



OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH – 8-13-25

Hybrid Meeting - Recorded

LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

Members in Attendance: Andrew Petty, Tom McMahon, Tom Massaro, Amanda Ritvo

Director's Report

Mr. Petty reported that this is the seventh week of the Republic strike with trash pickup only but not recycling. No further closure for strike nor a meeting has occurred. Recently the mayors from 14 of the affected cities have met and written a letter to the CEO of Republic asking for mediation. The governor has also become more involved.

Mr. Petty's next concern is the schools. With the start of school soon, he would like to be able to ensure pickup from there. Most likely the scenario will be having one truck doing trash pickup at schools before 7am or after 4pm. Recycling pickup from schools would be by another truck. Otherwise, there may soon be some community recycling pick up on an every-other-week basis, possibly starting Monday. Still the focus is on curbside trash collection.

Looking ahead for the next contract as this one will expire in September 2026, he is looking at RFPs (from other towns). A new contract could continue trash/recycling pickup as is current, or a different plan. Such a "new" plan could use an automated truck in most of Marblehead and a regular truck in the historic district because of the narrow and crowded streets. This plan would require using a standard trash barrel which in turn would require the town to buy the barrels for the approximately 8000 households. This could be financed over a period of time, 3-10 years. By buying in bulk there would be a cost saving. As for recycling, there

would need to be a new regulation so that it is put in containers with lids - open containers often have contents blown around. Clearly, this decision would need community input with attention to concerns and questions before a solution is decided.

Commenting, Mr. McMahon noted that Salem has every other week recycling which works. In the historic sections, perhaps every week would be necessary or using 2 X 35 gallon barrels. Mr. Petty will look at barrel contracts, ones with lids, wheels, and repair.

Dr. Massaro felt that community input was essential and perhaps the mid-September meeting with a robust agenda would be a good time. He suggested that Mr. McMahon chair that meeting. Mr. Petty will gather contracts, RFPs, and garner questions, with the idea of automated trucks for three quarters of the town and “regular” for the rest. Mr. Petty is looking at big as well as smaller companies - this is not a contract for the lowest bid, but the most qualified.

There is frequently the question about bringing trash and recycling “back in house.” This is major undertaking and would need: a daily crew for trash, 2-3 trucks for trash and recycling, need back up for crew, a mechanic for repairs, as well as places to take the curbside collections.

Other news is that a new employee who was excellent is moving on to a new job at MMLD. Mr. Petty has hired a new administrative person from the finance department. He wanted to thank Nadine from the COA for all her help over the last 7 weeks.

Chair’s Report

Dr. Massaro reported on the progress of the CAHM (Creating a Healthier Marblehead) survey. A group of seven with representatives of maternal health, seniors, pediatrics, and the school all met to review the 50 proposed survey questions. (Dr. Massaro had written to the school committee who were very enthusiastic about having someone from the schools participating.) The group has worked diligently but were only able to get through half of the questions. They are trying to “prune” the list down to 40 questions. Soon they would like to present the questions to the community but not until the strike is over - perhaps mid-

September. The plan is to have the survey ready, go out, with returns by October so analysis could start and results by early next year.

On a separate subject, health literacy, Dr. Massaro wanted to proceed with presentations about the importance of public health, especially in areas where people don't know about it. He would address questions, such as, where does the money come from, where does it go, etc. (He gave a pilot presentation to the Rotary.) He was thinking about possible venues – COA? The time of day is important to consider as well as if it could be recorded.

Vice Chair for Waste Report

Mr. McMahon reported that things are going better at the transfer station: the lines are shorter, the workers are very good and helpful, etc. He even mentioned perhaps a Go-Fund-Me campaign to show appreciation for the cheerful help of the workers.

Mr. Petty said that bids for the renovations (scale house, etc.) are out and expected back by mid-September.

Vice Chair for Community Health Report

Dr. Ritvo had received questions about testing the water quality at Riverhead beach as there are instruction programs, kayaking and paddle boarding, etc. there. Mr. Petty replied that it is not a designated bathing beach which are the only ones that are tested. To have this changed would require numerous steps. He could talk to the state of MA about a mixed-use beach. Mr. McMahon commented that one has to be careful as changes are made. Currently there is an active paddle board program there, but it has already faced a number of obstacles and operates on a “shoestring” budget. It is a watercraft area, where people walk their dogs, and no one swims there.

With school starting soon, Dr. Ritvo would like to talk to the schools about how they monitor updated vaccines. How do they inform parents? She would like to encourage schools to exclude those who are not up to date, except those with exemptions. Those without vaccinations would need to stay out for 21 days if there is an outbreak. It was moved and passed that the BOH is mindful of vaccinations and would like to work with the schools. Dr. Ritvo would talk with

the school's head nurse. (The required vaccines include - Tdap or DTap, polio, MMR, hepatitis b, varicella and meningitis for those 7th grade or older.)

The meeting was adjourned with the next planned for September.