

Charlemont Board of Health Minutes

January 27, 2026

Zoom

Present: Doug Telling, Scott Randall, Star Atkeson – secretary

Absent: Rob Lingle

Guests: Kurt Schellenberg, Randy Crochier

Action items:

1. Review/Approve Minutes from December 11, 2025
Minutes were not approved at this meeting, will be put on next agenda.
2. Review and choose items from 2026 District Local Technical Assistance
 - R.Crochier said the top priority should be regional EMS, especially advanced life support, noting that ALS is only available in Colrain and response times are long for West County.
 - D.Telling suggested regional emergency sheltering, pointing out that most towns lack properly equipped or inspected facilities and may not understand the requirements. S. Litchfield had wanted to address that.
 - D.Telling mentioned abandoned housing as an issue but noted it would likely require more staff capacity than towns have. A possible environmental concern regarding prohibiting round up use at Hawlemont as related to and public drinking water and wellhead protection came up. There was uncertainty about whether DLTA funding could apply to private wells, and R.Crochier suggested checking with J.Atwood.
 - EMS regionalization, emergency sheltering, and community health improvement plan emerged as the main areas of interest.

Discussion:

1. Smoking on Berkshire East restaurant deck
The Board discussed complaints about smoking at Berkshire East and suggested following up with a reminder that smoking must occur at least 20–25 feet from exits and areas where food is served.

Recurring Topics:

1. Health Agent Report
 - There was a report of flooding in a basement, the address was not mentioned. J.Ward may have been in contact with the occupants.
 - 280 Zoar Road, ongoing water concerns were reviewed. Complaints date back to February of last year, and in September a leak was identified that had caused water to sink a trailer. At the time of inspection, the trailer was dry and a hose was found off to the side, suggesting the issue was not active at that time.
 - 119 Main Street, a complaint was received from a third-floor unit regarding a rotten egg smell associated with the washing machine.

- There has been no follow-up from units two and three. A separate issue involved a truck damaging a well cover while emptying a dumpster. Although the cover was broken, no violations were identified. While occupants questioned whether proper licensing was in place, the sanitary cap was not compromised and no testing was required.
- R.Crochier said, as of the December 11 meeting, Tobacco Control Officer JJ Prusack is now working as part of the FRCOG health district conducting regional inspections and has already followed up on tobacco signage issues at a problem store.
- K.Schellenberg is designing septic system checklists; creating a plug and play multi page checklist for different systems.
- K.Schellenberg and M. O'Reilly drafted written testimony for the BOH to the Conway Select Board regarding a proposal for two temporary battery energy storage systems. Concerns were raised about siting, permitting and Eversource trying to fit it all in a pole hearing.
 - These systems are described as mobile units, typically housed in trailer- or container-sized structures with lithium-ion batteries. Fire safety remains a concern, as current guidance often recommends allowing such fires to burn rather than attempting extinguishment. R.Crochier concern about Towns not having a formal oversight role despite potential responsibility if issues arise. There are approaching MAHB to draft some language for Towns to use.
 - R.Crochier noted significant public interest, referencing a well-attended meeting in Conway where K.Schellenberg and M. O'Reilly addressed questions and helped correct misinformation. K.Schellenberg added that newer battery technologies, such as vanadium redox systems, may offer safer alternatives, though they are likely several years away from being put to use.
- The Board has completed the renewal season and finalized the FY27 budget, with a few renewals still pending. M. O'Reilly and K.Schellenberg plan to meet with S.Reyolds to review the short-term rental bylaw following a challenging first year in Buckland and Shelburne. The bylaw was modeled after South Hadley's approach.
- An update on Oxbow included receipt of extensive documentation and a brief inspection by J.Gougeon. T.DeCere appealed J.Hawkins' ruling on sprinkler requirements to the state level but was unsuccessful.

The meeting concluded with a motion to adjourn by Scott Randall, seconded by Doug Telling, at 6:48. S.Randall - Yes, D.Telling - Yes

These minutes are not official until signed.

Documents Reviewed

- Agenda January27, 2026
- Minutes 12/11/2025