



## **OBSERVER CORPS REPORT**

### **BOARD OF HEALTH- 5-13-25**

Hybrid Meeting - Recorded

LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

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

### **Mental Health Month Acknowledgement**

Ms. Hazlett wished to acknowledge that May is Mental Health month and wanted to voice the board's support for this as well as for the MHD Counseling Center where there are excellent therapists. Mr. Petty added that the health department has a list of therapists at the MCC, as well as a list with the MHTF.

### **Community Health/Creating a Healthier Marblehead (CAHM)**

Dr. Massaro has the latest survey proposal from U Mass Boston and would like the BOH to approve this. The latest proposal had only 3 focus groups versus 4 in the original proposal, but Dr. Massaro intends to push for the 4.

The other good news is that the health assessments will be fully funded with funds from groups, such as, The Female Humane Society, MHD rotary groups, and others from the community. This means it is funded with no tax-payer dollars. He is seeking specifically to move forward with the contract with U Mass Boston Social and Demographic Research on Aging. (The group has recently added another member who has a PhD, an MPH, and 10 years of public policy work experience.) This was moved and passed by the board.

The "calendar" for this assessment starts in early June and will be a hybrid survey (i.e. both print and digital.)

Dr. Massaro has met with various groups who would be of interest in the assessment: the chair of OB/GYN at Salem Hospital, Marblehead Pediatrics, and also Pediatric Associates of Greater Salem (who see about 50% of MHD children).

### **Letter to BOH from a resident about a flu study done at the Cleveland Clinic**

The BOH received a letter about a flu vaccine study that was done at the Cleveland Clinic in the Cleveland area. (This is a "preprint" study, meaning it has not been peer reviewed or published in a journal.) The study was of 40,000 employees at

the Cleveland Clinic, 80% of whom received the vaccine and 20% who did not. The data showed a 2% infection rate for the vaccinated and a 1.7% rate for unvaccinated.

Dr. Massaro wanted to underline that this is a “preprint” study that may or may not hold up to greater scrutiny (peer reviewed.) The 2% rate as it is a very low % of influenza infections where normal years are up to 25%. Also, that the flu vaccine decreases the risk and severity of hospitalization; vaccination decreases hospitalization in children by 40% and in adults by 80%. The question remains why the unvaccinated had such a low rate. Perhaps other factors were present: the unvaccinated may have had less or no patient contact, they may have been reassigned to less contact areas, they have masked more, etc. These considerations make it imperative to wait for the peer reviewed and published versions. Moreover, it would be essential to see what the experience was at other institutions, such as MGH/Brigham. Conclusions in medicine are never based on one study.

Ms. Hazlett and Mr. McMahon have seen Dr. Massaro’s reply to the resident and thought the reply was thoughtful.

### **Marblehead Mental Health Task Force (MHTF)**

The MHTF met last Friday at the MCC and are moving forward as it now makes sense for mental health counseling to become the focus. The chair, Marc Lebon, noted the accomplishments of the MHTF, especially during the pandemic - developed a webpage, numerous articles in the MHD Current, wellness fairs, hosting speakers, etc. The plan now is for the MHTF to meet after the summer at the MCC and be folded into the MCC.

Mr. Petty said that the resources listed on the MHTF website will “slid over” to the MCC. (Of note the MHTF website was hacked but all the info was on the MCC website which has links back to the health department). What happened? It was held for ransom, but there was no money there.) Further discussion was about maintaining website if it is salvageable. If it is Mr. McMahon would pay for it to be a website for substance abuse issues because the name of the website is similar to what other towns use for their substance abuse issues.

### **Bills**

Mr. McMahon read the most recent bills from vendors and their costs. As the costs for trucking were read, some board members wished more explanation. Mr. Petty discussed the various trucks and the role of each: curbside trash collection (to the Transfer Station), recycling (to the Greenworks facility - currently there is no charge for this). The amount of \$32K is for just the trash collection from residential curbside, schools, and municipal sources. Cardboard in front of stores is also collected but may have to change with new contracts.

## **Directors Report**

### **Household Hazardous Waste Day**

HHW will occur on 5/31/25 at the Transfer Station from 9am-12pm. The company that comes recycles fuel, paint (latex and other), pesticides, etc. The fees that are charged are based on gallons or pounds, with the costs in three different amounts (small, medium and large.) This day is also shared with Swampscott residents who account for ~50% of the volume. Mr. Petty asked that residents who use the transfer station try to avoid these hours as it is very busy.

In the past there was a HHWD on a Wednesday from 4-7 pm, and perhaps it can happen again in the fall, but it is up to the vendor. This is the final year of the contract.

### **Landfill Monitoring Expenses**

Since the transfer station is a “capped” landfill, ongoing monitoring is required by MADEP. The company Hailey Ward (a highly regarded company who is also the “face” with DEP) has been doing this twice a year, collecting water and gas samples, at the periphery of the landfill to be sure nothing is leaching in the surrounding areas. This is the responsibility of the town of MHD. As with other contracts, the costs are rising, and Mr. Petty would like to have a long-term contract with the Hailey Ward. He outlined the costs for the contract from 2026-2029, with costs gradually rising from the spring sampling of \$26K to \$28K and fall sampling from \$25K to \$26.5K. The proposed contract acceptance was moved and passed by the board.

### **Beach Testing**

MHD has five beaches (Devereaux, Crocker Park, Gashouse, Grace Olivers, and Stramski and sampling will begin on 6/11 and end on 9/10. The beaches are sampled once a week (waist deep, elbow deep samples) on a Wednesday with results back on Thursday. For three of the beaches (Devereaux, Crocker Park and Stramski), if a sample is positive for bacteria, the beach will remain open pending a second sample. For the other two beaches, Grace Oliver and Gashouse, a positive sample will result in the beach being closed until the next sample is negative. Mr. Petty went on to explain the procedure for collection and said all health department personnel are needed to help. In addition to the samples, other data is collected - potential sources, presence of dogs, rash line, tide level, number of people on the beach - and are included in the report.

After the above agenda there was discussion about a plaque at the Transfer Station when all the work is completed.

### **Public Comment**

One resident asked about when the board will be a 5-member board. This has to be approved by the MA legislature and the responsibility for follow-up rests with the Select office - Mr. Keezer

Where will the new scale be located? It will be right in front of the tipping floor at asphalt level. This will allow for a truck to be weighed, dumped, reweighed, and then pay. Because of the location, residential exiting will be directly out.

**Executive Session - to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel: specifically, the Health Director Employment contract**

Of note once the meeting minute notes of the Executive Session are made that will become public.

**The next BOH meeting is 6/3/25.**