

Town of Newington, NH  
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, November 15, 2018 Town Hall

**Present:** Chair Ted Connors, Selectman Mike Marconi, Selectman Ken Latchaw, Kevin Kelley, Health Officer, Lulu Pickering, Martha Roy, Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recorder.

**Additional Guests:**

Lisa Morris from the NH DHHS  
Dr. Ben Chan, NH State Epidemiologist  
Clark Freise, Asst. Commissioner NH DES  
Robin Mongeon, and Peter Sandin from the NH DES  
Chris Reh and Tarah Somers from the CDC ATSDR  
Peter Clark from Senator Shaheen's Office  
Kerry Holmes from Senator Hassan's Office  
Ashley Molta from Congresswoman Carol Shea Porter's Office

T. Connors called the meeting to order at 10:02am, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

L. Pickering expressed her concern about the contaminated wildlife. She would like to see testing of the deer and turkeys in Newington. Michigan has put out a health warning about eating contaminated deer. L. Pickering referred to a NH Fish and Game chart that shows that 63 deer and 7 turkeys were captured in Newington last year. The Great Bay Wildlife Refuge hasn't been tested at all.

Clark Freise stated that he had never heard anything about contaminated deer being a concern. He noted that the deer liver and blood were important pieces of the deer to avoid as the chemicals concentrate there. The State's concentration had been on drinking water because it affects the most people. Everyone drinks water every day. The people affected by eating contaminated deer would be minimal he believed.

**Eating Contaminated Venison Concerns**

1. After 2 years of discussing the hunter/venison pathway of exposure at RAB meetings with members of NH DES in attendance (Peter Sandin and Robin Mongeon), Clark Freise/NH DES told us that our November 15<sup>th</sup> meeting was the first time he had head of the issue. Are the RAB DES folks talking with other DES folks?

2. It was good that Kevin Kelley, Newington's Health Officer, spoke up in support of deer hunters. As a hunter, he is concerned about the PFC issue in deer and wants to know who is informing hunters or the NH Fish and Game about any potential risks from eating locally-killed deer. The two-day deer hunt at Great Bay Wildlife Refuge began Saturday November 17, 2018.
3. Clark Freise/NH DES said that he hears different "most important" pathways of PFC exposures in different communities he visits around the state, and we may not like what he says/does about the deer/hunting pathway. Obviously different communities can have different pathways of exposure, and there is nothing inconsistent or out of the ordinary for Newington's main pathway of human risk to potentially be from contaminated deer consumption. Unless some of the local deer are tested, however, we will not know how much of a risk the venison issue is, or is not.
4. Other areas of NH are dealing with PFC contamination in drinking water, for example, Bedford and Litchfield. According to the 2017 Fish and Game report, 80 deer were killed in Bedford, 63 in Newington, and 42 in Litchfield. If deer are a human exposure pathway, Newington is likely not alone in needing to address this potential risk to human health.

Ken Latchaw spoke about contaminated ground water and high water table that occurs in the springtime. This contaminated water runs over farmland and gardens thus contaminating soil. Clark Freise concurred.

T. Connors discussed the need for blood testing for Newington residents. Dr. Chan told the group that the blood testing program ended in June but residents could go to their primary physician and ask to have their blood tested. The NH DHHS has composed a letter that residents can take to their doctors when they ask for blood tests.

### **More Blood Testing Concerns**

1. Some Newington folks did have their blood tested in the earlier state program, but they were included in the study because they either worked on Pease or had children in daycare there, not because they were drinking contaminated well water.
2. There is no money available for additional blood testing. The earlier state program has ended. Folks with well PFC contamination less than 70 ppt are not eligible for testing anyway.
3. Private testing can cost between \$600 to \$800 for the test, plus up to two doctor's visits to determine if the test will be ordered, and then to discuss the results. See [www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/pfcs/blood-testing.htm](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/pfcs/blood-testing.htm) for the blood testing vendors.
4. NH DHHS is focusing its educational efforts primarily on health care providers, see the July 2018 letter already on the town's website.

5. Anecdotal information exists (Lisa Morris/DHHS, Dr. Benjamin Chan/DHHS) that some health insurance companies have covered the cost of testing but this is likely wishful thinking because Tarah Somers/ATSDR and Christopher Reh/ATSDR have heard otherwise. Unless there is some health issue that the person is complaining about that may possibly be related to PFC ingestion, it is unlikely that insurance companies will pay.
6. The state labs and NH DHHS do not have internal capabilities to do PFC testing. All prior blood testing was done by external vendors with DHHS solely acting as a go-between. The costs of the DHHS's work to coordinate this activity were absorbed internally in their existing budget. This included the Pease Blood testing study and the Merrimack biomonitoring study.
7. NH has two legislative commissions looking at environmental contamination. HB511 (Establishing a commission to study environmentally-triggers chronic illness) was sponsored by Mindi Messmer, Dennis Malloy, Tamara Lee, Martha Fuller Clark et al, and signed by Governor Sununu 06/28/2017. The other is HB 484 (establishing a commission on the seacoast cancer cluster investigation).
8. To increase its PFC testing capabilities, there is already a plan with a budget to add equipment and resources to the DHHS labs. A copy of this plan will be sent to Martha Roy. It is unclear whether this plan will increase the capabilities or capacity at the state level for testing any animal tissues. Michigan increased their state capabilities through legislative actions and appropriations.

