highlights the need for updated regulations. He reports that he has begun seeing more PFAS testing submitted voluntarily with home sales and seeks the Board's opinion about the possibility of incorporating PFAS requirements into updated well regulations, either for new wells, property transfers, or both.

Member Quackenbush expresses support for requiring PFAS testing for new wells and at the time of property transfer.

Chair Petersen inquires about potential opinions and reactions from the real estate community. Member Kruskall cautions that realtors may oppose new requirements due to potential delays on transactions, especially if Dover acts ahead of other municipalities. He suggests an educational approach as the initial step, which would serve to inform residents and real estate agents about PFAS and mitigation options. Chair Petersen agrees and supports this idea, and Director Belmonte suggests surveying local realtors to gather feedback.

Chair Petersen asks whether other municipalities are pursuing PFAS regulation as well. Director Belmonte notes that Mashpee requires PFAS testing and that Nantucket has dedicated staff addressing PFAS concerns. He suggests reaching out to a Nantucket official who presented on PFAS at a MHOA conference and indicates that the individual may be willing to present to the Board. The Board expresses interest in hearing from him and other outside experts.

The Board discusses prior PFAS testing in Dover, noting that one previously reported elevated result appeared to be an outlier and speculates potential causes. The Board also notes concerns about reporting requirements, as PFAS levels above regulatory thresholds would trigger mandatory reporting and remediation with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

Considering other aspects of the regulation worth amending, Director Belmonte mentions clarifying responsibility for required testing at property transfer, as current language does not specify whether the buyer or seller must complete testing. The Board agrees to set up meetings with both the official who spoke at the MHOA conference and the person who received the outlying test.

6. FOIA Request

Director Belmonte summarizes that the Board of Health recently received a substantial FOIA request seeking all documents related to the Nicotine-Free Generation Initiative. He explains that the Town Clerk has acknowledged the request, notifying the requester that fulfilling it would require a significant amount of time and labor and provided an estimated fee to compensate.

Director Belmonte states that the Town is currently awaiting a response from the requester. He adds that preliminary preparation has begun, and if the requester elects to proceed and submits the payment, staff will then move forward with compiling all of the requested materials.

Member Quackenbush asks whether there is a deadline for the requester to respond. Director Belmonte states that, to his understanding, there is no deadline, and the requester could choose to proceed at any point in the future.

7. 40B Project Discussion

Chair Petersen introduces the agenda item regarding the 40B Project on Strawberry Hill Street and states that comments are due by February 2, as announced at a recent Housing Task Force meeting. She explains that the comment period is part of MassHousing's project eligibility review to determine whether the site is appropriate for 40B housing.

Chair Petersen summarizes discussion from the December Housing Task Force meeting, explaining that a consultant from Barrett Planning Group recommended identifying a peer-review consulting firm, and that Tetra Tech was identified as a potential firm that is familiar with the area. Director

Belmonte cautions that the Town Administrator has advised waiting to hire a consultant until a formal application is filed, but Chair Petersen expresses concern that waiting could create timing challenges.

Director Belmonte notes that he is compiling a master document of written comments from the Board. Member Kruskall briefly summarizes his comments, reiterating concerns about water usage. Chair Petersen and Member Quackenbush agree to add their comments, and Director Belmonte confirms he will compile and forward the final document accordingly.

8. Intern MOU Project

Director Belmonte introduces the review of the intern Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), explaining that the MOU is a written but non-binding agreement between Dover, Needham, and the Massachusetts Health Officers Association (MHOA) to participate in the intern program. He requests the Board's input prior to forwarding it to Town Counsel.

Member Kruskall raises concerns regarding the intellectual property (IP) language and recommends review by a firm with IP expertise. Chair Petersen and Member Quackenbush state that they believe the likelihood of the issue arising is very small and do not see a need for additional legal expense but agree that the concern should be flagged during legal review. Director Belmonte notes that he corrected one small unrelated error in the document and confirms that Town Counsel will review the MOU.

Member Quackenbush made a MOTION to approve the intern MOU pending legal review, including review of the intellectual property clause. Member Kruskall seconded the MOTION.

All members voted in favor to pass the motion.

9. Town Report

Chair Petersen introduces the Town Report and states that while minor grammatical and formatting edits may still be needed, she sees no substantive issues and proposes that the Board vote to approve the report today.

Member Quackenbush notes that he submitted minor editorial suggestions to Director Belmonte and confirms that none were substantive, and Member Kruskall notes that a suggestion he previously

made has already been incorporated into the current draft.

Director Belmonte also notes that a brief paragraph prepared by Nurse Varsa was added to the report that morning to reflect the public health nursing role. Nurse Varsa explains that the paragraph highlights that this is the first year Dover has had a public health nurse and summarizes the scope of her work.

Chair Petersen raises a question regarding the status of the Old Farm Water Trust and whether any changes occurred during the year that would warrant an update of the report. Director Belmonte states that the report will be updated if clarification is received before submission.

Member Quackenbush made a MOTION to approve the Town Report contingent on minor edits by the Board of Health director and staff. Member Kruskall seconded the MOTION.

All members voted in favor to pass the motion.

10. Associate Board Member Bylaw Draft

Director Belmonte introduces the drafted bylaw establishing an Associate Board of Health Member. The Board Reviews the draft language, which allows the appointment of one associate member who may attend all meetings and participate in discussions and, when formally designated by the Chair, act as a full member in cases of conflict of interest, absence, or vacancy of a full Board member for the duration of that designation.

Member Kruskall raises concern that the associate member position should be elected rather than appointed, citing the Planning Board's structure and the importance of public input. Chair Petersen and Member Quackenbush discuss the benefits of appointment as a lower-barrier way to involve residents and note that any associate member filling a vacancy would ultimately stand for election at the next town election.

Director Belmonte proposes a compromise requiring a unanimous vote of the Board to appoint an associate member. The entire Board supports this idea, collectively feeling that this method would address concerns about fairness and transparency. Given the need to meet the warrant submission deadline, the Board agrees to submit the bylaw as a placeholder with the unanimous-vote modification.

Member Quackenbush made a MOTION to submit the proposal for an appointed Associate Member of the Board of Health to the Warrant Committee, subject to the modification that the Associate member is elected by unanimous vote of the Board Members. Member Kruskall seconded the MOTION.

All members voted in favor to pass the motion.

11. Waste Management

Member Kruskall introduces the waste management agenda item by explaining that there is an inconsistency between single-stream recycling used by private haulers and the required separation of recyclables at the transfer station. He notes that private carriers generally do not offer separated recycling, while the transfer station mandates it, creating a disconnect in different parts of town.

Member Kruskall also raises secondary concerns, including uncovered trash containers and the fact that trash pickup occurs five days per week in Dover, compared to other municipalities that limit pickup to one day per week. He suggests that reducing pickup days could improve efficiency. Member Kruskall encourages continued discussion of the agenda item at subsequent meetings and seeks to hear the opinions of the sustainability committee regarding potential solutions.

12. Old Business

Director Belmonte raises the topic of digitizing department files, noting that now that online permitting is live, staff could revisit this effort. He explains that hiring an outside company would be costly and would result in unorganized PDFs, and that undertaking the project internally would be feasible if divided among office staff. To optimize staff time, he notes that only core property documents will be digitized, including as-builts, well reports, Title Vs, permits, and related materials.

Chair Petersen inquires about the disposition of the files following digitization. Director Belmonte confirms that all files, in their entirety, will remain in the office even after the digitization process is complete. The Board expresses support for staff proceeding with the proposed approach.

13. Adjournment

Member Kruskall made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Quackenbush. The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sophia Kriegsman