



OBSERVER REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH Date of Meeting – 2-7-23
Members in Attendance - BOH : Andrew Petty, Todd Belf-Becker (chairperson),
Sec. Andrea Flaxer, Joanne Greer Miller, Helaine Hazlett
LWVM Observer - Thomas Krueger

AGENDA

1. Tobacco Control Update

Joyce Redford, Director, North Shore/Cape Ann Tobacco Prevention Program came to give an update and some recommendations to the BOH. She noted that since 2016 numerous changes have happened at the state level. But, before discussing tobacco issues, she wanted to alert the board to two psychoactive substances that are currently being sold over the counter at convenience and adult only stores. The first is called Delta 8, which is a synthetically processed derivative of hemp, a cannabinol. This compound can give a “high” and can also be addictive. It is ingested, e.g., gummies; inhaled, e.g., vaped, etc. The other psychoactive substance is called Kratom, which is believed to act on opioid receptors. This is an extract from a species of evergreen trees. It can be a stimulant in low doses but at high doses give euphoria and reduces pain. There can be significant side effects from this drug, including seizures, high blood pressure, and even death. Joyce said there have been no restrictions on their sale in MA so far, but it is illegal. The police have the authority to confiscate these drugs. There is the option for local BOHs to ban these substances and attach fines to their sale. (Joyce noted parenthetically how actions at the local level, leads to regional action, and finally state action. This was the route workplace smoking bans occurred. A critical mass of local actions was needed.)

Members of the BOH were all deeply concerned about these drugs. A discussion ensued about potentially banning these in MHD, and a regulation could be crafted and reviewed by town counsel. The town of Beverly is currently considering the same. Lynn already has a broad sweeping regulation that prohibit a wide variety of drugs.

Following this discussion, Joyce read a list of possible tobacco control regulations for the BOH to consider. Some of the items on the list are already state regulations; others could be done at the local level. Some of these items included no permit renewals if outstanding fines, if tobacco sold to minors, having permit caps per towns, etc. Other were more specific: minimum pricing for cigarettes (not < \$2.50 for a single, 2 or more not less than \$5); banning blunt wrap tobacco; suspension periods for sales to minors (3 days for first, 7 days for second, 30 days for third.) The BOH discussed these recommendations and will draft regulations to be reviewed by town counsel. These will

hopefully be ready by the next scheduled BOH meeting, 3/14/23. In conclusion Joyce said that the smoking rate in MHD is low, but vaping has increased.

2. FY 24 Budget

Andrew said that the HD was currently putting together the FY 24 budget for the health department and waste management. He is actually working on three iterations of this budget: one if it is level funded; a second if there would be cuts needed; thirdly, a budget if an override passed. The steps will be to meet with the liaison for Finance Committee, then the Town Administrator, etc. He then gave some specifics about the revolving accounts - vaccines and waste disposal. There are a number of cost drivers that increase each year - waste disposal, recycling, compost. He stated there was a lot of work needed ahead.

3. Mental Health Task Force Update

Ms. Miller gave an update on the MHTF. The last meeting was on 1/30/23 and two new members were added, Susan Stelk and Mark Lomand, bringing additional energy and experience to the group. Susan is a social worker and has been very active in school education and the MHD Humane Society. Mark is a professor at Salem State University, a health professional, and has already participated in MHTF speaker series. Previously Dan Bauer, principal of the high school, was part of the task force, but he will be leaving. Ali Carey, a special ed teacher, will fill his spot for the schools. (There was brief discussion about the procedure for adding new members to the MHTF since it a subcommittee of the MHD BOH.) Gina Rabbitt, a mental health clinician who works with the MHD Police Department, and whose role is de-escalate MH situations, attends the meetings also but is not a member.

Ms. Miller has sat with each of the task force members individually for feedback and ideas, etc. Ideas include: meeting in person every other meeting; having a column in the newspaper regarding mental health and reducing the stigma surrounding it, etc.

Future programming might include programs for opioid prevention; hope and resilience; scams for the elderly who are often victims; postpartum depression; NAMI for suicide prevention, etc. Ms. Miller spoke to having MHD move to where we care for each other and build support structures.

In regards to applying for ARPA funds, the requests are as follows: \$10,000 for high school programs, \$2,000 for the COA, \$2,000 for MHD CARES branding (banners, tents, flyers, etc.), and \$3,000 for website maintenance and design. Much of this funding would cover more than just this year. Ms. Miller will write this up for consideration at the next meeting.

4. Service Animals Discussion

Mr. Petty read some of the specifics of the definitions, laws, rights, and responsibilities of service animals and emotional support animals in places of accommodation, housing, transport, etc. These are available on mass.gov, specifically the Mass. Office of Disability. For example, if a person with a disability is accompanied by a service animal, they cannot be asked for documentation of the disability. Only when a disability is not obvious, can the following two questions be asked: 1) is the animal a service animal required because of the disability? 2) what task or service is the animal able to provide? Service animals can go into restaurants, groceries stores, etc.

3. Director's Report

- A. Transfer Station update - still waiting for architect who is talking to subcontractors, etc. When a schedule is available, the TS committee will talk with group. Bidding could perhaps start by spring.
- B. Investigating motorizing fencing at the TS so it would be automatic, allowing for less idling of trucks.
- C. Surveying needed to establish TS property boundaries
- D. Surveillance cameras at the TS - most have been installed
- E. Household Hazardous Waste program - no curbside pickup this March as the firm ACV will no longer be doing this. There are no other firms to go to. Could go back to previous method at transfer station, but there would be a \$7-10,000 set up cost.
- F. COVID - still in the community. Test kits are available at the HD and have been offered to establishments. There is no limit to the number you can take.

4. Public Comment Period

- A. One resident who lives on Broughton Road brought in two completely filled trash bags to emphasize her point that this the amount of trash that ends up on their street every day. It is destroying the quality of life for her and her neighbors. She is reaching out every department for help. She would like people to come over and see
- B. Another resident in a follow up to the regulation about the size of the trucks that can dump at the transfer station (see BOH 1/10/23), stated how he contacted a number of individuals at MA DEP who did not interpret the law in the same way.