

City of South Portland Board of Health Annual Report 2024

History & Establishment

The City of South Portland Board of Health (BoH) was established in [Order 44-19/20](#) on 8/27/2019. As per state statute, [Title 22, §453](#): “Any municipality may appoint, in addition to the local health officer, a board of health consisting of 3 members besides the local health officer, one of whom shall be a physician if available in the community, and one a woman. When first appointed members of the board shall be appointed one for one year, one for 2 years and one for 3 years. Subsequent appointments shall be for 3-year terms. The local health officer shall be secretary ex officio of said board and keep a record of all proceedings.”

Members of the BoH serve as an advisory body to the Local Health Officer (LHO). In addition, the City Council may refer specific health-related matters to the BoH for its review and recommendation. Such referred matters must be within the jurisdiction of the LHO as defined by [state](#) and [local](#) law. Unless expressly authorized by the City Council, the BoH shall not expend funds. The BoH shall not direct the work of the LHO or any other employee or appointed official of the City.

2024 BoH Membership & Meetings

From January 1 – December 31, 2024, City of South Portland BoH membership included:

1. LHO: Barb Skelton (*retired July 2024*); Scott Havu (*started August 2024*)
2. Chair: Bridget O’Connor, MPP, PS-C (term expiring 12/2/2024)
3. Vice-Chair: Becca Boulos, MPH, PhD (term expiring 12/2/2026)
4. Physician: Josh Cutler (term expiring 12/2/2025)

The BoH adopted the [City of South Portland’s Remote/Hybrid Meeting Policy](#) on September 30, 2021. The Board voted to abandon offering regular hybrid meetings, unless requested by a BoH member, or member of the public, on October 21, 2024. Future meetings were held in-person only, unless otherwise indicated, and recorded via Zoom. The Board met monthly for 90-minutes throughout the year.

2024 BOH Accomplishments

Article II: Domesticated Chickens

- BoH members worked closely with LHO, Barb Skelton, on updates to the city’s domesticated chicken ordinance.

Planning Office Support

- Staff from the city’s Planning Office attended BoH meetings for feedback about data (specifically M-DASH) and the Comprehensive Plan.

Process for Resource Sharing

- BoH members proposed a process for determining which resources to post on the Board’s website and worked with the city’s communications officer to adopt a policy for other boards and commissions.

Rodents

- BoH member, Bridget O’Connor, met with staff from Wisdom Good Works to learn about rodent birth control pilot program.

Other Activities

- Requested that City Council approve funding for the LHO position. Request was denied.
- Requested that City Council approve an expansion of BoH scope and membership. Request was denied.

- Requested that City Council approve the BoH oversee a process to update the city's cannabis ordinance. Request was determined to be outside the allowance of the city ordinance; however, the City Council did approve Josh Reny, Assistant City Manager, to oversee the cannabis revision process.
- BoH members continued to provide support to local businesses and city staff regarding sharps disposal.
- Public comments about housing in South Portland informed state policy action (the city's Affordable Housing Committee was not interested in focusing on lead/mold in current housing stock).
- BoH members provided feedback to public requests for assistance with a SAMHSA climate change and mental health grant.

2025 Plans

- Identify new BoH members to replace Bridget O'Connor and Rebecca Boulos.
- Oversee programming to reduce rodent issues in the city.
- Prepare regular updates for inclusion in the city's e-newsletter and *The Sentry*.