



**Board of Selectmen**

**Ware Town Hall, Meeting Room, 126 Main Street**

**Regular Meeting Minutes – Monday, March 8, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.**

**Instructions for call in option: at or before 4:00 p.m., call the phone number below and when prompted enter the Meeting ID number. The platform is Zoom Meetings.**

**Join online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7846041861> (the online option will require a download).**

**Meeting ID: 784 604 1861**

**Passcode: 01082**

**Phone: 929-205-6099**

**Present:** Selectman Alan G. Whitney, Selectman Thomas H. Barnes, Selectman Nancy J. Talbot, Selectman John J. Morrin, Town Manager Stuart B. Beckley

**Absent:** Selectman Keith J. Kruckas

**Present via Zoom:** WRN Editor Eileen Kennedy, Executive Assistant Mary L. Midura

**Meeting Opened by Chairman Whitney at 4:00 p.m.**

**Approval of Letter RE: Mary Lane Hospital**

Selectmen briefly discussed the attached letter prepared by Mr. Beckley. A shorter letter requesting an immediate meeting with Baystate staff and State Legislators was sent today by Mr. Beckley (attached).

**Selectman Talbot made the motion to Authorize the Chairman to sign and send the Letter RE: Baystate Mary Lane Hospital to the DPH and Baystate Eastern Region. Selectman Morrin seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Kruckas).**

**Adjournment**

**Selectman Talbot made the motion to Adjourn the Regular meeting at 4:07 p.m. Selectman Morrin seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Selectman Kruckas).**

Attest:   
Mary L. Midura, Executive Assistant  
To Town Manager



## **TOWN OF WARE**

### **Select Board**

126 Main Street  
Ware, MA 01082  
413-967-9648 x100

March 8, 2021

Director, Department of Public Health  
99 Chauncey St Unit 200  
Boston, MA 02111

Dr. Mark Keroack, CEO and Molly Gray, President, CAO Eastern Region  
Baystate Health Systems  
280 Chestnut Street  
Springfield, MA 01103

Dear Director and Dr. Kerouac and Ms. Gray,

On behalf of the communities and residents of the Towns of Ware and Hardwick, Warren, and West Brookfield, the respective Select Boards and the area legislators present the below points of concern and needed action relative to the proposed closure of the Baystate Mary Lane Emergency Facility and Outpatient Center services. We ask for your support in properly addressing the communities' concerns and honoring the important services provided to residents.

- I. **Communication.** Timing and communication related to the closure of the ER and the medical services at Mary Lane have been terrible. From our legislatures to our local leaders to the region's residents, the suddenness of the closure announcement left no room for planning or discussion of options and timing. The community has loyally supported the Mary Lane facility for decades. The legislators have provided support for Baystate operations. The mistreatment and betrayal shown by the lack of communication by Baystate was unwarranted and unacceptable. It was shocking. We request that Baystate immediately and openly include the region's leaders in discussion and planning moving forward. When public meetings and Q&A sessions are offered, there must be a commitment to giving full and transparent answers and assurances. Don't cut us off. This will benefit Baystate in the long run as it works as a partner with the region.

We request a meeting to be held as soon as possible with Dr. Keroack, Molly Gray, legislative and local leaders to discuss the closing in more detail.

- II. **Emergency Room Closure.** The sudden announcement of closure does not leave towns and residents adequate time to create alternate plans for emergency health and amendments to budgets and operations needed to provide ongoing services. Baystate

should delay this closure for several months to cooperatively address all the impacts this change will have. We request that Baystate please keep the ER open through June of 2022.

*Impact on Ambulance Services.* Although we have an efficient paramedic level system, the closure of the ER would increase the time a patient has to be in the back of an ambulance. There are times, although infrequent that the ambulance may not be running at paramedic level. In the downtown area of Ware, transport time is usually 3-5 minutes to get to the door of the BSML ER. In Hardwick this is commonly twenty minutes for transport. If Wing now becomes the closest ER facility it would add an additional 15 – 20 minutes on the transport time depending on location, thus a change to 18 to 40 minute transport times. This will affect the medical care of patients.

