

# Sudbury Board of Health

## Virtual Meeting August 25, 2025

**Attendees:** Carol Bradford-BoH Chair, Linda Huet-Clayton-BoH Member, Susan Sama-BoH Member, Vivian Zeng-Health Director, Katie Betts-Health Nurse, Nina Lurie-Health Social Worker, Kirstin Wilcox-Health Social Worker, Shaun Jeffery-Health Inspector, Beth Porter-Health Coordinator, Felix Garcia-MDPH Trainer, Alexander Weishiet- , Andrew Sheehan-Town Manager, Victor Garofalo-Asst Town Mgr., Janie Dretler-Select Board, Cliff Mcg, Dave L, Gabe Fonte, Glenda, Kerani Verma, Kevin Lahaise, NBC Telemundo Boston, Steve Duncan, Susan Verma, WHDH 7 News, WCVB, Jason Ta, John Johnston, JP iPhone, Sally Chang, Lisa, Sonny V, Debby Johnston, Andrew's iPad, Emarie Pope, Michael, Stephanie, Simone Carter, Tiffster's Phone, Esme, Mishel C, WBZ, Emily Whitaker Smith, Dan Wells, Bei Zhoa, Sean Fair, Marissa's Phone, Kay Bell, Sandra, Stephanie Oliver, Wendy Di Modica, Billy, Chia-Hsin-Chen, Hi, Charlie Russo, Dave Oulette, Tom Di Modica, Adam, Emmy, Eli Jackson, Frances Dagle, Karyn Jones, Leila Frank, Michelle Pizzi-O'Brien

### **5:30 - Open Meeting Law** – Carol Bradford

**5:32** – Carol Bradford started meeting stating that the Board of Health is responsible for keeping the public safe while supporting businesses and meeting minimum standards. All food establishments are required to uphold Massachusetts State Food Code. Misinformation has been circulated about Debby's Drive Thru. The situation has escalated and there has recently been hostility toward the Board of Health specifically targeting the Sudbury Health Director, Vivian Zeng. Carol Bradford also gave an overview of the procedure for Public Comments.

### **Public Comment:**

**Janie Dretler**-Sudbury Select Board Liaison to the Sudbury Board of Health. Ms. Dretler outlined the responsibilities of the Health Department and stated that mis-information has muted the facts pertaining to a food establishment in Sudbury.

**Debby Johnston**-Owner of Debby's Drive Thru: Ms. Johnston stated that Debby's Drive Thru has been operating for nearly 12 years. Debby states that she has always safely prepared and served fresh egg sandwiches (an important part of her business and a customer favorite). She has always passed inspections and has never had a complaint of illness. She says that the public support over the past week reflects how much her customers value and trust the quality of her food. Concerns were raised over Debby's use of a 3-bucket wash/rinse sanitize system which was approved when the business first opened. Debby requests that the Board grant a variance so that she may continue the 3-bucket wash/rinse practice with Health Department recommendations. In reference to microwaving eggs, Debby could not find any reference in the food code prohibiting the microwaving of shell eggs. Debby feels that the suggestion of using egg substitutes such as frozen patties or powdered eggs are not practical for her tiny shop. The substitutes are not the wholesome real food that her customer base has come to expect. Debby read off the ingredients found in the frozen patty's and determined that they are not up to the standards that she would like to serve in her shop. Debby sites space limitations in the refrigerator as being another issue with the frozen patties. Powdered eggs are not the standard of quality that has kept her business viable. The egg sandwiches are important staple in her shop and without them her business would not survive. She greatly respects Ms. Zeng's dedication to public health but believes that there is room for a

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compromise that balances safety and practicality so Debby can continue to serve the community safely and successfully.

**Emarie Pope**-Marlborough resident and customer of Debby's Drive Thru. She has frequented Debby's for 10 years and purchases the egg sandwiches. She has never suffered any adverse effects from the food and requests that the Board allows Debby to continue serving the egg sandwiches with any adjustments that may be needed.

**Sean Fair**-Wayland Resident and customer. He wants the board to know that Debby serves many communities and that she serves fresh food. He advocates that the board work with Debby to keep the shop operational.

**Dan Wells**-Hudson Resident and Sudbury Fire Dept. appeals to the board to allow Debby to continue to microwave and serve the egg sandwiches.

### **Katie Betts = Public Health Nurse Update:**

**Infection Cases:** Campylobacteriosis caused by under cooked poultry, meat and eggs. You can also contract this infection from contaminated food, water and animals. Cross contamination of food can also cause this infection. It's important to wash your hands and adhere to food safety practices. The bacteria live on egg shells. When you crack an egg the campylobacteriosis can get into the raw egg from the infected shell. Always cook food to recommended temperatures. The bacteria infect the lower intestinal track. Symptoms include abdominal pain, nausea, fever, diarrhea and vomiting. These symptoms can last up to a week. Hydration and rest are recommended, but for those who are older or immunocompromised, antibiotics are recommended.

