



Falmouth Health Division

Falmouth Town Hall • 59 Town Hall Square • Falmouth, Massachusetts 02540
(508) 495-7485 • health@falmouthma.gov

BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

January 5, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

Select Board Meeting Room
59 Town Hall Square, Falmouth, MA 02540

MINUTES

Times indicated are approximate

In attendance:, Jed Goldstone, George Heufelder, Amy Roth, and Kevin Kroeger

Health Agent: Scott McGann

Absent: George Topulos

5:37 - Open remarks and Public Comment

Ms. Roth read mission of Board of Health

Mr. Kroeger read rules of behavior

No public comments

5:39 – Barnstable County Massachusetts Alternative Technology Test Center (MASSTC) Septic Utility Program – Discussion with MASSTC over their Septic Utility Program for residential Innovative/ Alternative septic system operation and maintenance.

Documents: link to the MASSTC SUP program, PowerPoint presentation by MASSTC

Mr. Heufelder provided opening comments explaining that the Town of Falmouth passed regulations on I/A systems with new construction in watersheds that are nitrogen sensitive.. With 14 endangered watersheds in Falmouth, Mr. Heufelder noted that this presentation by MASSTC is an opportunity to provide information and resources to help answer many of the questions from the public.

David Iorio Izzo, Program Manager for the Septic Utility Program (SUP), which is part of Health and Environment, Wastewater Division.

The presentation provided an overview of the type of services MASSTC can provide to towns, explaining that they can be involved with every part of the I/A system life cycle. The program is designed to support towns around aspects of I/A systems, with one aspect to reduce individual homeowner costs and another to provide information to help homeowners with decision-making.

Mr. Iorio Izzo went on to define the need the Septic Utility Program (SUP) is filling, and some examples of services provided to towns.

Additionally Mr. Iorio Izzo provided an overview of the I/A database and oversight provided by the SUP, which is a centralized system for tracking and overseeing all I/A septic systems. Currently their role is mostly administrative, with proposed options for other types of support in future the SUP such as more technical support to town health departments (enhanced oversight to support town).



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Allie Nicolosi from MASSTC explained efforts to develop a regional certification program to address the aging operator workforce and attract new people into the field. The hope is that towns will embrace the certification and prefer or require certified operators. Additionally Mass DEP may recognize or require the training since existing state requirements are not considered sufficient for I/A systems.

Mr. Heufelder asked for more details about the “enhanced support” option that MASSTC could provide a town, and that that would include.

Mr. Iorio Izzo explained that in addition to the baseline service (\$60/year per home) that ensures a required O&M contract is on file, including outreach if a contract is missing, the enhanced oversight (\$160/year per home) also supports:

- monitoring inspections and sampling to ensure all I/A systems are inspected and sampled on schedule, and they perform outreach if sampling is missing or late,
- verifying correct parameters required by the permit for the type of I/A system, town requirements and Mass DEP are being met and tested,
- performance review and troubleshooting of reported data including reaching out to the operator and keeping homeowner informed,
- monthly reporting to the town, including whether identified problems are resolved or outstanding, and
- escalation to town enforcement if repeated outreach attempts by MASSTC do not resolve issues.

Mr. Iorio Izzo explained that the enhanced support turns the county serving an administrative role into a technical partner and active overseer of I/A performance. They reach out to operator and homeowner. If sampling results do not fall within range, they provide oversight on behalf of the town with operators of systems, and deal with operators and homeowners and communicate to towns through standardized monthly reports.

The Board of Health members reiterated to the public that this type of support would require a process with the Town Health Division and Board to define support and then have public hearings before imposing the higher fee.

Mr. Iorio Izzo explained that the additional service is designed to work on behalf of Town Health Division and Boards of Health and should Falmouth opt for this, the services would be tailored to meet town needs, and ensure that systems are installed properly, maintained and operating as intended, and monitored/sampled appropriately.

Mr. Kroeger raised concerns about the town’s limited capacity and resources to manage existing legacy septic systems.

Mr. Iorio Izzo explained that enhanced regional oversight could help address this gap by building knowledge and structure before a new wave of innovative/alternative (I/A) systems are installed. He noted that a county certification program for system operators could assist homeowners in finding qualified professionals, improve monitoring, and attract younger workers to the aging industry.



