



## OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

### **BOARD OF HEALTH - 4-9-24**

Hybrid Meeting - Recorded

LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

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

Prior to the start of the agenda Ms. Hazlett read a statement about her support for substance abuse programs, thanking the three participants who spoke at the last meeting.

### **Substance Abuse (SA) Education**

The discussion began with the ideas that SA support groups and education could partner with the Marblehead Counseling Center who offer support groups. Mr. McMahon presented Learning to Cope which has a number of groups in Massachusetts. The closest one to MHD is in Peabody that meets twice a week 7-8:30 pm in person. He asked the question do we need to look further? Much of the ensuing conversation was between the board, Mr. Petty, and two residents who have been active in support groups. One resident, Tom Day, noted that there are 25 chapters of LTC in Massachusetts. The participation at Peabody pre-pandemic was 60-70, now averaging 10-12 in person and when on Zoom 30-35. When Mr. Petty asked the residents about their feelings about LTC: both answered the meetings were very important and beneficial with some participants attending the two meetings a week. LTC does need facilitators who are family members of those with SA.

Further discussion concerned anonymity which initially was of concern for participants "who would know me", but this gives way and many become friends. Ms. Hazlett mentioned Ruth Ferguson of the MCC who with \$45K of ARPA dollars would explore opportunities. Terry McDonough of the MCC would take the lead. Ms. Miller asked if friends of the families are invited to LTC meetings: no, this is limited to family members.

A resident said that she had met with former Gov. Baker, and now Gov. Healy who are both supportive, to discuss support for those younger than 18. Mr. Petty discussed Opiate Intervention monies which are currently being used by communities for education and treatment "scholarships", SAM boxes, etc. Swampscott is doing a community survey which might be tailored to MHD.

Regarding Speaker Events as noted before, MCC has support groups. Mr. Petty envisioned a panel and individual speakers. Ms. Miller reported on what the Mental Health Task Force is looking into: 1) the NAN project that works with schools to increase mental health awareness and suicide prevention. The program is free, geared to young people, and offers instruction into active listening and possible interventions. There are 75 schools in the Boston area who have the NAN project. 2) Kevin Rosario who speaks to teens about substance abuse. He is authentic and connects well. 3) Charlie Applestein, author of books about understanding emotional and behavioral challenges of youth using a strength-based approach. 4) the Redwatch Band program - a peer to peer bystander intervention program to prevent toxic drinking.

As a conclusion Mr. Petty and Mr. McMahon plan to attend an LTC meeting. As for a program in MHD it is a busy time and hard to plan for the summer. This entire topic will be discussed further at the next meeting.

### **Town Meeting**

Mr. Petty spoke to the FY 25 budget and with the delays in the transfer station, the dollars from the revolving fund cannot all be spent. He proposed that \$300K be forwarded to the FY25 budget, resulting in \$1,362,000 versus \$1,062,00 where it will be spent next year. This was moved and passed.

Mr. Petty and Mr. McMahon will give the transfer station report at the Town Meeting, where we are and where we are going. Ms. Hazlett will speak to article 37, which seeks to increase the BOH membership to five from the current three. This addition could increase the knowledge and expertise of the board. Article 42, which seeks to discontinue personal beach and transfer station fees for honorably discharged veterans, is to be decided by the voters. The cost for 700 eligible veterans in MHD would be \$76K. For warrants 43, 44, and 45, all concerning gas powered leaf blowers, the BOH has no opinion.

### **Mental Health Task Force**

Ms. Miller has spoken about their recent discussions above. In addition, the MHTF is looking into the Grad the Torch program where teens, especially girls, learn leadership skills, social emotional learning, and self-awareness.

### **Transfer Station Update**

Mr. Petty presented the board members with a copy of the sub-bids for each aspect of the transfer station renovation. He read line by line what the estimated cost of each aspect (plumbing, electrical, painting, metal work, hvac, etc.) and the bids. In general, every bid, including the low bids, were at least twice and often three or more times that of the estimate. There were NO bids by a general contractor for the project. When asked why, he offered some possible reasons: there is already "a lot of work out there" and it is not worth it; it is difficult for some contractors to get to MHD on a daily basis; the contractors when doing public work must pay the "prevailing wage" which is more than private work; a project such as the transfer station requires much more oversight. In conclusion Mr. Petty will talk to the general contractors to understand their concerns and start the process of rebidding. (If the town were the general contractor, it would be a scheduling disaster.)

## **Household Hazardous Waste Day**

The next one for MHD will be Saturday 4/27 from 9am to 12 pm. This is a pay event and one must come early and be in the gates by 12pm, as it is extremely busy. The HD is planning two events a year. Mr. Petty noted that latex and acrylic paints, if dried out are taken by the transfer station at any time, up to 4 gallons per day.

## **Wellness Day**

This would be an important initiative for the HD, who could work with other groups, such as the YMCA, JCC, Chamber of Commerce, COA, etc. A good time of year would be in January as many are making New Year's resolutions, the year is beginning, and there are few conflicting activities. Thoughts about where and when were offered. The plan is to start reaching out soon.

## **Public Comment**

One resident was incensed that there were zero bids for the TS renovation, noting this is a failure of the BOH, whose job this is. A second resident wanted to remind all that Diaper Drive is all this month and unused diapers and wipes can be brought to the HD. A third resident voiced concerns about how busy the last HHWD was, and some could not get in.