**Tick Borne Illnesses: Ehrlichiosis** (lone star tick) Symptoms start to show one week after being bitten. They include fever, chills, headache, muscle aches and upset stomach. Antibiotics are strongly suggested. Delayed treatment can cause severe illness and even death. **Babesiosis parasitic infection**– can show symptoms 36 to 72 hours after being bit. Infection can change in red blood cell shape and rigidity, blockages in capillaries, spleen enlargement, fever, chills, sweats, headaches, nausea and enlargement of the spleen and liver. Recommended antibiotic and antiparasitic treatments.

**Rabies:** Treatment - wound care Human Rabies Immunoglobulin and 4 dose vaccine series given on day 11.

**COVID:** Increase in positive tests. Outbreaks in Sudbury Long Term Care Facilities. CDC new recommendations for getting COVID vaccine, immunocompromised and those with underlying issues. AAP recommends Kids 6 – 23 months get vaccine. For children 2 years to 18 years with underlying conditions or in congregate living should get vaccinated.

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**Measles:** Unconfirmed case. Highly contagious, Airborne can live up to 2 hours in the air and on surfaces. Most infectious time is 4 days prior to rash appearing and 4 days after rash appears, Symptoms show up 14 days after exposure. Symptoms include High fever, cough, runny nose and rash. The best prevention is to get the MMR vaccine.

**West Nile Virus:** Is spread thru infected mosquitos. Symptoms include fever, Headache Body Aches, diarrhea. Most infected people are a-symptomatic. Take precautions to protect yourself. Wear repellent, cover exposed skin, stay indoors between dusk and dawn.

**Flu Clinics** – Senior Flu Clinic September 24<sup>th</sup> at Senior Center. Town Wide Flu Clinic October 4<sup>th</sup> at Curtis Meddle School. Town Employee Clinic October 8<sup>th</sup> Curtis Middle School.

### Sudbury Social Worker Update:

**Kirstin Wilcox:**

**Hope Sudbury:** New applicants seeking assistance with rent, Eversource and security deposit. Hope Sudbury also did their back to school back pack drive, which the Health Social Workers helped out with.

**Goddard School:** Mini Back Pack School Supplies Drive

**Fire at Sudbury Home:** The Social Worker Office supplied the residents with gift cards and helped with meeting basic needs. Worked in tandem with the Fire Department. Referrals and resources proved to be very helpful in finding lodging and basic needs for the family. Vivian was instrumental in handling the dwelling condemnation and helping the residents to retrieve important belongings.

**Housing Meeting** with residents to fill out applications for housing. Referred a family to Household Goods in Acton so that they could furnish their home.

**Worked with Residents:** Assisted with job and resume support

**Overdose Awareness Day:** this September 4th. Working with regional coordinator to help organize the event. Flag planting was completed last week. Thank you to town employees for all of their help.

**Free medical program event in Framingham.** Resource was shared with town residents.

**Housing inspections.** Worked with Health Inspector with a case at Longfellow glen.

**Sudbury Foundation Gift Card Program.** A new grant has been obtained and gift cards are being disbursed to families and individuals in need.

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### Nina Lurie: Social Worker Update

**Sudbury Transportation Committee:** Effective October 1<sup>st</sup> Uber and taxi program will become the low-cost program. Residents will get \$30.00 vouchers for rides each month. Any costs in excess of vouchers will be paid by the resident. People under 60 will work directly through the Social Workers Office, Catch Connect will continue to run.

**Social Work Intern:** will start next month. Nina has obtained a grant from the Metro West Foundation to pay the intern a stipend.

**Intern Manual:** Nina has been working on a manual that details goals and expectations of incoming Social Work interns so that the progression is clear and obtainable.

**Sept 6: Lifting Spirits** will be coming to Longfellow Glen to educate kids and families on caring for a horse and provide rides. Flu clinic will take place the same day.

### Shaun Jeffery: Health Inspector Update:

**Food Inspections:** Inspections at all of the Senior Living Facilities have been conducted. Support for Dunkin Donuts had a patron who fell in the establishment.

**Home inspections** with Kirstin Wilcox (Social Worker) to ensure that dwellings are up to code

**Septic Related Inspections/Tests:** Soil Tests, septic installations, repairs and reinspection's for problem septic's have been ongoing.

**Food Code Training** at the Sudbury Public Schools. Shaun will be offering training to school cafeteria employees so that they can work within food code regulations and have a better understanding of food temps, food prep and proper food storage.

