



OBSERVER REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH: 8/10/21 LWVM Observer - Thomas Krueger

Members in Attendance via Zoom - Andrew Petty, Todd Belf-Becker, Sec. Andrea Flaxer, Joanne Greer Miller, Helaine Hazlett

Meeting Posted 48 hrs in advance

Meeting held in a Handicapped Accessible Location - not applicable

Public allow to Participate in the Meeting - yes via Zoom.

AGENDA

Minutes of BOH meeting 6/29/21 were approved.

A sticker rebate was granted to a resident who purchased a sticker but already had a handicap placard in order to use Devereaux Beach. Per Park and Recreation, a sticker is not required for beach use if one has a handicap placard. A sticker is required for the use of the transfer station.

COVID UPDATE

Andrew read the latest statistics from 8/6/21 MHD case report. On 8/6 there has been a total of 1387 cases (on 7/30 1370; on 7/23 1359) with 16 active cases. Over the past 2 week the distribution has been 7 in 0-19 age group; 8 in 20-29; 3 in 30-39; 5 in 40-49; 3 in 50-59; 1 in 60-69, and 1 in the 70+. This brings an average incidence rate per 100,000 of 9.4%. Regarding testing, a total of 63,441 tests have been in MHD with 1,342 in the past 2 weeks. (For perspective, during the height of COVID, over 4,000 tests were done in a 2-week period.) The positivity rate for the tests is 2.24% which is higher than in the last 6 months. Also include in the case report (which is available at marblehead.org) are various guidelines from the CDC, state, DPH, etc.

Andrew wanted to emphasize three important points. First, we need to vaccinate as many people as possible. Secondly, when cases occur, contact tracing will continue and help will be available from the state collaborative. (As conditions were improving, the collaborative decreased staff but is now adding staff again.) They try to contact all positive cases within 24 hours. Finally, testing should continue to be robust, so that anyone with symptoms or contact should get tested. It is necessary to have a surveillance strategy.

The vaccination rate in MHD has been excellent with 78% fully vaccinated and 1900 one dose away. As for a breakdown in vaccination rate, those fully vaccinated are 79% in 12-15 age group; 94% in 16-19; 83% in 20-29; 89% in 30-49; 89% in 50-64; 88% in 65-74; and >95% for those 75 and over.

Andrew went on to read MA DPH advisory from 7/30/21. This advisory regarded facial coverings for unvaccinated; those fully vaccinated may resume many normal activities. In response to the Delta variant, however, even fully vaccinated who have certain risk factors (immune compromised, age, underlying medical issues, etc.) should wear masks indoors. Your PCP should be able to tell you if are at increased risk. Masks needed to worn regardless of vaccine status in all transportation (buses, trains, livery, etc.) and health care facilities. As a reminder one is considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after the second dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines, and 2 weeks after the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. If one does develop symptoms, one should get tested then wear mask awaiting test results.

Andrew restated that masks should be worn by all unvaccinated persons. They should also maintain 6-foot separation, avoid crowded or poorly ventilated places, wash hands, etc.

MA DESE and DPH issued a joint memorandum on 7/30/21 for COVID guidance for districts and schools. The document outlines the recommendations for masking, COVID testing and quarantine protocols. In short, masking - recommended for all K-6 when indoors except for medical conditions or behavioral needs. No masking for outdoors and masks can be removed while eating. Unvaccinated staff and unvaccinated students 7-12th grade, and unvaccinated visitors should wear masks indoors. Anyone with a household member at high risk should wear a mask. Masks need to be worn on school buses. COVID testing - all schools should maintain a robust plan for testing both diagnostic and pooled testing of students. These will be at no cost. Contact tracing and quarantine - with testing there will be a new "test and stay" protocol in lieu of requiring asymptomatic close contacts to quarantine.

In response to these recommendations, Andrew was concerned with visitors and vendors coming into the school and having to ask them whether they have been vaccinated. He felt that it would be better to have all visitors just mask, obviating the need to ask the question. The MHD then took up 3 motions to recommend to the school committee addressing the DESE recommendations as well as Andrews. The first motion - MHD BOH strongly recommends all students KG-6 wear mask (as outlined about in the DESE memo.) The second - MHD BOH strongly recommends unvaccinated staff and students in 7-12th grade wear masks (as in the DESE memo.) And the third - MHD BOH recommends that all visitors and vendors wear masks indoors at the schools. These were each voted on and approved. Andrew will convey these to the superintendent who will bring them to the school committee.

MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE (MHTF)

Joanne gave a report on the work of the MHTF which has continued to meet biweekly this summer. The task force has collected resource information and is the process of building a website for this based on a very successful one that Lexington has had running for 3 years. The priority is gettin this up and going and make it easily accessible. To "advertise" this all the stakeholders (schools, COA, faith community, etc.) will help to widely communicate the site.

Another initiative is to start a speaker series with the first topic as how non-professionals can recognize mental health symptoms and areas of concern. The speaker should hopefully be available to the schools and wider community.

TRANSFER STATION

Andrew reported that all mitigation and litigation regarding the transfer station with engineers, contractors, and home owners has been resolved. This leaves \$1.2 million dollars of the original moneys designated for the new transfer station. The parts NOT done are a new transfer building, a scale house and scale, a swap shed, entrance gate, motorized gate for the trash trailer. Andrew asked the board how to proceed. He notes that current scale house is on a trailer; the compactor is good condition, needing annual maintenance, but the compactor building needs sheathing on one side and a new roof. The major needs are upfront and for better flow. The residential side of the station is working well with bins for waste, good parking, and a large area for yard waste. The commercial side (which brings in a lot of money to the station) needs work. As a next step the architect needs to be enlisted again for estimates of the cost of construction options. It is important to know what can be done with \$1.2M. There is always the question of whether to “go back” to the town for additional funds; such a request would require estimates by January ‘22. During the public question period, one resident thought an accounting of how the original money was spent would be useful.

DIRECTORS REPORT

1. Beach water sampling has been ongoing this summer. In general, this has been good with the exception of times at Grace Oliver beach where the geometric mean (a calculation based on series of samplings) was 36, just over the acceptable 35 level. The beach was closed when these occurred. Andrew is actively investigating the source of this contamination which is the result of rainwater washing down pollutants to the ocean.
2. Household hazardous waste - the next scheduled event is for 9/15 and will require pre-registration and payment. One hundred residents of MHD and Swampscott can participate. As reminder this is not a curbside pick-up; items must be left on the porch or near the garage.
3. Miscellaneous - there has been no EEE or West Nile virus detected so far.

The next meetings of the MHD BOH are scheduled for 8/25/21 and 9/14/21.