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Mr. Goldstone questioned whether government involvement might compete with private contractors, and Mr. Izzo clarified that operation and maintenance (O&M) contracts would remain with private operators.

Ms. Roth asked about using operator data to identify training needs, and Mr. Izzo said the data exists but is not currently available to public. Mr. Kroeger suggested collaboration with MASSTC to flag performance issues.

Steve Leighton (Precinct 1) inquired whether fees would be county-set or operator-based, and Mr. Izzo confirmed they vary by contract.

Mateo Handley (Precinct 6) urged the Town of Falmouth to join the regional effort, noting it would ease the management burden as the Watershed Management Plan anticipates 7,000 additional I/A systems and that standardized training could improve affordability and oversight.

6:00 – Innovative/Alternative denitrifying septic system monitoring, performance and data review- continued from 12-15-2025. Review performance of I/A systems installed in Falmouth and how the collected I/A data could be used or modified to better help the Board ensure installed I/A systems can be tracked to ensure compliance with their approvals. MASSTC to be present for the discussion.

Document: data from the Massachusetts Alternative Septic System Test Center

Mr. Iorio Izzo and Ms. Nicolosi asked for some clarification on what additional information was wanted on this agenda item.

Mr. Kroeger provided summary of the discussion topics that came up when the Board of Health reviewed the county data report at the last board meeting.

Mr. Heufelder explained that high numbers in reports might be due to water use and that during their discussion they wondered if water use data could be added to the county database to help rule out whether water use is the issue and not a performance issue with the I/A system.

Mr. Iorio Izzo stated that tailoring that can be done for specific systems and that it is possible to add water use data to the database assuming meters to collect that information are available. Mr. Iorio Izzo asked if the list of database attributes could be shared with MASSTC to help inform the revamp of the database that they are currently working on, explaining that this is a good time to receive feedback from the board and share with developers.

Mr. Heufelder added that when the town considers going to advanced oversight support from MASSTC, providing an interface with water department records would be particularly useful in winter with lack of irrigation, when the data can more clearly tease out lack of performance. With enhanced support, water use data is going to play a significant role in determining system performance.

Mr. Goldstone added that seeing a range of efficiencies from the same system design/technology across different operators will allow them to identify what makes some systems work better than others. It is already known that there is a range in performance across systems, and this will help to identify variables that influence performance. That information can be used to improve other systems.



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Ms. Roth reviewed minutes from last meeting and shared potential inclusions for county database with Mr. Iorio Izzo from MASSTC.

6:30 - 0 Tobey Lane (41-01-000C-000) – Innovative/ Alternative (I/A) technology approval request. New Construction in a Falmouth Nitrogen Regulated Area. Seeking to construct an 8-bedroom septic system serving a 6-bedroom dwelling and 2-bedroom ADU. Proposed NitROE 2KM nitrogen removal technology. Documents: design plan from Scott Miccile, P.E. dated 12-31-2025, cover letter, homeowner acknowledgment form.

Scott Miccile, engineer representing lot owners. He shared that all resource areas have been flagged on property and they will need to do a notice of intent since development will be in zone b of coastal bank.

Proposed a 6 bedroom home and 2 bedroom ADU for a total of 8 bedrooms. Nitro 2KM system designed for 7-9 bedrooms, 2 tanks for a system of that size. 2K initial septic tank; 2 compartment due to ADU. Followed by 2 nitro tanks. Followed by a leach field consisting of 7500 gallon precast leaching chambers in series surrounded by 4 feet of stone. Performed test pits all extremely consistent. Health agent was present for testing. No evidence of groundwater.

Request for approval to implement I/A system.

Mr. Heufelder questioned the 8 bedroom, 2k 2 compartment tank. He believes that the initial tank is not large enough. Questioned if that was part of permit.

Mr. Miccile explained that the size of tank could be increased.

Mr. Kroeger asked what distance was to salt marsh

Mr. Miccile referred to design plan and approximated 300+ feet to salt marsh.

Mr. Goldstone asked if needs to be 3 inches to grade on the inspection port.

Mr. Miccile stated that if they raise the covers they can meet that requirement.

