

Charlemont Board of Health Minutes

June 30, 2026

Zoom

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

Guests: Kurt Schellenberg, Jonathan Mirin, Ken Gartner, Kent Chamberlin, Ellen Landauer, Bill Coli

Appointments:

6:15 Bill Coli to speak about his proposal for a septic system variance at 216 Warner Hill Rd.

B.Coli hoped to restart his septic design process to use an Incinerator toilet and Tight tank rather than the Eljen system that was approved and asked the board how to go about restarting the process.

K.Schellenberg read an excerpt of 310 CMR 15.260: Tight Tanks (1) *Approval of a tight tank may be granted only to eliminate a failed on-site system when no other feasible alternative to upgrade the system in accordance with 310 CMR 15.201 through 15.293 exists, except as provided in 310 CMR 15.260.*

Bill acknowledged that the conditions did not fit his situation as there is a feasible alternative to upgrade his system, and that he would keep researching.

6:35 Jonathan Mirin Follow-Up: May Vote on Smart Meter Measurements / Presentation on National Grid Smart Meter Deployment

- Jonathan Mirin said he was there as a follow-up to the Board's vote in May to pursue measurement of RF emissions from National Grid smart meters. Ken Gartner had prepared a document based on measurements taken, no charge.
- Doug Telling said that the matter falls under the jurisdiction of DPU rather than the Board of Health, that Town Counsel had advised that the issue is outside the Board's purview, and that two lawyers had reviewed the question and reached that conclusion.
- Jonathan Mirin responded that town counsels are traditionally conservative in their advice, and noted the Board has not itself taken any measurements to assess impact.
- Doug Telling noted that smart meter installation is currently underway.
- Jonathan Mirin suggested the Board could implement a tracking project, as other communities have done, citing the Board of Health's general plenary authority to safeguard public health.
- Board members responded that this authority is generally understood to apply to acute or emergency situations, not broader population-level claims absent clear and convincing evidence, and that a nuisance-law approach would require peer-reviewed evidence of broad applicability not yet presented to the Board.
- Kent Chamberlin, presenting to the Board, argued that RF exposure affects the general population cumulatively, comparing it to air pollution's link to asthma and emphysema. He stated that rates of various diseases — including Alzheimer's, brain tumors, and diabetes — have increased markedly since 2020, referencing findings from a presentation he had previously shared with the Board.
- Board member Rob Lingle pushed back, stating that cell phones emit substantially more RF energy than smart meters (he estimated roughly 1,000 times more) and that establishing causality would require rigorous, consistent scientific methodology — a high bar, in his view, for the Board to take on. He noted the DPU sets the governing exposure standard, which he said is based on distance from a cell tower.

- Kent Chamberlin responded by questioning the origin of current exposure standards, citing animal studies referenced in his presentation, and referenced a New Hampshire legislative commission that he had served on and that had examined health and environmental impacts of wireless radiation.
- Rob Lingle and Kent discussed research involving in vivo blood imaging (citing ultrasound-observed red blood cell clumping, or rouleaux formation) and single-cell gel electrophoresis studies referenced in connection with RF exposure, comparing this to effects seen with ionizing radiation.
- Jonathan Mirin offered an analogy questioning whether current exposure limits are meaningful, comparing it to setting a highway speed limit of 500 mph — so people would be technically compliant, but not indicative of safety. He further compared long-term low-level RF exposure to secondhand smoke, which degrades health cumulatively over years.
- Scott Randall asked to review the underlying data and presentation materials.
- Kent Chamberlin stated that outreach to the FDA, EPA, and FCC had not resulted in any of those agencies agreeing to meet with advocates on this issue, characterizing them as influenced by industry.
- Jonathan Mirin said the goal is to help build broader public awareness, and asked whether the Board might consider distributing basic educational material to residents — rather than a formal determination or enforcement action.
- Rob Lingle again questioned the focus on smart meters, noting they emit substantially less RF energy than cell phones, and asked why higher-output consumer devices were not the focus of concern instead.
- Kent Chamberlin responded that the pulsed waveform pattern of smart meter transmissions may be more biologically disruptive than continuous exposure, and noted current exposure limits are based on thermal (heating) effects only, not potential long-term non-thermal effects.
- Scott Randall noted, drawing on his background in microscopy, that he would want to see higher-resolution imaging (such as dark-field microscopy) rather than ultrasound, before drawing conclusions from the blood-clumping claims discussed.
- Kent said that direct petitions to the FCC have been unsuccessful, including a 2021 appellate case, and suggested local-level action — such as a Board statement encouraging awareness and precaution — may be more practical, along with promoting opt-out options.
- Rob Lingle confirmed that National Grid does offer a smart meter opt-out option.
- Jonathan Mirin suggested addressing the topic in smaller increments at future meetings given time constraints, and offered to meet separately with members who have follow-up questions

Action items:

1. Minutes of 5/27/2026
Scott Randall made a motion to approve the Minutes of May 27th as written. Rob Lingle seconded the motion. Doug Telling - yes, Scott Randall - yes, Rob Lingle - yes.
2. Board organization
 Doug and Scott both have printers.
Rob Lingle made a motion that Doug Telling and Scott Randall be co-chairs. Doug Telling seconded the motion. Doug Telling - yes, Scott Randall - yes, Rob Lingle - yes.

Kurt will follow up to make sure Scott gets on the MAPCHO list.

3. BOH representative for the Earth Removal Committee

Zoar pit is almost depleted, there will be moves around Charlemont for a new gravel pit. The Committee may have occasion to meet. There is a lake at the bottom with a loader in it. Lingle has a background in Quaternary geology and geophysics and is happy to do it.

Doug Telling made a motion to appoint Rob Lingle to the Earth removal Committee. Scott Randall seconded the motion. Doug Telling - yes, Scott Randall - yes, Rob Lingle - yes.

Discussion:

1. 174 Main Street

J.Ward took complaints from the tenant, inspected, and wrote lengthy order. Many changes have been made. There was extensive cross wiring. They will get the electric inspector in there.

2. 280 Zoar Rd

Woodland Park was visited and lengthy orders written up. There were debris issues, well issues, flooding issues. There was flooding on the Western side of the park, ducks lived there. The well is the DEP's jurisdiction. There is still a boil water order.

Scott Randall saw the cars, plans to look at the wetlands maps and have concomm take an action.

3. 2151 Route 2, trash

There is a current order for the owners to clean up the piles of trash. R.Crochier is in contact with the AG's office about receivership. It's hard to get answers from the current owners about title and bank etc. They are not being forthright.

Recurring Topics:

1. Health Agent Report

- Summer camps for children are starting up, the agents are going by to see that there is a medical presence on site and a doctor that can be consulted, and that camp directors are adhering to code.
- K.Schellenberg and The Board talked about tick borne disease. Meg Ryan is the arborvirus liaison, mosquito surveillance gets relayed from the state.
- Permethrin events are held.
- Bathing beaches and swimming pool inspections are booked into August.

Rob Lingle made a motion to adjourn @7:47 pm. Scott Randall seconded the motion. Doug Telling - yes, Scott Randall - yes, Rob Lingle - yes.

Documents Reviewed

- Agenda 6/30/ 2026
- Minutes of 5/27/2026