



OBSERVER REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH - 6-29-26

Hybrid Meeting - Recorded

LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

Members in Attendance: Andrew Petty, Tom McMahon, Tom Massaro, Amanda Ritvo, Kristin Dubai Horton, Julie B. Selbst

Chair's Report

Outdoor exercise facility - The BOH was asked if MHD was interested in an outdoor exercise facility. (This is from the same organization that helped with one set up years ago in the woods behind Seaside Park.) Such an area would be near current park areas, about tennis court size, concrete, divided into sections with exercises at various locations. The cost to the town would be ~\$250K; there would be some grant money and the organization would help the town seek more, e.g., park grants from the state. The question is this in the purview of the BOH, who can't oversee or run it. Dr. Massaro sees the BOH role as a facilitator to work with other groups to bring this fruition. This could include Park and Rec, the schools, etc.

BOH organization issues - A) how often to meet -> 2/month. B) what days - the board agreed to the 2nd and 4th Mondays, with exceptions made for holidays. C) how to divide the work - Dr. Massaro has watched how school committees that have 5 members have created subcommittees (finance, roof, etc.) and wondered if the BOH might do the same. Another alternative is that a board member with a particular interest could work on an area of need. A long discussion ensued about subcommittee possibilities - a "health assessment", a "finance", "mental health and substance abuse", etc. subcommittees. The CAHM survey showed that people are asking for more and better health messaging. The conclusion at this point was to not have subcommittees, where there are the

requirements of “open meeting laws.” Yet another possibility was to have “break out” groups for specific issues via Zoom during a regular meeting. D) public comment - the plan is to continue with possible public comment during the agenda item discussions, perhaps summarizing comments that are presented.

CHIP grant - Dr. Massaro reported that the grant application was NOT funded. In the state there were 182 applications for 20 grants. Previous applicants who had also not been funded had success on a second application. The MHD proposal was developed with 10 collaborators for a 2- year, \$50K grant looking at youth mental health - perhaps creating a teen center. If this CHIP grant had been awarded, after 2 years, MHD could apply for implementation grants.

CAHM Survey - Dr. Massaro reminded the board that there had been 2553 responses to 40 questions, many of which had “sub” questions. UMass Boston has produced a 180-page final report, with a 40-page summary. The results could help set the BOH priorities. An example was the work of the previous board initiated Mental Health Task Force which had been transferred to the Marblehead Counseling Center. The point person at the MCC has left, so perhaps this should return to the BOH. The MHTF had a website, Marblehead Cares, that went inactive but is now “up” and under construction again.

The survey results point to 7 high priority areas: stress, parenting issues, mental health, pedestrian safety, substance abuse, and senior fragility. The highest priority from the survey was **stress**. Ms. Dubay Horton talked about a very successful intervention with teen drinking in a Connecticut town similar to MHD in size and demographics, with a lot of youth stress. She thought that this would be a good case study. (The intervention involved detailed conversations of parents with their teen children, including clear expectations for safety and “contracts.”) Many BOH suggestions followed about the priorities. Dr. Massaro said he would come to the next meeting with ideas about which priorities to work on first. All board members wished to read both the extended and summarized reports.

Community Health - Dr. Ritvo reported that this is the height of tick season with many ED visits. The recommendations from the last meeting are especially important: tick checks, repellants, showering, etc. Mosquito born illnesses are few in MA, but the more common one is West Nile; there

was one reported case in MA last year. The worst times for mosquitoes are early morning and dawn.

The most immediate health risk for MHD has been from the heat wave. People should drink more fluids, moderate exercise, and watch for heat related illnesses. Mr. Petty added that there are locations in town with a/c - the COA, the library, and perhaps even opening Brown school. The health department does use the reverse 911 to notify residents. He urged all to sign up for this service.

Director's Report - A) a fowl permit was granted to 18 Stony Brook Rd- 4 chickens, no rooster. B) the MHD HD is part of a North Shore health collaborative and there is concern about kratom, a derivative from a plant with multiple uses, pain relief, sedation, etc. and concerns (dependence, withdrawal, and worse.) A draft regulation will be presented at the next meeting. C) Curbside collection will proceed this 7/1. Bins have been delivered to all residences. In 6 weeks there will be the smaller bins available. Once a person "swaps out" for a smaller bin, they can't "go back". As a reminder all recycling has to go in a bin with lid closed, which may be more of an issue at holiday time. D) a sticker sale was refunded.

The next meeting is scheduled for 7/28.