necsema
New England Convenience Store & Energy Marketers Association

Melrose — Document Notes

13 DOCUMENTS · PUBLIC RECORDS PRODUCTION · REAL TRUTH MA · RETRIEVED SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

The substantive documents in Melrose's production, in the order the events occurred: what each one is, what it says, and a link to the file. The complete production is in the document library on the main Melrose page.

Melrose houses the regional tobacco prevention program whose staff appear in almost every other production on this site. Its own records therefore show the coordinating side of the work rather than a single town's adoption.

Nothing is characterized or interpreted. Where a document is ambiguous, it is quoted and left ambiguous.

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1 Board of Health minutes, October 19, 2023 — the Melrose hearing

Board of Health minutes · October 19, 2023 · members Frank Brincherio, Carol Ann Licitra and Lillian Kelly; Anthony Chui, Director

> "No person, firm, corporation, establishment, or agency shall sell tobacco or e-cigatette products to anyone born on or after 1/1/2004."

Melrose's own hearing, two years before most of the material here. Four votes, all 3–0: open the hearing, open the floor, close public comment, adjourn. No adoption vote appears. The times conflict — hearing 6:32 p.m., comment closed 6:19, adjournment 6:33. The Director reads letters from a distributor, a national retailers' association, a law professor, the Public Health Advocacy Institute and NECSEMA; several speakers' remarks appear only as "See attached letter."

2 Whether to publish the guidance document

Email · December 2, 2024 · Mark Gottlieb, Executive Director, Public Health Advocacy Institute, to Chris Banthin and a Department of Public Health official; copied to two further DPH addresses, the Municipal Association, the Health Officers Association, the Association of Health Boards and Maureen Buzby

> "I would strongly recommend NOT publishing this resource on the web. It should be shared directly with stakeholders and likely advocates either in print (I will start with a run of 100 copies) or via a locked PDF. There is no reason to share all of our counterarguments and strategic advice with the national retail sector of the tobacco industry."

The guidance document went to boards of health in December 2024 and appears in several other productions here. Three Department of Public Health addresses are on it.

3 The working group's membership, as its own header gives it

Email · December 3, 2024 · header names twelve people; no titles are stated for any of them

> "Can we include Diane Stover (pulmonologist) and Ken Elstein (Belchertown BoH member) who have joined our group on future emails."

The header names the group: Bonny Carroll (Somerville), Anthony Ishak, Jonathan Winickoff and Thomas Savage (Mass General), Maureen Buzby and Anthony Chui (City of Melrose), Katharine Silbaugh (Boston University), Mark Gottlieb (Public Health Advocacy Institute), Sigalle Reiss (Brookline), Ginny Chadwick (Brandeis), Jeanne MacDonald and Lester Hartman. No titles appear; the only affiliation is each email domain. Somerville's Board wants "an 'expert' presentation… hopefully the next step towards a hearing."

4 A letter template to be customized per town

Email thread · November 30 to December 3, 2024 · Jonathan P. Winickoff, MD, MPH, to the same group, addressed "Dear Team"

> "As a reminder, the letter should be customized by naming the city and town prior to submission to each BOH. Where possible, we should continue to meet with city and town officials in advance of hearings, and prior to the tobacco industry poisoning the atmosphere."

Two attachments are named, a frequently-asked-questions document and a November 24, 2024 letter for boards of health; neither is produced under those names. The file carries a hospital confidentiality notice and the City of Melrose public records notice, the latter five times.

5 A letter for another town's hearing

Email · December 5, 2024 · Maureen Buzby to Andrea Crete, Director of Public Health, Quabbin Health District · from the seventh batch, produced September 11, 2026

> "Please share this letter with Belchertown Board of Health Members at or prior to the December 11, 2024 meeting."

A letter of support for Belchertown's hearing, sent from Melrose six days before it. It opens: "In my role as Regional Tobacco Program Manager for seven Mystic Valley communities I get to see new products as they hit store shelves." The seventh batch is eleven files; the others are routine correspondence, a signage invoice, and two unrelated newsletters swept in by the search terms.

6 A monthly meeting of the task force

Email thread · December 17, 2024 · meeting notice circulated by Katharine Silbaugh to fourteen addresses

> "Bonny and I distributed NFG signage to tobacco retailers in Chelsea today."

Twelve addresses on December 3 have become fourteen, adding Ken Elstein of the Belchertown Board of Health among others. Buzby reports a North Shore program director "is reaching out to all her North Shore Collaborative communities (except for Manchester and Peabody)" and a prevention coalition steering committee "is sending a second letter to the BOH to press for action on NFG."

