
Board of Health Meeting Minutes - May 13th, 2026

1 message

Irza Bigas-Melendez <ibigas@easthamptonma.gov>
To: Ryan Griffin <rgriffin@easthamptonma.gov>

Mon, Jun 8, 2026 at 1:00 PM

Hi everyone,

Please find attached the draft minutes from the May 13th, 2026 Board of Health meeting for your review and approval. Kindly let me know if you have any corrections, additions, or other feedback.

Once finalized, I will ensure they are ready for official recordkeeping and any necessary public distribution.

I've also added an email from Maureen Buzby, Regional Tobacco Prevention Program Coordinator. She requested that I share this email with the members of the BOH:

"Good evening,

I am writing in support of Nicotine Free Generation which I understand is a June 10, 2026 Board of Health meeting agenda topic.

I'm the Regional Tobacco Prevention Program Coordinator for seven communities - - Malden, Medford, Melrose, Reading, Stoneham, Wakefield, and Winchester. I've been inspecting stores and conducting youth compliance checks for fifteen years. I've watched the evolution from pink and purple foil-wrapped, \$.79, flavored cigarillos that look like candy, to Juul devices that look like flash drives, to oral nicotine pouches, to the latest vapes that look just like highlighters, and pens that actually write and vape!

There are newer designs – all child-friendly - a teddy bear, a toy guitar, a CD that plays music while you vape. Oh, and you can vape and play Mario Bros. on the same device.

There are vapes that track your use. The device captures information on when, how often, how much you puff, and the nicotine content of your device. The data is sent back to the manufacturer so they can recalibrate.

There are vapes with LED screens that tell you how much battery life and how many puffs you have left – just like the range indicator on your car dash so you remember to fill up.

You can be sure Big Tobacco is developing the next product. They tell us these devices are to help smokers quit. They are blatantly re-branding themselves as a harm reduction provider. When they peddle a device that is soft, squishy, looks like a teddy bear and comes in pink, baby blue, and rainbow colors who really believes that they are targeting an adult smoker.

As you know, tobacco prevention organizations and Public Health professionals have advocated for policies to reduce youth access to addictive nicotine products for decades. We've done so much. Cigar minimum price, flavor ban, T-21, pharmacy ban, permit cap. But year after year, new products. It's a game of whack-a-mole. Band-aid after band-aid is not enough.

We believe it's time to remove these poisonous products from store shelves. It's time to adopt a strategy that actually moves us towards a generation of young people who will never experience tobacco. Just as we now have a generation of young people who, unless they have travelled out of Massachusetts, have never been in a restaurant, movie theater, school, or hospital; or ridden on a bus, subway, train, or plane where someone is smoking.

The Tobacco Industry has their playbook – "Hook them while they are young and you have a customer for life" – that's a quote from industry documents.

We have a playbook too. And we've followed that playbook with many important public health policies. One city or town adopts an innovative and even sometimes controversial policy like Smoke-Free Workplace Law; more cities and towns follow until we have critical mass; and then the State Legislature takes it up – as they did with pharmacy ban, T-21, and the flavor ban.

There are currently twenty-four municipalities that have adopted NFG and ten per cent of the state's population is covered by this life-saving policy. I hope to see Easthampton join other Boards of Health across the state in a move that will save lives and protect an entire generation of young people from experiencing the financial burden, serious health consequences, and even potential career impact of nicotine addiction. Oh, and save the state money in the process. One of the biggest items in the state's budget is health care costs for smoking related illnesses.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts with you. Please share this email with members of the Easthampton Board of Health.

Sincerely,

Maureen Buzby"

Maureen Buzby

Regional Tobacco Prevention Program

562 Main Street

Melrose, MA 02176

781-979-4158

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Kind regards,

--

Irza M. Bigas Meléndez

She/Her

Administrative Assistant

Health Department

City of Easthampton

ibigas@easthamptonma.gov

413-529-1400 ext.123



BOH Meeting Minutes_5-13-2026.pdf

205K