



OBSERVER REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH - 6-16-26

In Person-Recorded

LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

Members in Attendance: Andrew Petty, Tom McMahon, Tom Massaro, Amanda Ritvo, Kristin Elizabeth Dubai Horton, (Julie B. Selbst not present)

Following the recent town election and expansion of the board to five members, a reorganization was held. Dr. Massaro was reelected as chairperson.

Dr. Massaro noted the expansion and that at the election the override for curbside trash and recycling collection was passed.

Curbside Trash and Recycling Collection

Mr. Petty quickly summarized the collection process: the town is staying with Republic for this service; the automated collection - a practice that all major companies are adopting - will begin on 7/1; the new barrels have to be used in order for the automated arm to work; the current "hand collection" will continue in Old Town; it is likely this collection route will be on Mondays; there will be separate trash and recycling trucks; the barrels are owned by MHD, are expected to last 10 years, and maintenance will be performed by MHD; in a survey the option of every week versus every other week recycling collection resulted in a decision to have it weekly.

Mr. Petty went on to remind the board and audience that the past contract in 2015 was very favorable to MHD as there was no limit on the amount of recycling that could be put out. In the new contract, however, MHD has to pay for the processing fee and cost share the sale of recycling material. Mr. Petty said that costs have to be contained because of the budget - the volume now matters, so costs will be known. With these facts the decision was to have a 65-gallon bin for trash and a 95-gallon bin for recycling. (No material left outside the bins will be collected.)

After this summary, Dr. Massaro allowed comments from the audience present and on Zoom. What transpired over the next hour and a half was a back-and-forth between the audience and primarily Mr. Petty and Mr. McMahon. The major themes from the audience included the following:

1) difficulty understanding the wording of the override - reply: the Select Board had written this.

2) size of the barrels - A) Some wanted only two 35s: reply - having the large recycle bin gave the option of every other week collection in the future; having two 35s for each trash and recycling would end in double stops. B) in Old Town there will be the option to have two 35 gal bins. 500 pairs have been ordered and will be available in 6 weeks. C) There is the option for two 35-gallon bins for others, especially the elderly, disabled, those with health issues, physical distance to the street. Mr. Petty said that he would take care of Old Town first, and then the rest. Email the Health Department (health2@marbleheadma.gov) with the request, and specifics, etc. D) numerous complaints were voiced about the messaging of the change and barrel size options - e.g. Beverly had a more interactive approach; Arlington sent letters to each household – Reply: Beverly had much more lead time and MHD was rushed when the decision to not include the trash/recycling in the general override was made. The HD had to prepare the possibility the trash/recycling override wouldn't pass. The HD budget is so tight that they only had 2 people handling all of this, and the cost to send 8000 residences letter is ~\$8000. As for messaging, there are two local papers and a third online that ran numerous articles about the changes in trash/recycling. There were public forums. Mr. McMahon has an active FB account with many followers. E) Older people often don't generate much trash and would leave bags at the curbside - Reply: the trucking industry won't pick these up. F). One resident chided the HD for not engaging volunteers, finding other towns who would take old bins, etc. - Reply: acknowledge the excellent work this resident did in facilitating the shipments to Peabody. G) Since the collection is now part of the tax base (not a fee per residence), residents can now SHARE bins. At the end of this extended discussion, one resident who has attended numerous BOH meetings thought that given everything, the BOH had done a good job. All board members acknowledged that this was far from a perfect process.

The next agenda item was to offer businesses an option to pay monthly for trash and recycling pickup. As the motion was being written, it would be for the same 65-gallon trash, 95-gallon recycling, only for business that were NOT food, liquor, etc. The rate would be \$160/month

(which is the market rate). Businesses would set up an account at the Waste Department (much as is done for commercial businesses at the Transfer Station.) Perhaps at a future town meeting a revolving account could be set up these payments. This motion was crafted, seconded and passed.

Directors Report

Transfer Station - Mr. Petty reported that the renovation was complete except for minor things: gate to install, striping, infrared to figure out puddles by scale. He said it was good working with Dulis.

Beach testing - beaches will be tested weekly; if there is an abnormal test, the beach will be immediately retested. If it fails twice, it will be closed and this will be posted on the MDH website, Facebook, water and sewer, etc. A sign will be posted at the beach about the closure. (Grace Oliver and Gashouse beaches will be closed after just one failed test.)

Community Health

Dr. Ritvo gave a comprehensive summary about ticks and tick-borne diseases. "We are in the middle of tick season" and have noticed increasing numbers over the years secondary to human encouragement in wildlife areas and milder winters that not killing them off.

The most prevalent is Lyme disease, caused by a *Borrelia burgdorferi*, carried by the *Ixodes scapularis* tick (deer tick). The signs and symptoms can include rashes (erythema migrans, bulls eye), fever, fatigue, muscle and joint aches. If not treated, the disease can go on to cause neurologic, joint and cardiac complications. There are 30-50,000 cases in MA per year, and ticks range from Virginia up to New England.

Other tick diseases of note are Rocky Mountain Spotted fever which is fortunately rare in New England but carries a 20-30% fatality rate. One that is seen, however, is Alpha-Gal syndrome which is carried by the Lone Star tick. This syndrome comes from an allergic reaction to a sugar in the saliva in the tick. Alpha-gal is a sugar (polysaccharide) that is in meat and other mammalian products. An affected individual who develops the allergy can experience hives, nausea, and some anaphylaxis. The only "treatment" is to avoid meats and for some, dairy products.

Dr. Ritvo talked about prevention. Ticks are most commonly found in tall grasses, bushes, etc. One should wear long pants tucked into sock, light colors, and do a thorough skin check - exposed areas as well as moist areas (groins, arm pits, etc.) Showering soon after a hike can decrease

ticks. If a tick is found, use a fine tip tweezers, pull up and then cleanse with soap and water. If a tick is on for < 36 hours there is usually no concern. If found later but within 72 hours, prophylaxis (a single dose of doxycycline) can be taken. On a more encouraging note, a Lyme disease vaccine is in the works.

For the next meeting there will be discussion about CAHM findings, a discussion about an outdoor exercise facility with a grant from the National Fitness Council, and a report about the CHIP grant (grantees to be notified in late June or July.)

The next board meeting will be on 6/29 at 7PM.