**Health Inspector Training:** Food Tier 3 Training to be completed.

**Debby's Drive Thru Inspection:** Conducted a routine inspection on August 12<sup>th</sup> , 2025 and found the following violations:

1. Coffee on ground in open canisters exposing coffee to fumes from vehicles and insects. When Shaun asked why the coffee was on the ground Debby explained that it was how she cooled the coffee for iced coffee. State code does not allow food to be left on the ground. Debby voluntarily discarded the coffee
2. Animal on the floor in the shop. State code does not allow animals in food preparation areas. Debby voluntarily removed the animal.
3. Staff was not washing hands after handling money or before food prepping. This could cause cross contamination and make customers sick.

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4. The inspection took approximately 2.5 hours giving the inspector time to observe operations and food handling procedures. This allowed for the business to keep running while the inspection took place.
5. Raw shell Eggs were observed sitting on counter in 95-degree weather and explained that the eggs would need to be discarded because someone could get sick from the eggs sitting out in the extreme heat. Debby voluntarily discard the eggs.
6. Inspected Ice Machine and found spilled food, dog hair, mold and debris on the exterior of the machine. The interior of the ice machine had large amounts of mold. Debby discarded the ice and purchased a bag of ice at a nearby establishment. Shaun informed Debby that the store-bought ice could not be stored in the ice machine

In all there were 14 violations. Debby voluntarily closed down to start addressing the violations. Shaun called the Health Director Vivian Zeng, and Vivian spoke with Debby to work with her on coming up with solutions. Debby wanted to stay open, but Shaun explained that the work on the violations would go much quicker if she was closed while doing the work.

Vivian and Shaun went back for a re-inspection, they discussed the egg substitutes for the breakfast sandwiches with Debby. Debby explained that she would be retiring and that she would remove the egg sandwiches entirely from her menu. Debby explained that she had arranged for someone to sublet the shop space in order to continue selling coffee and goods. The future business owner who was going to rent the space was contacted and a meeting was set up with the Health Director, Debby and the perspective owner to discuss options moving forward. A final inspection was conducted when the Ice Machine had been serviced.

Shaun shared photos of the more severe violations that occurred during the inspection.

1. Dog Bed in shop.
2. Filter of Ice Machine caked with food debris and dog hair.
3. Uncovered Coffee cannisters on the ground outside exposing it to contaminants. Cannisters are located directly where the vehicles were idling.
4. Interior of Ice Machine that shows dog hair and black mold. This hazard can be directly ingested potentially causing gastro intestinal irritation, respiratory issues can occur and infection. These symptoms are especially pronounced in children and those with weakened immune systems.
5. Inspection form dated August 12, 2024 responding to a complaint of potential food poisoning at Debby's Drive Thru. The inspection form was signed and dated by Debby Johnston.

Vivian Zeng reviewed some of the violations and explained the importance in maintaining food code safety and compliance. The lack of handwashing can result in cross contamination and food borne illnesses. The eggs being left out on a hot day would result in salmonella and Campylobacteriosis. These bacteria live on surfaces and are easily spread. Food borne illnesses like Salmonella causes 1.35 million illnesses in the United States annually and 142,000 of those cases are specifically linked to eggs. Campylobacter is also associated with raw eggs and even more cases of Gastroenteritis accounting for 5% - 7% of cases in the

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United States annually. Both parthenogens persist on all surfaces with a real risk of being spread to customers, potentially causing outbreaks.

Debby's Drive Thru does not have the sinks to adequately wash hands, rinse food or wash dirty dishes. It is not the intention of the Health Department to force costly upgrades. It is necessary to ensure that all businesses are operating within the guidelines of food safety. Complaints and illnesses must be investigated and adjustments must be made.

Last year on August 12, 2024, a complaint of nausea and vomiting was made by a customer after eating an egg bacon and cheese sandwich. The Health Inspector went out for an inspection and observed Debby making a breakfast sandwich. After observing how the egg was cooked the Health Dept. required that Debby cook the raw egg in the microwave using disposable paper cups. When Shaun conducted his semi-annual inspection on August 12, 2025 Debby was using an egg cup used for microwaving, the cup was not being washed between uses. The unwashed microwavable cup is another health hazard, risking the spread of food borne illnesses. The issue is not the use of eggs, but the preparation of the eggs. Also, the switch in preparation (that was not agreed upon by the Health Department) caused concerns. Debby confided that she normally prepared 12 egg sandwiches per day.

A meeting was set up for August 27<sup>th</sup> with Debby and the new owner to strategize safer methods of overall sanitation and food preparation (specifically the egg sandwiches). When Debby announced the permanent closure of her shop it came as a surprise to the Health Director. It's unclear if the business has been turned over to the new owner. Linda Huet-Clayton wanted clarification as to whether the Health Director closed Debby's Drive Thru. The Health Director never closed down the shop, other than recommending that she shut down temporarily to correct some of the violations.