7 How the group describes itself to a health official

Email · January 6, 2025 · Maureen Buzby, Regional Tobacco Prevention Program, City of Melrose

> “we have a wonderful, very active, “MA NFG Task Force” – informal, anyone can participate. I call is an ad hoc working group.”

To a health official in a town that had not acted. Buzby says the group meets “via zoom once a month or a little more frequently when there is a lot going on,” asks “Are there any plans to get NFG back on the agenda?” and adds: “I understand if you would prefer not to be active in this group until Belmont takes up NFG.”

8 Meeting notes, March 3, 2025

Meeting notes · dated only by the file name · no author, sender or recipient stated

> “Communication to municipal leaders to allay fears generated by opposition’s robo emails”

Notes by municipality — South Hadley, Amherst, Northampton, Pittsfield, Westfield, West Springfield, Somerville, Cambridge, Everett, Winthrop, Natick, Dover, North Reading, Mansfield — recording Somerville’s March 20 hearing, a proposal to schedule the next meeting, an undergraduate compiling “all upcoming mentions of tobacco in BOH notices that have been posted,” and the line “Someone needs to make a calendar.”

9 The state program on a press request

Email · April 24, 2025 · Rachel Cohen, MPH, Senior Health Communication Specialist, Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program, Department of Public Health, to Maureen Buzby; copied to two further DPH staff

> “In the future, please let me know IF you have something scheduled so I can make the comms office aware of the deadline.”

Three state Department of Public Health addresses on a thread about a press request handled by a municipal employee. Melrose’s messages carry the Commonwealth’s external-sender banner. The request’s substance does not appear.

10 Grant reporting, and what the state asked to be counted

Grant reporting workbook · fiscal year 2025, quarterly · includes a column headed “Contract Manager Comments”; neither the reporting staffer nor the contract manager is named

> “Q3 Interesting to seee the communities considering NFG.”

The state program’s metrics include “Number of presentations to municipal decision-makers to propose local policy strategies” and “Number of municipalities for which model policy has been changed/created.” The narrative names municipalities outside the seven-community region the program serves — Northampton, Natick, Dover, Amherst, Pittsfield, Newton, Somerville, Chelsea, Concord, Needham, Manchester, Belchertown, Hopkinton, Mansfield — and states: “I provided testimony, both written and in person or virtually for all.” Spelling as filed.

11 Circulating a draft charter for a steering committee

Email thread · July 22, 2025 · Chris Bostic, Policy Director, Action on Smoking & Health, Washington DC, and Kate Silbaugh; copied to Mark Gottlieb, Ken Elstein, Anthony Ishak and Maureen Buzby

> "It's helpful to have some individuals who are influential, some who will be workhorses and bring certain skills, and some who work for organizations that have not yet committed to NFG/endgame. But everyone should be on board with the goal. No curious tourists."

Bostic writes that "[t]here are similar committees (not all run by ASH) in CA, NV, CO, India, and Oceania as well as the U.S. and global committees," and that "[i]t is not necessary to name it Project Sunset; not all committees are." Silbaugh circulates the draft by link: "Anyone with link can access so keep to yourselves."

12 The draft charter itself

Concept note / terms of reference · dated only by the file name · no author, sender or recipient stated on the document

> "The [MASSACHUSETTS PROJECT SUNSET] steering committee (Committee) is an ad hoc group of volunteers serving in their individual capacities to advance endgame measures in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts"

A one-page draft. Two passages in bracketed capitals mark unresolved choices: the committee's name, and whether elected officials may be members. Membership "is by invitation only" and may include "advocates (whether professional or volunteer), researchers, public servants"; "[i]ndividual membership in the Committee does not require or indicate that the individual's organization supports the goals of the Committee"; the committee will "organize written and oral testimony before government bodies"; "[n]o member may speak on behalf of the Committee unless authorized"; and "[m]embers agree to keep confidential the workings of the Committee." It names no members and no organizations.

13 "We need to expand our group"

Email · September 9, 2025 · Maureen Buzby, forwarding a thread whose quoted distribution list runs to 43 addresses

> "Our goal is to continue adding cities and towns, one by one, Board by Board, until we have critical mass which will make it more likely that the state legislature will pass NFG state-wide"

Buzby writes that "[t]here are currently 17 Massachusetts municipalities that have NFG in place — most by Board of Health regulation," calls the network "the all-volunteer group," and offers to add a new correspondent. Her covering note: "We need to expand our group. Too much going on for the core group to handle. This guy may be a good add." A personal mobile number appears unredacted.