



OBSERVER REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH: 1/18/22 LWVM Observer - Thomas Krueger

Members in Attendance via Zoom - Andrew Petty, Todd Belf-Becker (chairperson), Sec. Andrea Flaxer, Joanne Greer Miller, Helaine Hazlett

Meeting - Emergency

Meeting held in a Handicapped Accessible Location - not applicable

Public allow to Participate in the Meeting - via Zoom - 116+ in attendance

AGENDA

The chair opened the meeting by discussing the logistics of how the meeting would be conducted.

1. Move to go into Executive Session - Review of Open Meeting Law Complaints file by Tammi Baer, Sharman Pollender, Emily DeWitt and Kevin McKernan pursuant to G.L.C. 30A Sec 20 in executive session pursuant to G.L. C. 30A sec 21(a)(3) to consider potential litigation. The board went to private session for ~ 10 minutes and returned to the meeting

2. Approve Meeting Minutes of 12/27 and 12/29/21 - the minutes were approved

3.Sustainable Marblehead - Peaker Plant

The discussion from the meeting 1/11/22 was continued. Ms. Hazlett had called the manager of the MMLD and the board received a letter in addition from him outlining MMLD's position on the proposed Peabody Peaker Plant. The letter discussed that the current plant in Peabody would be replaced with the newer one emitting 25% less CO2 than the current. The plant would allow other more polluting plants to be decommissioned and could run on liquid nitrogen and potentially "green" hydrogen. MHD is one of 14 towns with financial interest in the plant with a 4.4% investment. The commitment is for 30 years and would cost \$225K annually. Bonds for the plant have been sold and it is scheduled to go online in 2024. The manager advised the BOH to not write the letter of support.

Representatives from Sustainable Marblehead in response said that the permitting for the plant had been "grandfathered" in when it was proposed in 2015. Since then,

new policies for clean energy use have enacted. The Peabody BOH has written (July 2021) to the governor asking for review of the plant and its potential impact on community health and the environment, both short and long term effects. SM representative are asking the MHD BOH to write a letter in support of the Peabody BOH. It is not known at the current time any action regarding the Peabody BOH letter. After further discussion the MHD BOH will write a letter in support.

4. Transfer Station Update

The chair addressed the issue of “transparency” about the expenditures for the cap of the landfill. The expenditures were reviewed by town counsel and the inspector general and were found to be appropriate. (A spreadsheet of the expenditures will soon be on the town website.) Delay with further work on the transfer station has been because of COVID. Further explanation was that the three warrants voted on at town meeting were all incorporated into one ballot issue. This was done with done with input from the Board of Selectman and the town administrator. The reasoning was that the landfill had to be capped (via order from MA DEP) and that all other work could follow - one could not just pick and choose.

A brief chronology of the landfill/transfer station is work began July, 2014 was finally completed with all the unanticipated issues including legal ones finally resolved in September, 2020. In May 2021 the BOH tasked the original architect, Daniel Weeder, to draft two options: A, a new facility, and B, a renovation of the existing transfer station. Over the next hour Mr. Weeder discussed the option B using a schematic of the plan with the location of each of the buildings, scale, compactor, residential trailers, etc. as well as the traffic flow. He described in some detail the renovations that would have to be done to each building. Much discussion concerned the traffic flow for commercial and residential users with problematic cross points and bottlenecks - the traffic would have to come and go on Beacon Street. An entrance from Green Street would be possible but because of the cap would remain only one lane, and would need addition staffing. Questions from the BOH: 1) how long would the “pit” last - was rebuilt in 2016, requires frequent maintenance, and don’t know the life expectancy. 2) what are the contingency costs for Option A and B - Option A would be low, Option B is unknown but usually 10%.

Further discussion included ensuring employee safety, e.g., the scale trailer; residential use is the primary objective of the transfer station; there will be a interim plan during construction.

Jerry Smith who had been involved with the project earlier was asked to comment. He felt that Option A was a big “ask” and that Option B was acceptable but not perfect, noting that MHD does a lot better than some other towns (Hingham). He too was concerned with the choke points and there was further discussion concerned traffic flow and constraints.

Discussion then returned to the length of time construction would take. Modular building (built in NH or ME) if possible, would decrease construction time, so that Option B would be 5-6 months with these building or 9-10 months without. Option A would take 10-12 months.

The cost estimate for Option A is \$6,275,000 and Option B, \$1,666, 000. There is \$1.25 M left after the cap of the landfill. As to the capacity of each option MHD is currently capped at 15,000 tons/year and currently the TS does 12,700 tons/year. Option A could increase this. MHD could go the state and get permitted for more tonnage, but this would mean increased truck traffic.

In either case the BOH would need more fund and warrants are due by Friday (1/20/22). (There was brief discussion about using revolving funds and the finance department and independent auditor can answer these by 1/20). As it was not clear that the BOH wished to decide on one of the options at this time, the board decided to put in two warrants asking for more funds with the idea of removing one later. Board members said that they would like to hear from the community perhaps in an open forum about these decisions. They moved and passed that there would be at least one community forum discussion about the transfer station.

5.Public comment period

Comments about the Transfer Station included: happy that there will an accounting; concern about the traffic design; need for two scales; concern for employee health, especially the trailer and the compactor pit; need for an oversight committee; scrap both options and go for an Option C.