With MassDOT planning to reconstruct the Route 32 Three Mile Bridge over the next two to three years, there is additional complication with transport to Wing Hospital. The possibility for delays and therefore health impacts are increased.

Impact on ability to turn around calls when they overlap. Currently, once the ambulance has arrived at BSML ER, the crew can be available in a short time to respond to another call in the area. Emergency calls tend to overlap 25% of the time. If we had to transport to another facility this response time is increased and or delayed. The likelihood of requiring use of back up ambulances, staff, and utilization of Mutual Aid is increased dramatically. This is a health concern to the area and an increased cost to the ambulance system. There will be increased overtime costs and delays to recall staff to cover additional ambulance calls when the primary ambulance is out of town.

The increased distances will increase wear and tear on the region's ambulances due to added mileage of the transport to another facility resulting in increased maintenance costs. Ambulances would require consideration for replacement of the ambulances sooner than currently planned. Access to controlled medication for use by the paramedics will now be out of town at Wing Hospital. Re-stock would now require travel out of town.

The closure creates the potential loss of a sanctioned landing zone for medivac Helicopter currently at the BMLH site. The region requests that the helicopter facility be kept and maintained.

- III. Reuse of the Land. As part of the closure announcement, Baystate noted that they would demolish the buildings on the property and donate the property as green space. Since that first announcement, Baystate has noted that there may be alternative ways to donate the land, and it is willing to follow the Town of Ware's guidance. Baystate, therefore, should assist the Town with:

- a. A full review of the conditions and costs associated with the current state of the property. Walk through the property with leaders, showing the maintenance and environmental concerns. Provide maintenance costs and estimates for needed building repairs.
  - b. Be a full partner in the planning of the site re-use. What is the best use for the residents – park, recreation, economic development, housing, other?
  - c. Place no restrictions on the re-use of the site if conveyed to the Town.
  - d. Provide all services – planning, engineering, and cleanup – necessary to convey a contaminant free property.
  - e. Provide consultant costs to assist with a full community planning process for the reuse of the site. The outcome of that process should be community support for a vision of the re-use of the site, documented by concept plans and supporting data.
  - f. As planned, whether with buildings or cleared and cleaned, convey the property to the Town of Ware
- IV. The Lewis Gilbert Trust. This is an opportunity for Baystate to offer transparency to the community. Baystate Health should provide all relevant documents to the Town, and allow their attorneys to work with Town counsel to review the requirements of the trust. The regional community should be aware and understanding of the trust's requirements and resources. It is not right that these resources should be re-directed to other facilities if the Trust is not clearly being followed. The Gilbert Family invested a great amount in the welfare and health of the residents of Ware and the region. Baystate should work to continue and enhance that investment.

We, the undersigned State and Local leaders of the Quaboag community, of which Baystate is a part, ask for the consideration and action of DPH and Baystate on these requests. We hope that Baystate will act more openly and responsively on this very important process.

Sincerely,

Senator Anne Gobi

Representative Todd Smola

Representative Donald Berthiaume

Alan Whitney, Chair, Ware Select Board

Keenan Young, Chair, Hardwick Select Board

Chair, West Brookfield Select Board

Dan Flynn, Ware Business and Civic Association



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March 8, 2021

**Dr. Mark Keroack, CEO and Molly Gray, President, CAO Eastern Region  
Baystate Health Systems  
280 Chestnut Street  
Springfield, MA 01103**

Dear Dr. Kerouac and Ms. Gray,

With regard to the announced closing of the Baystate Mary Lane Emergency Room and medical services, the Ware Select Board requests a meeting with you and appropriate staff and our State Legislators in the very near future to further discuss plans and options for medical service and the long term use of the Mary Lane site.

Please coordinate a meeting date with the legislators and Town Manager Stuart Beckley, [sbeckley@townofware.com](mailto:sbeckley@townofware.com).

Thank you for working with the Town.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stuart Beckley".

Stuart Beckley, Town Manager

CC : Senator Anne Gobi  
Representative Todd Smola  
Representative Donald Berthiaume  
Ware Select Board