

March 25, 2026 BOH draft minutes

Board members participating: Chair Celia Bird, Jenny Tomczak, Jane Seymour, Kate Tracy and Health Officer Bill Ward

Board Chair Celia Bird called the meeting to order at 5:39 pm.

Agenda

Jenny made a motion to amend the agenda to table Item #4 and invite Dr. Perkins to our April meeting. 2nd by Jane. Unanimous in favor.

Jenny made a motion to approve the amended agenda. 2nd by Jane.

Vote was unanimous in favor.

Draft minutes

Some typos were corrected and Jane made a motion to approve those minutes. Jane 2nd- Vote was unanimous in favor.

Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

Problem Property update from Director Ward

Bill gave the board members an overview of DPI's recent work on Problem Properties. These include vacant and distressed properties. There are 32 properties currently being tracked as "problem properties". The priority properties on the list are determined by of a combination of the length of vacancy, proximity to downtown and their potential negative impact on the community and the housing crisis. The current top priorities included 68 Pearl Street, 281 Pearl Street, 115 Pine Street and 19-21 North Street. More updates will be provided in future BOH meetings.

Public Health and Water Fluoridation –Decision on next steps

Jane provided an overview of the water fluoridation question. Celia pointed out that the current board had reviewed historical board of health reviews of this question. Jane explained that given the preponderance of evidence documenting the safety of water fluoridation and its effectiveness as a public health intervention to prevent dental carries, especially for some of the most marginalized members of our community, she motioned to suggest no changes to Burlington's long-standing practice of fluoridating the public water supply. The motion was seconded by Kate. Unanimous vote in favor of the motion.

Substance Abuse and Safe Syringe Disposal

The board discussed a map showing litter complaints, with Bill explaining that most reports are centralized in downtown areas due to the Peace and Justice Center/BTV cleanup crew's efforts. Celia asked about the next steps regarding litter tracking and prevention. JXXX made a motion to invite the BTV Clean-up crew leaders to the next BOH meeting.

Jane raised the issue of the Howard Street closing their Clarke Street office and the need to keep this in mind as we work on these related issues.

Chair Report

For Chair Report the Celia sought input from board members on areas to focus our efforts in the coming year, particularly in working with City Council.

Jenny suggested continuing work on the impacts of services lost with the closing of the Howard Center Clarke Street program, working with other SSPs and the proposed Overdose Prevention Center.

On budget Jane suggested working with the DPI Housing Division to lend support either financial or with Front Porch Forum messaging that helps the inspection team.

The board had a brief discussion about the annual railroad pesticide treatments. These are subject to approval by the State of Vermont and do not require approval from the BOH. When notification is received about railroad spraying this year, Jennifer and Bill will inquire with state about any recent federal changes to pesticide regulations and related impacts on railroad pesticide postings.

Emerging Issues

Kate voiced concern that with the recent reports of Immigration agents in town and asked that we keep a heightened awareness about the impact that this might be having on our communities the toll that that's taking on people. Celia will connect with Council President Traverse on the community needs question on this issue. The board will look for additional feedback when they meet with the REIB Director.

Public Outreach/Communications

Jane will write a SeeClickFix FPF message to support the work of the BTV Clean-up crew and Bill help residents understand the best reporting practices on syringe clean up.

Adjournment

The Board scheduled their next meeting for April 29th at 5:30 PM on a Wednesday, with a plan to potentially move future meetings to the last Wednesday of each month. Motion to adjourn made by Jenny, seconded by Jane. Unanimous vote in favor.

Celia noted the meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

February 1 to March 25 reports of found syringes

