



## OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

### **BOARD OF HEALTH – November 10, 2025**

Hybrid Meeting- Recorded

LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

Members in Attendance: Andrew Petty, Tom McMahon, Tom Massaro, Amanda Ritvo

### **CAHM**

Dr. Massaro reported that the survey end date will be 11/16/25, and all the promotion that could have been done was. The most replies on a single day, 161, seem to correspond with the CODE RED announcement. The total to date was 2310 replies with the following breakdown by decile: 39 (18-29), 111 (30-39), 262 (40-49), 332 (50-59), 382 (60-69), 409 (70-79), 152 (80+). The hope was to reach 2500 total responses which would add to statistical significance. Clearly there is a need for focus groups to see how to engage 18-29 year-olds.

Dr. Massaro said it was his sense that funds for public health activities would have to come from external sources, given budget and financial constraints. He suggested that a 501(c)(3) be formed separate from the BOH, perhaps titled Friends of BOH or CAHM, or other name. Mr. Petty will ask legal about how much the BOH could be involved.

### **DMH Grant RFA**

Dr. Massaro also reported on the possible application for the DMH Grant. The due date was extended to 11/21, but a number of changes to the grant were made: the number would be cut from 9 to 8, and the total amount in the fund was decreased from \$3M to \$1.25M for FY 26. Numerous questions were asked after the webinar, more than half from large institutions. If MHD did apply, it would be for the lowest tier funding, Tier A. The seven focus areas enumerated in the last report could be combinations of two of these. In MHD case, this would be combining improving community health literacy and regarding substance abuse by adolescents using case study education and training.

Dr. Massaro then continued to discuss how using case studies and a class format like the MHD Police's academy might be used for public health. He imagined a "Micro MPH" course. This would be structured as follows: 3 sessions on health policy, touching on

the US health system, international health care systems, and the current federal public health system; 3 sessions on local public health, touching on health inequities, post COVID trust deficit, what it is like being a parent in MA today; 3 sessions on the science of public health, discussing public health science and research, basic epidemiology and biostatistics, and health promotion and wellness; and finally 3 sessions of the current atmosphere surrounding PH - information (the toxicity, and where to find the truth), vaccine policy, social determinants of health, mental health and substance abuse.

Dr. Massaro suggested that each session would be no longer than 80 minutes and at the end a “certificate” be given to participants. He wants people to know that the BOH is active and is a health promoting entity.

He asked the other BOH members when the best time to meet to go over this grant proposal. The BOH will meet on 11/19/25 via Zoom at 11am.

### **Response to tragic death in MHD**

Mr. McMahon has met with representatives from Park and Rec, Select Board, and School committee about possible interventions. The impaired driving simulator program, Arrive Alive, needed an earlier lead time, so that option is “out” for this year. Hopefully this could be scheduled in 2027.

Other options were also discussed. For example, requiring parents to attend a lecture about social hosting and the consequences before the yearly PROM. The Select Board and school committee will see what other towns have done and have the town counsel look at current laws. The school superintendent will work out steps that the school and police could take.

Mr. McMahon has talked with parents about how helpless they feel. The times have changed from years ago when no parents hosted parties to today when parents often almost brag about it. The “helpless” parents feel that if they stop their kids, they will then feel left out. These parents are also angered that there are no consequences to the hosted parties. Mr. McMahon asked parents where these hosting houses were and many parents came up with the same locations time after time. He has compiled a list of the addresses of these houses. He hopes the street locations will be published and those hosting will want to change their ways. These streets are Kenneth Road, Abbot Street, Gregory, Clifton Ave, and Liberty Road. He plans to give the names and addresses to the police. Mr. McMahon was asked about the police response. He replied it is illegal, the parties are broken up, but there are no arrests or fines - no consequences. Why do these parties continue? Kids want to be cool, fit in. Parents who host want their child be safe.

## **Waste Management**

The public meeting at the COA about the options for curbside collection went well. The main questions were about collection in the historic district, the size of the barrels, and the frequency of pickups. Most wanted weekly trash and recycling pickup. Some suggest the “the pay as you throw” option. Mr. McMahon said that the HD was not supportive of this option, but he suggested that they could get 10 signatures and submit an article at Town Meeting for this option.

(As an aside, Mr. McMahon was congratulated for the success of his promotion of the MH 5K. Over 200 turned out, the weather was good, he ran well but was beaten by 14 others. As promised, he wrote a check for \$350.)

## **Community Health**

Dr. Ritvo reported that in collaboration with Park and Rec, the wording on the signage at Riverhead would be changed to “water may not suitable for swimming”, “bacterial levels are not monitored”. The board voted to accept this signage.

Dr. Ritvo went on to discuss food security and community health - access to healthy foods is needed for good health and has impact beyond just hunger: growth, learning, ability for adults to work and focus. This means that food security needs support despite the current environment. MA residents who get food assistance should be getting some now and then the full November benefit. There are other important ways for all to help. Dr. Ritvo went on to list the local food assistance sources, their locations, hours, etc. that all could be contributed to. These include The Marblehead Food Pantry, MHD COA grabable lunches, Salem Pantry (that is open to all), My Bothers Table (Lynn), etc. Some food pantries prefer food goods and others dollars, so they can buy in bulk. Mr. McMahon opined that it is embarrassment that Congress could allow so many to live in food insecurity.

As an exercise in the dispelling the idea that “eating healthy is expensive”, he went to Market Basket to see the minimal cost of feeding four adults three healthy meals a day for a week. His breakfast consisted of eggs and apples; snack, a container of yogurt; lunch, tuna and carrots; and dinner, chicken breast, sweet potatoes, and rice. The total cost for each would be \$7.76. He contends that it would be very hard to find an “unhealthy” meals for less. Dr. Ritvo thought it was a good exercise, but the cost per month would ~ \$900, whereas SNAP benefits for such a family are ~\$430. Mr. McMahon commended Kim Crowley of Lighthouse Fitness for offering a free group exercise class for anyone who contributes to a food pantry.

## **FY 27 Budget**

Mr. Petty said that the budget process is already beginning and will be level funded. Last year the health department wanted to give the MCC \$120K, but because of the budget exigency this was reduced to \$60K. He will submit \$120K again. All the other budget lines will stay the same. As for the waste budget, it too will be level funded with exception of the curbside pickup which will be a large increase. The Fin Com and administration are all aware of this substantial cost increase.

The process is the same as in the past - review with a liaison from Fin Com, then Mr. Petty and chair of FinCom and the liaison meet. From there it is proposed officially to FinCom, and when approved to go for vote at Town Meeting.

The HD nurse is retiring in April, but her position is guaranteed because of a requirement of the grant Safe 2.0, from the state that the North Shore Public Health consortium (Marblehead, Swampscott, Salem, Peabody, Danvers, Lynn and Beverly) is a recipient of.

## **Transfer Station**

Mr. Petty said all the notices to proceed have been made and work will start on 11/13. Excavation for the scale house will be first, followed by excavation for the scale pit. The transfer station then will be "down" for commercial business for 25 days. A number of specialists will be hired as the project proceeds - a geotechnical engineer for compaction, asphalt testing, etc; a surveyor for some survey work. The contractor is for 90 days, but some work will have to wait until spring, namely paving.

Dr. Massaro commented that the entire board should visit the transfer station to meet the workers, thank them, etc. Town counsel said this could be done without calling an open meeting.