T. Connors would also like to see all Newington residents that are on well water to be hooked up to Portsmouth water. The Air Force has offered the 4 residents with high levels of PFAS in their well water to be hooked up. Three have taken the offer. Clark Freise thought the most important issue is to set drinking water standards in NH. They will need everyone's support to get it through the legislature. The DES can't enforce it if there are no standards.

### **Water Information**

1. Tarah Sommers/ATSDR indicated that NH used to be part of a cooperative agreement with ATSDR but not any longer. PFC issues are now being handled by NH DES.
2. Newington well owners with PFC levels of 70 ppt or more have been contacted about hooking up to the Portsmouth drinking water supply. Peter Sandin/NH DES said that 3 of the 4 impacted well owners were already on Portsmouth water. He also said that people with wells testing less than 70 ppt for PFC were not eligible for this offer.
3. The USAF is currently conducting a study of the level of contamination at various levels in the underground water. Wells are being dug around town to test for PFCs in

the bedrock and at 2-3 levels above bedrock, including in surface water. This information will inform us about the extent of the contaminated water flow at the surface level and below ground in two different strata plus bedrock. It may, or may not, lead to the creation of a new groundwater management zone – not really discussed.

4. The water table in Newington is high in many locations, which leads to contaminated ground water being present at the surface at various times of the year. This year the water table stayed at surface level, or just below, for most of the summer and fall. Clark Freise/NH DES told Ken Latchaw that such a condition could create a risk for farmers or folks growing backyard gardens.
5. Clark Freise/NH DES is working on an ambitious schedule to create the first drinking water standards for the levels of four PFC compounds by January 1. These MCLs (maximum contaminant levels) automatically become the standards for ground water.
6. Clark Freise/NH DES said that even if NH creates standards for drinking water that are lower than 70 ppt for PFC, there is no guarantee that the state standards will take precedence over the national EPA standard of 70 ppt. Also, the state has not decided whether, or not, to have a combined standard for PFOS+PFOA.
7. We need to appreciate that getting the water standards right is important. NH DES needs to appreciate that a linear approach is not the only viable one. Working on multiple aspects of the contamination issue in a parallel fashion is also a viable approach.
8. Dr. Chan/DHHS said it best when he noted that the water standards NH DES is creating will impact future deer drinking contaminated water, but the town is also interested in what can be done now for hunters eating deer who are drinking contaminated water today.

Tarah Sommers of ATSDR- CDC explained the history of the USAF firefighting foam and chemicals within it. Chris Reh, Associate Director of ATSDR stated that blood testing will be conducted once the final 12 sites to use are chosen. This is a national study.

#### **Federal Register Health Effects Study**

1. Nothing concrete came from the meeting about the ability of Newington folks to be included in the different waves of this study, other than a general assertion of eligibility once all other avenues have been exhausted to fill the available spots with people who took part in the earlier Pease study.
2. The handout from Christopher Reh/ATSDR shows three components of a multi-site study that includes the Pease study. The emphasis of these studies is on drinking water and not on occupational or environmental exposure. In a general sense, however, what is learned from the drinking water studies should help inform any

health effects of people who have PFC exposure from their occupation or environment.

3. It is important to appreciate that from a scientific standpoint, the ATSDR is most interested in a strong study that correlates, or not, PFC exposure to specific health problems. They are highly focused on the Pease group who took part in the earlier blood testing work because those folks are a somewhat homogeneous group who all drank from a single contaminated water source with known levels of contamination. Yes, Newington contaminated well water drinkers will benefit as much as anyone else on the results of this study. BUT, no, the costs of covering PFC blood testing for these Newington well water drinkers, will not be possible unless some of these folks get enrolled in the study.
4. Tarah Sommers/ATSDR mentioned perhaps including some additional “diet” questions in the survey that study participants will fill out – presumably relating to whether the person eats venison.
5. No real feedback on whether a Division of Community Health Investigation petition would help Newington with the deer issue. It sounded like the PFC issue is being addressed in a different path.

Extensive discussion ensued about how to inform the public of the health risks and how Newington residents could be helped.

### **Suggested Next Steps**

1. At a minimum, everyone who attended the meeting is at least aware of what Newington is wrestling with in terms of widespread PFC contamination. They are also aware of our concerns and our request for help in addressing the potential risk from eating local deer.
2. Clark Freise/NH DES said he would contact Glenn Normandeau of the NH Fish and Game Department to discuss the PFC issue and deer. The Newington selectmen should do the same.
3. Peter Clark/Senator Shaheen’s office, Kerry Homes/Senator Hassan’s office, and Ashley Motta/Rep. Shea-Porter’s office spoke with me after the meeting. They said that if the selectmen write a letter to their offices about the deer testing issue that the congress women, in turn, could send a letter to the USAF asking that deer in Newington be tested for PFC levels.
4. Clark Freise/NH DES will send information on its proposal to expand PFC testing capabilities in NH.
5. Robin Mongeon/NH DES mentioned that RAB may be a good way to inform the public about human health issues relating to PFC. Probably not. RAB already affords little time to ask questions and discuss topics, and the public has to wait until the very end of the meeting with each person limited to 3 minutes. A Newington-specific

meeting would be better to focus on Newington related issues. The town and the state both have a responsibility to keep townsfolk updated on potential public health risks.

**Adjournment: T. Connors moved to adjourn at 11:59am. K. Latchaw seconded the motion with all in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Lulu Pickering & Eleanor Boy,