



## OBSERVER REPORT

### **BOARD OF HEALTH - 3-5-26**

Hybrid Meeting - Recorded

LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

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

**Minutes** - minutes from the meetings dated 11/10, 11/24/, 12/9, 1/3 accepted

### **Chair's Report**

**Wellness Fair 2** - Another success with congratulations to Tom and Andrew. There were 30+ vendors, 200+ participants. There was some discussion about when to hold the fair next year

**CAHM** - Dr. Massaro presented a slide of one of the results of the survey - levels of stress by age decile. These slides had rows indicating sources of stress (mental health, physical health financial concerns, work life balance, parenting, providing care) and the age deciles for columns. The cause of degrees of stress varied by age: for example, ages 40-49, work life and parenting were highest, with work life balance high for 18-39, 40-49, and 50-59. Given the high degrees of stress of parenting children, perhaps the BOH could provide parenting classes. (When OB/GYN and pediatric practices were asked about what the BOH, Health Department could provide, both recommended parenting classes.)

The next phase of the project is focus groups to drill down on specifics. In the month of March four focus groups will meet with one for age 18-30 (perhaps by zoom) 4/1, one for middle age 3/26, and one for seniors, 3/26. A fourth group, a "youth stake holders" will meet on 3/27. The final report will be available by late spring, early summer.

One result that came from the CAHM survey was a request to have current resources for the community available. During the pandemic when the MHTF was formed, they had a website “Marblehead Cares” which had an extensive list of resources. This website suffered some problems and disappeared. Dr. Massaro will soon talk to the website designer who is optimistic that this material will be available again and can be expanded.

**Paul Tucker (Essex County DA)** - Mr. Tucker will be coming to the BOH meeting on 4/14 and will discuss underage drinking and social hosting. (It is clear that the MA state laws have significant financial and other serious penalties whereas the local MHD bylaws, are smaller financially, shorter, and would involve mainly public embarrassment). As noted before there have been no penalties in MHD since 2017. The town’s attorney was asked to review the earlier MHD bylaws and to have that done by 4/14). The MHD police chief will also come on 4/14 if possible. For the BOH meeting of 3/24, time will be spent generating questions for Mr. Tucker. There were suggestions that members of the Select Board be invited to attend also. It was noted that with all the participants it would be a “big statement” about the issues. There was some discussion about where to hold this meeting if a large number of people attended.

As an aside there was mention of a program via the police department - Addiction and Recovery. This program is lead by Gina Rabbit, a jail diversion officer (who works for the MHD police) and another counselor from Swampscott. This program addresses the challenges of addiction within families. The first two sessions were well attended, and the leaders are noted for their knowledge, sensitivity, and thoughtfulness.

**Planning Grant Opportunity** - Dr. Coyle from UMass Boston and chief collaborator on the CAHM survey alerted Dr. Massaro to an opportunity for obtaining a grant from MA Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds. Such funds, if available, could be used for priorities identified by the CAHM survey. The request for proposal are due by 3/31. If the proposal was “won”, \$50K would be available for 1-2 years for planning, and if that went well up \$100K+ would be available to do the project. (None of these dollars could be spent on capital expenses.)

**Bills-** Mr. McMahon read the bills since last meeting and made special note of the LPR (license plate reader) at the transfer station. The operator in the hut can see immediately who has a “sticker” and who doesn’t. He can even see how often they have come in the past. If someone has not purchased a sticker, it can be done “on the spot” via a cellphone. Another bill was for an LLC intercom system in the transfer station building. It is a high-tech system that has the potential of identifying frequent commercial customers and their accounts.

**Community Health-** Dr. Ritvo reported on the infectious disease in the state. There have been 2 cases of measles in MA, one from someone out of state, and another from international travel. This prompts all to check their immunity to measles. For those born before 1957, it assumed that they had had measles. For those born after 1957, at least one dose of measles vaccine is recommended. For children it is recommended that the first dose at 12-15 months, and a 2nd at 4-6 years of age.

In regard to respiratory diseases, influenza activity continues with less A and more B strains. 90% of cases have been via strain A. In Essex County, COVID is modest, influenza low and RSV high, this mostly affects children 4 or under. Dr. Ritvo discussed some prevention tools for RSV - monoclonal antibodies, and RSV vaccine - the vaccine is 70-80% effective in preventing hospitalization. Mr. Petty urged all to check their vaccination histories.

**Transfer Station Update-** Mr. Petty gave the update. The scale house is complete. There is some more interior work and in the spring some site work (curbing, lines, signs, etc.) to be done. There are still a few change orders needed - ledge removal, water and sewer rerouting, communication cables installation underground - aside from ledge removal, these total at \$9200.

When these projects are completed, future projects could include residing the compactor building, installing large exhaust fans, and completing the swap shed. Mr. Petty explained that the reason for proceeding this way was to complete projects, and then “taking small bites” and accomplishing another project, and “saving up” money in the waste revolving fund (WRF) to pay for them; no tax dollars would be used. (Funds from the WRF will be used to purchase the carts for home for curbside collection.)

**Curbside Collection Contract** - Mr. Petty presented a comprehensive overview of the results of the bidding for the curbside trash/recycling and disposal contract. He said that there were 3 top companies - Republic, Cosella, and Waste Management. It is now the industry standard to have single drivers, automated trucks with automated arms. There were no bids for manual collection. (For MHD it is a unique situation with the downtown area and there will be a “quasi” manual collection.)

He explained in our current contract that will soon end, we only paid for trash and not recycling, a cost savings of ~\$300K. Going forward we will have to pay for trash, recycling and processing. Republic has the largest, most up to date facility in the area. (Mr. Petty discussed the complexity in recycling with the mix of glass, paper, aluminum, etc. and how it can have blended value and the finances of this.)

Mr. Petty went on to explain that that he has the cost of each piece of this process. He handed out a sheet to the board members with line-by-line cost comparisons. Included in this request was to extend leaf pickup to 8 weeks per year. As the sheet was being reviewed it was obvious that there is a substantial saving with every other-week recycling pickup, about \$300K. (In view of this the HD will purchase 65 gallon carts for trash, and 96-gallon carts for recycling. The cost of every week pickup would be an additional \$29.50 per household per year.) In addition, Mr. Petty has the “numbers” for the cost of school collection and disposal.

In conclusion he recommended that the board should go with Republic. There are various cost-savings by the number of trucks, loads, nearness of the facility, lack of waiting to dump, first 2000 tons at \$123/ton, and second 2000 tons at \$110, etc. In addition, although he understands the hardship from the strike, Republic knows the town, has a truck in town daily, and has a route manager. (It was noted that any company can go on strike including municipal workers. ) Looking in the future, C and D (construction and demolition) material will get more expensive to dispose of, landfills will be closing, and C&D will need to be recycled. Sort and recycling will have to be something explored in the near future. Currently C&D costs \$175/ton to dump, whereas the TS charges \$320/ton.

In regard to the trash and recycling carts, the cost will be ~\$904K but financed over 5 years using waste revolving funds. The maintenance of

these will be by the waste department, at great savings. These carts will each have a have a MHD stamp, lids with recycling information, and coded for each residence. These are only for single, double, and 3-4 family residences. The carts will be distributed by a company, Rehrig.

A question arose about trash and recycling for businesses in town. Mr. Petty is suggesting offering the service, but each business would have to purchase carts and pay monthly for the service. He suggested \$100, an average reasonable cost.

As for the cost of the Republic contract, it would go up 5% per year for the 5 years of the contract. The contract would begin on 7/1/26.

After the presentation and questions the board moved and passed a motion for Mr. Petty to pursue a contract with Republic.