Mr. Goldstone made motion to approve I/A system for lot on Tobey Lane provided that the plans show the larger septic tank compliant with 15.224, a regulatory limit of 10 mg/liter, that the covers be raised to three inches from grade and the standard set of conditions.

**Mr. Heufelder seconded
All in favor, motion passed.**

6:37 – Cyanobacteria and freshwater quality discussion – Discussion on water quality of Falmouth's freshwater bodies, with a focus on Cyanobacteria, with the Falmouth Pond Coalition as it relates to public health and pond protection.

Documents: existing Cyanobacteria testing/monitoring program (websites/dashboard), current fertilizer bylaw Ch 237.



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Kim Komart (President of Falmouth Ponds Coalition) presented on cyanobacteria blooms in Falmouth's freshwater ponds, citing a severe bloom on Deep Pond in September that prevented use for approximately five weeks. He referenced MA Department of Public Health guidance on health risks (GI illness, skin/eye irritation, potential liver and neurological effects, and risks to pets) and stated that freshwater pond degradation constitutes a public health issue under the Board of Health's mission.

He summarized that Falmouth has roughly 75 ponds, including 28 "great ponds" (≥ 10 acres). APCC testing of 16 ponds shows an increasing number of documented cyanobacteria blooms over the past five years. Four municipal drinking water wells are located near major ponds; while current drinking water is considered safe, the potential linkage with degraded ponds was identified as an area of concern.

He provided a list of potential health actions that the Board of Health could be involved with or support such as, stronger regulation and enforcement of fertilizer and pesticide use near ponds (including better use of Chapter 237), promote public education on allowable activities within 50–100 feet of ponds, encourage or require I/A septic systems near freshwater ponds and support development and deployment of phosphorus-removal technologies and urine-diversion/innovative systems, better coordinate with DPW to improve storm drain maintenance near ponds, and explore a septic maintenance database to prompt regular pumping and inspection.

Mr. Komart reiterated that the quality of Falmouth's drinking water is good, and his intent is to emphasize the vulnerability.

Mr. Kroeger noted that the Board of Health received a few letters including one from Janet Kluever who is supportive of what Mr. Komart just presented, and Paul Skudder, a physician and resident of Falmouth, who wrote a letter emphasizing that eutrophication of freshwater ponds and algal blooms are a public health issue including toxins from cyanobacteria, which is a town health issue.

Mr. Kroeger mentioned that in previous meeting there was consensus among board that this is a public health issue and that the board has focused on coastal waters, but there is no real reason that freshwater ponds are different in terms of environmental and health impacts. He referenced the list Mr. Komart presented, and offered that some could be more effective than others and encouraged the board to consider what will have most impact.

Board members agreed that cyanobacteria and freshwater pond quality are public health issues. Their discussion emphasized the need for science-based, targeted actions guided by identification of surface and groundwater watersheds for each pond, coordination with existing groundwater and wastewater planning work, legal and practical constraints on fertilizer regulation under state law, and the importance of inter-departmental and inter-committee town coordination and public education.

Mr. Heufelder made motion to send a request to the Select Board, that identification of surface and groundwater watersheds and other areas influencing Falmouth's ponds be added to the watershed management plans "sensitive areas", to support targeted management actions.

Ms. Roth seconded

All in favor, motion approved.

Public comment:



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Kathy Sturrock (Precinct 5, Garden Club) asked whether the town's Department of Public Works (DPW) can do more maintenance and repair on storm drains.

Mr. Kroeger questioned whether storm drains are a significant source of nitrogen and phosphorus.

Mr. Goldstone noted that road runoff can be highly toxic—not just for nutrients but also for metals and other pollutants. He mentioned successful bioremediation and rain garden projects funded by state grants but noted their high costs.

Mr. Komart raised concerns that many storm drains are clogged and overflow into ponds, contributing to pollution. He suggested inviting DPW representatives to speak with the Board.

Mr. Kroeger said only about 3% of the town is impervious surface, but data is needed to understand pollutant loading.

Mr. Komart and Mr. Goldstone agreed storm water plays a smaller role in nitrogen and phosphorus loading than septic systems, though clogged drains can still harm ponds.