The Health Director explained that Debby would need to formally submit a request for a variance to use the 3-bucket sanitize method. She would also need to demonstrate to the board that this method meets state sanitary code. Vivian is not sure if Debby still plans to attend the meeting scheduled for August 27<sup>th</sup> but is eager to meet the new owner and collaborate with them. Susan Sama intoned that at this point we are in a holding pattern and will have to wait to see what the next steps will be in the re-opening of Debby's Drive Thru. The Board all agreed that Vivian and Shaun did everything correctly and according to code in terms of inspections, reinspection's and corrective actions.

Carol Bradford asked Vivian Zeng about the Media Coverage (concerning the closing of Debby's Drive Thru) and if any announcements have been issued from the Health Department. Vivian had released an announcement on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Vivian stated that the Health Department works with integrity and Professionalism and would never harm the reputation of a business, but maintaining public safety is our main objective. We prefer to allow the business owners to take corrective measures and collaborate with the Health Dept. to bring establishments into compliance. The media blitz based on Debby's social media post and misinformation has fueled negative rhetoric targeting the Health Director.

The entire Board is in support of how Ms. Zeng handled this situation and noted that they are appreciative as to how she approached the backlash and negative rhetoric.

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### **Vivian Zeng: Health Director's Update:**

**Overdose Awareness Event:** will occur on Sept. 4 2025 6:00 – 8:00 at Grange Hall, 326 Concord Rd.

**Department Staffing:** Katie Betts the public health nurse has returned from maternity leave. The Regional Shared Services Grant will be hiring a part time health inspector. There are 2 intern that will be working with the Health Department. One from UMass Lowell and one from Boston College specializing in Health Sciences and Social Work.

**Grants:** The MetroWest Foundation has approved an application for a grant that will pay the interns a small stipend for their work performed at the Health Department. Another application has been submitted to the Metro West Foundation for the purchasing of Gift Cards for Sudbury residents in need.

**Atkinson Pool Update:** Now that there is a break between camp season and the start of school, the Park and Rec Dept. has closed the pool to make scheduled repairs. Ms. Zeng will be closely overseeing the completion of the repairs so that there is a smooth re-opening.

**Sewataro:** Man Made Pond was temporarily closed because of a Cyanobacterial outbreak, but is now the end of camp season and the pond has re-opened.

**House Fire:** prompted condemnation of dwelling until all repairs are made. Ms. Zeng appreciated the work of Shaun Jeffery and Kirstin Wilcox for the expedient work they did in helping the family and overseeing the search for temporary housing. They worked in tandem with the Fire Dept. Police Dept. and Building Dept. finding the best solution for this family.

**New Food Establishments:** Primrose located at 225 Boston Post Rd has just opened. Wayside Inn Beer Garden – The Health Dept. has been working with Wayside Inn. They could not, at this point, invest in a septic system, but we have been working with the owners in finding viable solutions so that they can pilot this program. A more permanent solution is next. Formosa and Pinterest, there is no new information on these establishments.

**Sudbury Farms Renovation:** They are renovating while staying open. They have a freezer trailer that is attached to the building until they have completed the installation of their walk-in freezers. There was a small fire at the attached business. At the fire inspection, we found that the manager had already discarded the food that was exposed at the time of the fire.

**Lotus Blossom-** Is now open after 5 months of closure. The Health Department collaborated with the fire and building departments. There were many inspections to ensure that things were up to code. Ms. Zeng assisted the owner in submitting insurance paperwork. This a great example of the Health Dept. Working with local businesses and getting them up and running.

**Septic:** Shaun has been taking a leadership role in septic inspections and soil tests. We have been doing multiple inspections with new installers who are having difficulty staying within the guidelines of local regulations and Title 5 regulations. Ms. Zeng is collaborating with Health Departments within the region to determine the best way to deal with the problematic installers.

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**Open.Gov Update:** working out glitches in some of the permits and starting the installation of food permit applications so that we can implement prior to 2026 renewals.

**Health Dept. Space Renovation is complete.** The technology has been installed and the offices are up and running. Thank you to Sandra Duran and Mark Thompson for their work in completing this project.

**Mosquito Control:** The mosquito traps in Sudbury traps have specimens that have tested positive for West Nile Virus. There have been no human cases reported in Sudbury. The mosquito risk factor in Sudbury has been elevated to moderate. Wear protective clothing, use mosquito repellent, remain indoors between dusk and dawn and remove any standing water from your property.

**VOTE:** Susan Sama motioned to approve July Board of Health Meeting Minutes as edited. Linda Huet-Clayton seconded the motion. Motion passed 3 – 0 – 0.

**VOTE:** Susan Sama motioned to end the Board of Health meeting at 6:58 PM. Linda Huet-Clayton seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.