Town of Rowe - Board of Health

Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2000

Present:

Ellen Foberg, Leonard Laffond, Mary Jo Phelps and Melissa Quinn.
Audience: Joyce & Raymond Boutwell; Jean-Calude VanItallie, Soren Rono, Bob Leet (Whetstone Engrg)

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM.

Potential Rabies Expsoure:

Mrs. Joyce Boutwell stated that on August 25, 1999 her dog (a German Shepherd) was tied in their yard when it encountered a raccoon. The dog barked at the raccoon and the raccoon "spit at the dog" and then went up a tree. Later in the day (about 10AM) it came down the tree and was observed acting strangely and foaming at the mouth. One of the Boutwells shot the raccoon in the back of the head and then in the stomach. It died. Mrs. Boutwell called the Town Hall and was advised to call the Animal Inspector, Carol Lively, which she did. The Animal Inspector was not at home, so Mrs. Boutwell left a message on her answering machine.

Mrs. Boutwell then called Special Police Officer Gail May. She did not know how to handle situation and suggested Mrs. Boutwell call Environmental Police Officer Sgt. Rich. He stated that the rabies virus could be carried in the saliva. In the meantime, the Boutwells had untied their dog, which was very agitated, had brought it up onto the porch, and had given it some water to drink. Six individuals (Mrs. Boutwell, Mr. Boutwell, daughter Melissa Boutwell, son Scott Boutwell, Scott's girlfriend, and Scott's daughter) came into contact with the dog as they were trying to comfort it and calm it down. Mr. Boutwell checked it thoroughly looking for any cuts or wounds. In doing so they all possibly came in contact with the raccoon's saliva that was on the dog's coat. The dog was taken to the vet in Marlboro VT and given a booster shot. The dog never developed any symptoms.

Mrs. Boutwell then called the Franklin Medical Center Emergency Room. The physician on call said that rabies is a life-threatening illness and that they should be vaccinated. The Boutwells said they contacted their physician (Dr. French) and he stated that he would not administer the vaccine. They said they also contacted the physician of record for their granddaughter (who also happened to be at their home) and he said that he would not administer the vaccine to their granddaughter, (who was at that time only 3 years old) because of the possibility of adverse reactions to the vaccine.

Approximately 5 hours after leaving the message, the Animal Inspector returned home, heard the message and returned the Boutwell's call. She advised the Boutwells to assume the animal was rabid. Since the raccoon was already dead, she instructed them to bury it deeply enough so that another animal would not dig it up…and to handle it with extreme care using gloves and long-sleeved shirts to avoid contact with any saliva. The Boutwells did bury the raccoon.

All six individuals that had potential exposure went to the Emergency Room at the Franklin Medical Center and began their vaccinations. This entailed eight separate visits for each individual. At one vaccination appointment a nurse at FMC who was a personal friend of the Boutwells informed them that she thought there was a state law requiring local Boards of Health to pay for these vaccinations. The Boutwells were at the meeting this evening seeking payment for the treatments from the town, siting Chapter 140, Section 145A of the Massachusetts General Laws. Chairman Foberg read the law aloud and also read Commonwealth of Massachusetts Regulation 105 CMR 335.000. (See attached) Chairman Foberg noted that *the physician administering the vaccine must give the town written notification within 7 days as follows:*

> *"…the name and address of the patient to be treated, the severity of the bite or degree of exposure, the place where the bite or exposure occurred and the identity of the animal responsible for the biting if said is obtainable" prior to administering any vaccine.*

This was never done. Mrs. Boutwell stated that she thought calling the Animal Inspector was sufficient notification. She also said that she thought it was the Animal Inspector's job to take care of the dead raccoon and arrange for testing. Mrs. Foberg said that the Animal Inspector was not made aware that there had been any human exposure at the time of the original phone call, and it is standard procedure to advise burying a dead animal suspected of having rabies.

Mr. Boutwell stated that although the final bills have not been received, costs for the treatment could exceed $30,000. Chairman Foberg stated that the ER had failed to follow through with their responsibilities as far as notification was concerned. The vaccinations were well over with by the time the town hall was contacted about the potential exposure and that the vaccinations had even taken place (several months had gone by). Mr. Boutwell asked for a determination in writing. The Chairman said that he was welcome to a copy of the minutes. Chairman Foberg said that she would like to see copies of the ER bills and asked Mr. Boutwell to have they hospital call her if they had any questions or would like to discuss the matter. The Boutwells thanked the Board and left the meeting.

Shantigar Foundation:

J. C. VanItallie, Bob Leet (Whetstone Engineering) and Soren Rono (architect) came in to discuss plans for expansion of the Shantigar property. These plans are not yet finalized, and preliminary plans that were sent to the Board were withdrawn. Mr. VanItallie described to the Board how he envisions the addition of living quarters for guests, including a "meeting room" and five "pavilions", each housing four persons.

There is to be a kitchen in the meeting room, but cooking would be limited to heating and preparing non-perishable foods, with no actual meal preparation. The meals would be prepared in a kitchen in the barn/assembly room building, which must be constructed in compliance with requirements for a food establishment license. The kitchen must be inspected annually for a Food Establishment License. Plans still must be presented to the Planning Board for their consideration. When final plans are available, they will be submitted to the Board of Health relative to a sewage disposal works construction permit.

Nurse Practitioner:

Reports were submitted by Nurse Practitioner Ruth Loomis, both for the quarter ending in December and an annual report for calendar 1999.

Septage Pumping:

A pumping log for January 6, 2000, was received from Houghton Sanitary Service for the Ellsworth Veber property on Pine Hill Drive. The log stated that the 1000-gallon tank appeared to be in satisfactory condition.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa S. Quinn, Administrative Assistant

Approved:

Ellen L. Foberg

Ellen L. Foberg, Chairman

Leonard J. Laffond

Leonard J. Laffond

Mary Jo Phelps

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