Deb Hennessey (Ashumet Pond resident) Reported that Ashumet's boat landing design (with pervious surfaces and vegetative filters) was tabled in 2023 due to funding. The pond ranks among the state's highest for PFAS contamination. Requested funding support and commitment to protecting all town water bodies.

Mr. Goldstone explained that PFAS risk relates mainly to ingestion (e.g., drinking water); swimming risk is low. Mercury and PFAS have long prompted fish consumption advisories. He emphasized greater risk from cyanobacteria blooms, which can sometimes but not always produce toxins.

Mr. McGann said APCC determines when to test for cyanotoxins, and results are posted online. Testing is complex since toxin presence doesn't always correspond to bloom density.

Mr. Kroeger and Ms. Roth discussed the need for consistent pond testing and data showing increasing bloom frequency not caused simply by more testing.

Mateo Handley (Precinct 6): Highlighted large nitrogen contributors—such as nursing homes, schools, compost and septic dump sites near ponds—especially the Bonito Pit accepting old septic materials. Advocated for the Board of Health to lead coordination between the Fresh Ponds and Water Quality Committees under a unified reporting structure.

Mr. Goldstone and Mr. Kroeger agreed more inter-committee coordination is needed but clarified the Board's regulatory role and limited control over funding.

Mr. Heufelder reminded attendees that while water quality is important, the BOH manages many health responsibilities beyond ponds.

Mr. Kroeger requested updates on phosphorus-reducing technologies.

Brian Baumgaertel (Wastewater Division Director) Said few proven phosphorus-removal systems exist; current technologies need more real-world testing, and no regulations compel their use. Encouraged volunteer participation to collect data.



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Follow-up discussion with board members covered long-term phosphorus accumulation in ponds and differing pond characteristics.

Mr. Kerfoot (former EPA advisor) urged focus on measuring total phosphorus (TP) concentrations, noting that levels above 0.020 mg/L indicate a problem. Offered to assist the board with prioritization criteria.

Ashumet Pond residents (Paul Scherer, Audra Kelliher, Ron Clyeberg, Ken Ursaki, Marcy Klattenburg) shared observations of pond decline and pledged community support. They noted pending actions on alum treatment, freshwater mussel surveys, and DPW's role in fulfilling Falmouth's in-kind contribution to a joint project with Mashpee.

Mr. McGann will follow up with Mashpee about delays in alum treatment, expected to proceed in spring after required environmental surveys.

8:00 – Nitrogen management cost distribution - Review and discuss the Water Quality Management Committee letter to the Select Board regarding a recommendation to establish a committee to develop a plan for distribution of costs for nitrogen management throughout the Town.

Document: letter from WQMC to the Select Board

Mr. Kroeger reported that the Select Board has not yet seen the Board of Health's letter. Mr. Heufelder questioned why, and Mr. Goldstone explained that since it wasn't part of a Select Board agenda item, it wasn't included in their packet; he suggested that the letter could be emailed directly to board members.

Mr. Heufelder made motion to email individual Select Board members the letter.

Ms. Roth seconded

All in favor, motion passed.

The Board reviewed the Water Quality Management Committee's letter recommending that the Board of Health join a proposed subcommittee. Water Quality Management Committee member Steve Leighton invited board members to attend their upcoming meeting, noting the letter's purpose was to raise awareness with the Select Board before finalizing details. Ken Komart supported the initiative and suggested forming a freshwater ponds advisory committee to ensure residents around ponds who will be affected by septic mandates are also represented.

8:08 – Review and approve minutes 12-15-2025

Ms. Roth motion to continue minutes

Mr. Heufelder seconded

All in favor, motion passed

8:09 – New business and schedule future meetings

Mr. McGann needs a best guess estimate for future meetings in the new venue to accommodate request from FCTV.

Meeting on 1/26 can develop a more detailed schedule.

2/9 will be the following meeting.



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8:10 – Adjourn

Mr. Goldstone made motion to adjourn

Ms. Roth seconded

All in favor, adjourned

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Falmouth Board of Health is to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of residents and visitors of the Town of Falmouth. The primary functions of the Board of Health to achieve our mission are to: prevent and control disease, enforce state and local regulations, promulgate local health regulations, identify and protect from environmental hazards, and advocate for a healthy community.

Chair: Kevin Kroeger