

## Diary of a new Board of Health

Here we go a journaling, among the newbies so green.... (Sung to the tune of the Christmas song, *Love & Joy*)

Journal entries:

Monday evening, September 24, 2007:

I have been driving by the town sign each day that reads: "Interviews for BOH 9-24, 7:00 PM." I had no intention of volunteering for this position. My life is busy enough, thank you, but each day I drove by, the more difficult it became. How could I not help out my town? I've been a health agent for the last 7 ½ years. What if no one volunteered? What if only poor choices volunteer? I must, at least until election time, offer to assist on this board.

The Selectman's room was very crowded and somewhat tense. Some people wanted to know where they stood as to the septic plans approved during the time period of the changed regulation. What does town counsel think?

What have I gotten myself into? I was very nervous approaching the Selectmen, even though they were very nice. I was chosen along, with another, to be appointed to the Board of Health.

We held our very first meeting that same evening and voted as to positions for the three members. As soon as I walked into the room, I realized I don't like the room set-up. Everyone is way over there on the other side of a counter. Some are waving papers. Some push their way to the front. I am reminded of the scene in "*It's A Wonderful Life*" where there is a run on the bank and there is no order to the situation, only confusion. I invite people to enter and approach the board. We are changing already. It is an improvement.

**September 26, 2007:**

My board meets with the Selectmen to receive advice from town counsel on the Title V regulation that did not follow proper procedure.

**Friday, September 28, 2007.** My board meets with Town accountant and a representative from Wage & Personnel to discuss in executive session the pay rate of the board's assistant, as requested by her. She has cancelled. We have our open meeting, anyway, as posted.

**Sunday, October 1, 2007:**

It is with great empathy for my own Halifax Board of Health that I conclude my first week as a new member of Plympton's Board of Health. It is a very different experience being on the "other side of the table". For instance, just this last week, there I was at NEHA's conference in Plymouth. The National Environmental Health Association always delivers a great conference. In fact, NEHA was the very first conference I ever attended as a health agent in 2000. My goal was to learn a lot in a few days and I did, indeed.

So, here I was at another great "Yankee Conference", as New England's version is called, enjoying great topics and learning so much. I found myself saying, "Oh, that was a great talk! I have to tell the Board about that!" And then I would realize, I am a board member, also. Would I tell myself about that topic? How did I feel about that topic from the board side of the table? It is a different feeling of responsibility. It involves a sense of serious obligation to do the best you can to protect people and the environment.

Whew! It has not been a week yet and I am tired!

Stay tuned. There is more to be accomplished.