Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
January 20, 1999

Present: James Brown, Ellen Foberg, Leonard Laffond, Town Nurse Ruth Loomis, Dr. Robert Miller, Attorney Craig Barry, Melissa Quinn

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM. This was a working meeting to allow all concerned parties to get together for a discussion relative to extended services now possible to offer to Rowe residents because of Ruth Loomis's qualifications as a Nurse Practitioner(NP). Mr. Laffond noted that when the position of Town Nurse was envisioned, the original intent was along the lines of services permitted to a licensed Registered Nurse. When Mrs. Loomis was hired, it became apparent that she was licensed to do more than the Board had planned. Chairman Brown said that he was worried that the Board was "getting in over it's head", in regard to the cost of the position as well as possible liability. Dr. Miller was asked if he saw the letter from Drs. Grandison and French expressing their unwillingness to provide medical supervision to the position of Nurse Practitioner. He said that he had seen it and he felt that they simply do not have the extra time that would be required for medical supervision of the position. Dr. Miller is however, exceptionally enthusiastic about the services that Mrs. Loomis can provide for town residents under his medical supervision. He mentioned the distance for Rowe residents from medical offices and pharmacies as well as winter weather conditions that make traveling difficult, particularly for senior citizens. He is willing to arrange for admission to a hospital facility for Mrs. Loomis's patients that do not have their own primary care physician in the event of an emergency or pressing medical need. It was noted that Mrs. Loomis has worked in Dr. Miller's office on two occasions to give them an opportunity to work together. He praised Mrs. Loomis highly and said that the Town is very lucky to get the care that she can provide.

Chairman Brown expressed his concern about setting a precedent (i.e. providing the expanded services of a NP) in the event that Mrs. Loomis left the position at some point. His concern is that the Board might be unable to fill the position with another NP, and have to reduce services. Both Mr. Laffond and Ms. Foberg are in favor of offering the additional services, and pointed out that this would benefit more townspeople rather than focusing primarily on seniors.

Dr. Miller also noted that Mrs. Loomis, as a Nurse Practitioner, may keep on hand and dispense a 48 hour supply of certain medications (*not to include* any controlled substances), a service that would be especially valuable to residents in the event of severe weather.

It was made clear that Mrs. Loomis would never interfere with an established doctor - patient relationship; instead the emphasis would be on supportive and supplementary care.

Dr. Miller was asked what he would charge for his services to provide medical supervision. He replied that his fee would be $500 annually, with the understanding that he would donate this fee back to the program to be used to fund patient care.

Town Counsel Barry was asked if he had comments on the legal aspects of the position. Mrs. Loomis provided copies of 244 CMR 1.00 - 8.00 containing requirements for licensing, practicing regulations, continuing education, etc. relative to LPNs, RNs and Nurse Practitioners, and Attorney Barry had reviewed them previously. He made four suggestions, as follows:

1. 4.05 He recommended that the Board keep copies of the supervising physicians licenses on file.

2. 4.13 He recommended that the Board keep copies of the nurse practitioners licenses on file.

3. He recommended that the Board keep a copy of the NP's malpractice insurance certificate on file.

4. He recommended that guidelines must meet requirements of the regulatory scheme set out in 4.22, subsection 2 & 3. In this regard, it was noted that a set of guidelines was prepared by Mrs. Loomis and Dr. Miller. A copy was given to Attorney Barry. He will review these guidelines and report on his findings.

Other than these four points, Counsel had found no legal objections to the expanded duties.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa S. Quinn, Administrative Assistant

absent @ signing
James D. Brown, Chairman

Ellen L. Foberg
Ellen L. Foberg

Leonard J. Laffond
Leonard J. Laffond