



## OBSERVER REPORT

**Board of Health - 2-18-2025**  
Hybrid Meeting - Recorded  
LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

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

Prior to the first item on the agenda, Dr. Massaro offered an apology to Mr. Petty for his behavior at the prior meeting. He said that it was fine to disagree about a subject but not to have a display of anger. He acknowledged that Mr. Petty works "his ass off", and that the challenges of public health cannot be met by one person alone. Dr. Massaro and Mr. Petty differ about what board membership means; Dr. Massaro is in favor of a more active board and would like to know as much about public health as Mr. Petty.

### **Statewide Accelerated Public Health for Every Community Act (SAPHE 2.0)**

SAPHE 2.0 follows SAPHE 1.0 (but are two different works) and is part of a statewide \$4B effort. The blueprint began as early as 2014 but essentially from 2019. The first SAPHE did not do what it was supposed to do. MA is made up of 352 municipalities that is often unable to do even minimum requirements and standards and address problems with current growth. The funding has been inconsistent and unpredictable. All are optimistic for SAPHE 2.0 and an RFP will be coming soon.

In response to this statewide effort, Dr. Massaro was asking the MHD board should work with regional partners (e.g Salem, Swampscott, etc.) or "stand alone." Mr. Petty noted the difficulties of working alone as well as issues that cross town lines and that as long ago as 2012 there was an inter-municipality agreement to try to increase/improve services on issues, such as, smoking regulations, food code, etc. By working together they could accomplish more. This regional effort has extended into other regulations, tattoo and tobacco, and allowed more funds from grants.

Dr. Massaro wants to "go beyond" and what he found the weakest part of SAPHE 2.0, that is no word about mental health. Mental health, a definite part of public health, has always been dealt with separately. Why? Mr. Petty responded that "they think that mental health comes from the health care side, not the public health side."

As discussion moved to seeking grants, Dr. Massaro has heard that grants are "bittersweet". Mr. Petty opined that first, you need someone experienced in writing grants, then there is the work, and finally there is the reporting side which is often the hardest part. Even if there is help getting a grant, the next is the issue of hiring staff which is temporary. Mr. McMahon noted that temporary people aren't guaranteed a full time job and often are looking for one. Ms. Hazlett was wondering if the town's grant writer might come to a meeting and would email Mr. Thatcher about that. Mr. Petty brought paper copies of SAPHE 2.0 so the board could see what things to do.

Finally, Dr. Massaro wanted this topic included in the Town Report for next year.

## **Meeting Minutes 1/27, 2/3, and 2/11**

The minutes for the dates above were reviewed, voted on and accepted. As a complaint from the MA attorney general office came over their absence, the response to the attorney general will come from town counsel. All minutes are now up to date.

## **Bills**

Mr. McMahon read the list of vendors and their bills paid since the last meeting.

## **Director's Report**

The project to repair the compactor house prior to the installation of the new compactor is proceeding with the involvement of the structural engineer, architect, et. al. Mr. Petty hopes to have the site order by the end of the week. The rescheduling of the compactor installation will be delayed by many weeks.

A small fire occurred at the transfer station, necessitating a call to the fire department. This happened under a leaf pile and is not uncommon with the snow cover creating the additional heat.

Regulations for tobacco and tattoo/piercing need to be updated. Mr. Petty passed out the current regulations and the changes. If all board members are comfortable with these, they go to the town attorneys to format. A public hearing with two week notice follows, and after that the regulations can be adopted. The BOH has the legal capacity to do so. (Historically, in 2003 MA put out a set of guidelines that the BOH then adopted.) Some of the changes are keeping up with times - controlling menthol, later flavored, and addressing the new products. Dr. Massaro questioned the cost of each of the 351 municipalities having to pay attorneys for this process, wondering how to make this less expensive. Mr. Petty responded that the state of MA could do this, but often it is the local boards that first do this before the state "takes it on". He said that each community is slightly different. One could go to their state legislators to put this forward.

Discussion then went into the need to protect MHD citizens while the state "catches up." The board talked about the surveys sent to adults and to students about the perceptions of smoking in the community. The surveys have a perception of much greater use (50-70%) than the actuality of 3-5%. The discussion segued into the two surveys that will be coming one - the BSAS (Bureau of Substance Abusive Services) in March that is more focused and limited and the other hopefully in September (if the \$45K funding is attained) as part of CAHM project.

## **Other**

Ms. Hazlett is to hear from town counsel regarding Mr. Petty's contract. He is currently not listed as a permanent employee. He also not on a "special contract." Other town officials are in the same category.

Dr. Massaro wanted time in April to further discuss the logistics of the survey as part of CAHM. When the "money is in the bank" the project head can create focus groups, work on survey questions and format, etc.

Mr. McMahon read a note from a MHD resident that thanked in detail, Marty, Mr. Petty's assistant, for his help.

## **Public Comment**

When was the last time the tobacco regulations were changed? 2016. What the major changes in the proposed regulations? Legal age, 21; limiting flavored tobaccos; tobacco delivery.

The MHD Current learned that the town article that had been passed at Town Meeting changing the composition of the BOH from a 3 person to a 5-person board, had never been filed with the MA legislature. It will unlikely be done by the time of Town Meeting this year. The result is that a 3 person board prohibits any two members having a discussion or even attending a meeting together outside a formal BOH meeting, all slowing any work. It was the responsibility of the MHD Select Board to move it to the legislature.

Next meetings schedule - March 4, March 24, April 8 and April 28