



OBSERVER REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH – 3-24-26

Hybrid - Recorded

LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

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

Dr. Massaro began the meeting by announcing that Dr. Ritvo had been awarded “Community Clinician of the Year” by the Massachusetts Medical Society. This is a great honor.

FY27 Budget for Health/Waste Department

Mr. Petty passed out spreadsheets for the Health Department and Waste Departments’ projected budgets for FY27 as compared to FY26. He proceeded to go through line by line first with the Health Department explaining each line cost. The combined salaries totaled \$252,839 and the total cost including other line items totaled \$339,320, which represented a 4.7% increase over FY26.

He then proceeded to do the same process of line-by-line explanation for the waste department. The salary line was \$649,649 for FY27 (\$560,948 for FY26). The major change for FY27 was that in the curbside collection, trash disposal, recycling processing, and leaf collection. These items totaled \$1,953,016. (The favorable contract for all of the above ended this year, after 10 years. Mr. Petty had noted that in the previous contract that Republic was losing \$300K per year.) The total FY27 waste department budget was \$3,215,611 (FY 26 was \$2,844,354). In subsequent years the curbside collection, et.al expense will increase by 5% per year. Since the transfer station “sits” on a landfill, there are also expenses connected to maintaining and monitoring this - FY27 \$114,600, (FY26 \$114,600.)

Mr. Petty said that the Select Board was not including the Waste Department budget in the town's budget. There are two "articles" that will appear at Town Meeting: one for an override for town budget alone and a second for the town and waste department together. If the override fails, then the BOH would have to establish a fee-based service for the above. If there were not such service, the transfer station would be "overwhelmed" as it can't handle 8000 residences; the waiting times would be prolonged, etc. For the \$2.1M cost, Mr. Petty gave an estimate of what the annual fee might be for the 8000 residences with various "opt out" rates: with a 3% opt out, \$281, a 5% \$287. He said that if someone decided to "opt out" it would be for a full year.

When this presentation was complete, the board moved and passed both budgets above

The next spreadsheet concerned the Waste Department's revolving fund (income from the commercial side of the transfer station.) These funds of \$1.677M are used for expenditures at the Waste Department and will be used in part to buy the new trash and recycling bins for the 8000 residences in MHD.

In a public comment period that followed a resident noted that in his own searches that Beverly and Swampscott have no transfer stations and Danvers has a privately owned one. He felt that there should be more investigation in an enterprise solution. Dr. Massaro commented that that is up to the town.

Chairs Report

Creating a Healthier Marblehead - Dr. Massaro said that the focus groups were beginning this week with different age groups and questions in order to go into greater depth. The BOH has "nothing to do with these groups" – who's in them, etc. The last is scheduled for 4/7, after which the material will be "pulled together", leading to a final report, and then an open meeting about the results.

Essex County DA (Paul Tucker) at BOH 4/14 meeting - this will be about the topics of social hosting and underage substance abuse. The DA will be answering the questions. If you would like to ask a question, please send it to the HD or his office.

Charter Commission - Dr. Massaro reported that there were some stylistic changes to draft B, that he would like the BOH members to review. The Charter will be presented at Town Meeting and if approved go on to the State Legislature and if approved become law.

Community Health Improvement Planning Grant - Dr. Massaro has explored the RFP especially with the town's concern for substance abuse in adolescence. If the grant were to be awarded, it might be an opportunity to explore creating a youth center in town, a place for activities and role modeling. The grant would be of no expense to or commitment by the town. The YMCA, Park and Rec, COA, police department, and schools all know about this.

Associate Chair of Waste Management

Curbside Barrels for Automated Collection - Mr. Petty said that the barrels 65 g for trash and 95 g for recycling will be delivered by June. The new curbside collection will begin in July. He wanted all residences to try out these sizes. After a 6-week trial if someone wants a smaller bin, this can be exchanged but can't then be changed back again. Still, it is only two barrels per household. All the barrels will have a code for a specific residence. He reminded all that trash **MUST** be in trash bags in the bin, and all recycling has to fit in a bin - nothing alongside a bin will be picked up. As for existing trash/recycling bins, these can be brought for disposal to the transfer station by the resident.

Associate Chair for Community Health - Dr. Ritvo updated the board about recent news. A judge ruled in a case brought by the AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) vs the ACIP's vaccine policy: it cannot proceed. (The reconstituted ACIP had only 6 of 15 members with experience with vaccines despite the law, and there was an overly rapid approval process.). This ACIP had reduced the number of recommended vaccines from 17 to 11. The ruling is only a temporary ruling.

Measles cases are now 1500 so far this year, 94% from exposure in the US, and 3/4 were under 19. The most prevalent areas are Utah, Texas, Florida and South Carolina. Other infectious diseases to report: a meningitis outbreak at the University of Kent; polio on the rise even in UK, Poland, Germany, etc. - it might be wise to get a one-time booster; COVID rate decreasing, influenza moderate, RSV still high.

Transfer Station - Mr. Petty reported all is going well. The scale house is completed, site work still needs to be done (curbing, drainage, etc.); the scale painted red and concrete along the edges, yellow; a traffic light installed; and ledge work completed.