



OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH - 5-14-24

Hybrid Meeting - Recorded

LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

Members in Attendance: Andrew Petty, Tom McMahon, Joanne Miller, Helaine Hazlett

Heath Department Updates

Public Health Nurse

Tracy Gisela has been a public health nurse for the past 28 years and in Marblehead since 2012. She gave a report on what she does, both currently and in the future. She primarily works with the computer program MAVEN which alerts users to communicable diseases in their towns. With this information she does case and contact follow up. (Note - STDs are not reported to each town, only to the state.) She investigates any food born illnesses. In addition, she manages the annual flu clinic for employees and seniors. In the spring she checks to see that the seven camps in town are following state regulations. She works with Mr. Petty regarding planning for emergency preparedness. An additional duty recently has been to develop body art (tattoos, micro piercings, blading, etc.) regulations with other North Shore towns so that all are uniform. Currently there are no tattoo or body art studios in MHD.

Another seasonal activity is testing the beach water from mid-June until September. This is done at the six town beach seas as two town piers where there is swimming. The sampling is done each Wednesday with results back by Thursday.

Inspectional Services

Roberta (Bobby) Cody does the health department inspections which include food, pools, camps, as well as complaints. The inspection services are divided during the year as those from January to July and the other from August to December. She provided a printed review of all of her activities. Regarding Food there were 133 inspections which include twice a year site visits for food, retail, restaurants, schools, mobile, and houses of worship. In the summer these inspections are also for carnivals, beach concessions and yacht clubs. For Pools, she reviews applications, lifeguard and CPO credentials, as well as site visits. Camps are inspected along with Tracy and include applications, binders, trainings, etc. Finally, Complaints inspections - these

would include rental housing complaints; rodents; trash at food establishments; painting permits especially for sanding

As Mr. Petty noted these inspections are to help all get into compliance - the Health Department wants all to succeed.

Transfer Station Update Construction

Mr. Petty informed the board that they were unable to find a contractor for the transfer station renovation. He has compiled a list of companies that do work for under \$25M and found 25 possible contractors. He has reviewed each website and sent letters to 21 contractors about the project and plans to call to see if there is any interest. Once interest arises, then the project will be put out to bid again. Because the summer is almost here, many contractors have projects already lined up; therefore, when to put the project out to bid is when they are available. Summer is also a very busy time at the transfer station and he would like to minimize disruption.

During an evaluation for a feasibility study for construction and demolition processing, Mr. Petty was able to talk to the engineering firm about reviewing the transfer station documents to see if there were other ways the work could be done, or detail of the work described. In effect this would be a "second set of eyes" on the project. This could result in less construction costs and reduce the time to completion. The cost of this consultation would be up to \$9K. The board moved and passed this expenditure.

Veteran Facility Sticker abatement

As a follow up to the warrant article passed at Town Meeting, veterans can obtain a free sticker at the trailer, health department or treasurer's office. They do need to show a document stating that they are a veteran. This sticker abatement only applies to the veteran but not to the household.

Update Avian Flu

The Health Department has on its website a link to the CDC which regularly updates information about the avian flu (H5N1). At this time H5N1 is widely spread in poultry (90 million affected), wild birds, cows, and only one human has been documented infected. There has been no evidence of human spread. Milk including raw milk is all pasteurized so there is no concern there. In MHD backyards poultry may be susceptible. If a dead bird is found, Mr. Petty instructed all not to touch it and to contact the HD who will dispose of the bird.

Beach Testing

Beach testing begins in June and extends until September. There are 6 beaches and 2 piers where swimming happens that are tested. Testing is done on Wednesday with the following procedure: at high tide, 3 feet deep, and sampled at elbows depth. The results are back by Thursday. If there are two failures, then the failure is posted at each beach and the beach is closed. With Gashouse and Grace Olivers only one failure will prompt

beach closure. There can be multiple causes of contamination - sewage, trash, birds, run off after storms, etc.

Of note Redd's Pond can be a site of Cyanobacteria which can produce harmful toxins. Cyanobacteria are mainly identified by observation. This growth can persist as there is no "flushing" of the water.

Mosquito Control

MHD is part of the Northeast Mosquito Control program who maintain surveillance of mosquitoes in the area, especially EEE (Eastern Equine Encephalitis) and West Nile, testing weekly. Mosquitoes thrive in standing water, so storm drains are cleaned and treated with BTI (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*) which is naturally occurring and produces a toxin that kills mosquito larva before they can complete their cycle. MHD is a pesticide free community. There is more concern about EEE this year as we have had a mild winter. Generally, EEE is found in mosquitoes in saltwater marsh areas.

West Nile virus (also mosquito borne) is much less of a concern: 80% of those infected have no symptoms, 20% have fever, headache, nausea, etc. and <1% have severe illness. Once infected it is felt that there is lifelong immunity.

Mental Health Task Force

Ms. Miller reported that the last meeting was 5/13 and the NAN project presentation was postponed. The presentation will be on 6/3. (The NAN Project works to promote mental health awareness and suicide prevention for young people, using a peer-to-peer model.) 75 schools in MA already are implementing it.

On 6/22 the Marblehead Counseling Center will hold a wellness fair at Hobb's playground with many activities. The MHTF will have a table at the event.

Ms. Miller made special note of a column in the Marblehead Current by Dr. Tom Massaro about how we overprotect children in the real world and under-protect in the virtual world. He highlighted many of the points in Jonathan Haidt's **The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness.**

The meeting was adjourned with the next planned for **6/4/24**. The second Tuesday of the month is Election Day.