



OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH – 1-27-25

Hybrid Meeting- Recorded

LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

Members in Attendance: Andrew Petty, Tom McMahon, Tom Massaro, Helaine Hazlett

Before the meeting began Ms. Hazlett congratulated Mr. McMahon and Mr. Petty on a very successful Wellness Fair. The attendance was excellent as were the vendors. Mr. Petty suggested that this be an annual event, perhaps on a different date.

Community Health Update - Creating a Healthier Marblehead (CAHM)

As was noted at the end of the last BOH meeting, the MHD Rotary pledged \$10K towards the extensive health survey of MHD residents. Dr. Massaro and Mark Lebon plan to meet soon and Dr. Massaro will meet with the Harbor Rotary Club to ask for funds, hopefully to match the Rotary Club. He also plans to meet with the Female Humane Society next week. In order to foster more support for the health survey, he will be meeting with the community ministerial group as well as a group of doctors. The next Mental Health Task Force meeting is scheduled for 1/30.

Leash Law Article -The Leash Law article has been tabled for now because the police department had some questions about it and it is already late in the cycle.

Board of Health/ Department of Health discussion

The discussion about the relationship of the BOH and Health Department continued. Ms. Hazlett read from a document written by town council, Alex Castro. Ms. Hazlett omitted the chapter and general law references the opinion. The essence of the opinion is that boards of health are elected by the residents, and the health department works under the board health; the health department is NOT a separate entity. There is no legal statute for a HD but only for a BOH who appoints an officer. BOHs are elected to carry out certain duties that they can delegate to their agent.

This discussion segued into further areas including that the BOH chair is to work with town council about a contract for Mr. Petty. (It was suggested that this might be for a term of 5 years.) And the contract would include competitive salary and perhaps incentive pay for extra services. Further discussion included a) what is the role of Mr. Petty vis a vis the BOH, is it like the town administrator with the town Select Board; if

this is so, would the title be, “health administrator”; b) the scope of work that Mr. Petty is currently doing exceeds what other health directors do, e.g., manage the transfer station, setup contracts, etc.; c) the list of duties (19) for the health director is too long and needs to be condensed into perhaps 4 areas (e.g health, transfer station, represent the BOH, and develop community relations.); d) the need for annual review of Mr. Petty.

On a related subject Dr. Massaro questioned the health department entry into the Town Report. He thought that it should take a different approach (e.g., not listing all the infectious diseases) and to incorporate the BOH strategic projections so the residents could know what is happening ahead. Dr. Massaro volunteered to work with Mr. Petty on a new format for the Town Report.

The board moved and passed that Ms. Hazlett is to meet with town council concerning a formal contract.

Transfer Station update

Mr. Petty alerted the board to a significant problem that arose while the new compactor was being installed. When the “shoot” was removed, the metal underneath was rusted out (likely from the weather and leakage from the trucks), and the beams were damaged, all preventing any connection. Mr. Petty promptly contacted a structural engineer who verified these finding and said that all the beams and flooring needed to be replaced. The next steps include getting a quote for the design, finding a metal fabricator, site work, all before the compactor can be installed. Mr. Petty did not have an estimate yet but guessed that the design would be \$4.5K and costs could be upwards of \$50K. When asked about the age of the compactor, the compactor building was built in 1978 so the compactor would likely be the same. The current compactor was rebuilt in 2016-17, but did not involve looking at the shoot.

The new and additional cost can come from the waste revolving fund, but other site work for the transfer station will further be delayed and impacted - what next? Scale house then the swap shed?

Opioid Settlement Funds

Mr. Petty was asked about the status of the opioid settlement funds (from J&J and other distributors). Currently there is \$330,000 - (this does not include any so far from the recent Sackler settlement.) There is an opioid working group including the town administrator, police, fire and health departments. The funds so far have been used for placing emergency overdose boxes in all municipal buildings. Much of the funds are being held to be used for a person in need to get the best substance abuse treatment (often a 90 day program). Other ideas include using funds for peer support groups. Dr. Massaro said the MHTF is moving towards this type of work, and suggested the chair of the MHTF Mark Lebon come to speak at a BOH meeting

Meeting minutes

Mr. Petty read a letter about a complaint about the BOH and open meeting law. The complaint said the MHD BOH has failed to publish meeting minutes for the past 6 months. The last published meeting notes were from the September 2024 meeting. This is to be remedied. He noted that minutes are “available” but not necessarily “published.”

Public Comment

One resident offered that a job description for the health director needs to be accurate as it is often the basis for annual reviews, and ideally should contain future goals that are formed by both the director and the board.