

Winthrop Board of Health Meeting
Meeting Minutes for December 9, 2025
Harvey Hearing Room, Town Hall

Meeting called to order at 3:30 PM

Members Present: Chair Christine Reilly, Jeanne Maggio, Mary Lou Cooney

Minutes from the Board of Health meeting of October 14, 2025, were read and unanimously approved.

Director of Public Health and Clinical Services Update: No update.

Commissioner of Inspectional Services Update: No update.

Public Comment: None.

Past Business: None.

New Business:

North Shore Public Health Collaborative (NSPHC) Update:

Winthrop collaborates with Chelsea and Revere. Board of Health Chair Christine Reilly will be on the advisory committee. NSPHC was given an \$800,000 grant to share.

State goals:

- Vaccines for homebound citizens.
- Better mother/child healthcare services. Winthrop has a nurse once a week.

Board comments:

- Information needs to be disseminated in more ways than electronically. Information is not reaching everyone, particularly the elderly, who may not have access to a computer or know how to find it on a phone.
 - o Ideas: Church bulletins. Senior Center via outreach person (this would only serve seniors). The board discussed talking to Meredith Hurley.

Plastic and non-recyclable utensils, straws, and condiments:

Wendy Page discussed the Skip the Stuff mandate from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) regarding non-compostable items in take-out bags. The State Senate has passed a bill to ban these items, but the House has not passed it yet. They are split on mandatory composting. If the State regulations pass, there would be no need for Winthrop to pass their own.

Ms. Page was joined by members of Mothers Out Front, including Carina Campobasso; Diana Aliberti, Executive Director of the Winthrop Chamber of Commerce, Cheryl Queen, local business owner (Twist & Shake)

Ms. Page's points:

- Will save restaurants money in the long run
- Less going to landfill (40% of our trash goes out of state, and our landfills will be at capacity in 2029)
- Reduces labor and minimizes waste overall
- If composting is not regulated, it will end up in trash anyway.

Ms. Page proposed a July start and to help restaurants get ready now, but the Board demurred, believing that July is too soon.

Cheryl Queen of Twist & Shake noted that they do not send utensils with their Uber Eats/DoorDash deliveries, but they do get a straw (shakes are thick and need large straws). They do get online complaints about "no spoon", though deliveries are eaten at home.

Ideas to help restaurants get ready:

- Ask restaurants to post that restaurants will not give out utensils/condiments unless requested.
- Online banner on websites to promote opt out.
- Businesses will have time to get rid of any existing supplies.
- Sometimes the utensils are packaged with napkins and salt/pepper as well. This may be hard for restaurants to change this.

Board comments:

- Regulations will have to be presented to the public and business owners so they understand that this will take time.
- Regulation must be written, and the July timeline is not realistic.
- Who will ensure businesses adhere to new regulations. It was suggested that this could be done during regular restaurant inspections.

Another related topic was discussed regarding business owners and recycling. Per Ms. Queen, restaurants want to recycle, but their rubbish collectors don't recycle. It was advised that business owners get together, find a space, pay dues to each other and start a private recycling. It was noted by the Board that other cities and towns take care of business recycling. Ms. Page said that it benefits the town budget because of lower costs.

Pest regulations were also noted by Ms. Queen. Revere has regulations that a restaurant must have a contract with a pest elimination service, which will inspect once a month and send a mandatory report to the Revere Board of Health. In Winthrop, this is usually checked by Inspectional Services during regular inspections. It was noted that Revere has a large staff and Winthrop does not.

Next Steps:

- Ms. Page will work with Ms. Alberti on wording of proposed Board of Health regulations.
- Ms. Queen will look at her website to discover how difficult it would be to put a checkbox regarding opt out of utensils/condiments.
- Board will need to meet several times, followed by public comment, then another vote. Board may invite restaurant owners to net meeting for input.
- Chamber of Commerce may email businesses to advise them.
- This must be announced ahead of time via Winthrop Transcript and/or WCAT.
- Cheryl Queen will discover the cost of plastic versus biodegradable for restaurants.
- Ms. Page will write an op-ed for the Transcript to explain what is happening and that it might be a state mandate.
- BOH Clerk will email Mike at WCAT to discuss fixing the camera issues.

The Chair noted that this meeting was helpful and productive and wording will be discussed at the next meeting.

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 4:00 pm.

Adjournment at 4:44; approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Reilly, Chair