



OBSERVER REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH - Date - 1/11/22 LWVM Observer - Thomas Krueger

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

Meeting - Emergency

Meeting held in a Handicapped Accessible Location - not applicable

Public allow to Participate in the Meeting - via Zoom - 210+ in attendance

AGENDA

1. Reaffirm and revote Nash Mandate Order. Discuss open meeting law related to same to rectify procedural error at the opening of the meeting 12/29/21.

The chair opened the meeting discussing the “rules” for this meeting. He went further to discuss the procedural error related to the open meeting of 12/29/21. The error was that the meeting was not announced as being conducted by remote means (via Zoom.)

The next order of business was reaffirming the vote taken on 12/29/21 for an indoor mask mandate. The chair read the 14-point order out loud. A motion to reaffirm was made and passed by the BOH via roll call.

2. Executive session - review open meeting law complaints filed by Mark Pelletier, Andrew Kramer, and Allen Waller pursuant to G.L. C. 30A sec 21(a)(3) to consider potential litigation.

3. Minutes of prior meetings 11/15, 12/13 and 12/14 approved

4. COVID UPDATE - Andrew Petty

Andrew reviewed the town’s COVID statistics as of 1/7/22: total cases (since the beginning) = 2543; new cases (12/24 to 1/7) = 452 with 47 probable cases. The age distributions is as follows: 0-4, 24; 5-11, 39; 12-19,70; 20-29, 72; 30-39, 47; 40-49, 66; 50-59, 76; 60-69, 29; 70-79, 25; 80+ 4. The lower number for the 5-11 group reflects vaccination in this group. The average daily incidence in the past 2wks per 100,000

=145.2 (higher). Total number of tests = 92,494; tests in past 2 wks was = 3,645; positivity rate = 11.57% (highest ever)

The vaccination rate in the community is very good: 5-11, 61%; 12-15, >95%; 16-19, >95%; 20-29, 93%; 30-49, >95%; 50-64, 93%; 65-74, 93%, and 75+, >95%.

The statistics for BOOSTERS are as follows: 5-11, 0; 12-15, 1%; 16-19, 37%; 20-29, 38%; 30-59, 52%; 50-64, 60%; 65-74, 73%; 75+, 85%.

Andrew noted that much has been changing regarding guidance about isolation. Currently if a person has a positive rapid antigen or PCR test, they should isolate for 5 days. Afterwards for days 6-10, they should wear a mask. If one has been exposed but not symptomatic, and if not vaccinated or boosted, they should quarantine for 5 days, then get tested via rapid antigen or PCR on day 5, and wear a mask for days 6-10.

Andrew further noted that the only COVID statistics that the HD has is from confirmed tests via rapid antigen or PCR via the MAVEN system.

Regarding testing, the HD will receive 7,560 test kits with two tests per kit. (The reason for the two tests is that it often takes more than one test to identify COVID.) These kits will be distributed to public housing, COA, food pantry, etc. He will confirm when the tests will come and be distributed.

Andrew was questioned about contact tracing. He noted that there is some in daycares and school environment, but with the large number of cases it is impossible for the HD to do. He further said that positive individuals should contact their close contacts. He further added that if a person is fully vaccinated and exposed, the person does NOT need to quarantine but should watch for symptoms.

5. SALT (Superintendent Advisory Leadership Team) - Helaine Hazlett

There was only a brief meeting on 1/4/22 and a meeting conflict on 1/11/22. Notably there are no plans to return to remote learning, and schools are doing their best to stay open. On 1/3 teachers and staff got COVID test kits so that would feel more comfortable about returning, Currently the MA school mask mandate is in effect until 2/28/22. Mitigation is practiced where possible - lunch in the field house, open windows when possible, etc. Staff absences from COVID are being handle well with all staff pitching in, e.g., the athletic director taught a class one day. These efforts need to be appreciated. The school will a supply of the KN95 masks. The school department has its own dashboard of COVID cases.

6. MHTF (Mental Health Task Force) - Joanne Miller

Joanne updated the group recent efforts. The task force is in full support of the police chief, Dennis King, seeking a grant to seek ways to deal with crisis intervention and jail diversion.

A second program put on by the MHTF will be held on 1/31/22 at 7PM at the MHD high school. The topic will be suicide awareness and hopes to draw the young, families, etc from the community. The SOS will be held at MHD high school. (The results of the study are still being developed.)

The MHTF has engaged with Mark Leber who had previously led a program called MARBLEHEAD CARES, a program about substance abuse. They hope to use his experience and build on it.

The MHTF is still seeking student interns to join the task force.

7. Sustainable Marblehead (SM) - Peaker Plant

Members of SM presented the history of the Peaker Plant scheduled to be built in Peabody. A Peaker plant is to be used to provide electricity during peak demands. The project was first initiated in 2015 before environmental and health impacts were required of such projects. The plant would use oil or gas (fossil fuels) and would probably need to be decommissioned to meet MA environmental goals. The plant would also be emitting particulate matter that could be inhaled. The site for the proposed plant is near populated areas in Peabody (housing, schools, etc.). MHD Light Department “owns” about 4% of the proposed plant. The Peabody BOH has written a letter against the construction of the plant, and SM is asking the MHD BOH to write a letter in support of the Peabody BOH.

Question - what could take the place of a peaker plant? Battery alternatives, initiatives to “shave” the peak, buy needed electricity from ISO NE.

Question - what is the time frame? The construction has started to smooth the area. Of note the Peabody BOH’s letter against the plant was from 7/21/21 and a letter from SM was sent to the MHD BOH 9/24/21.

Town counsel said that it was within the purview of the BOH to write such a letter.

The decision about the MHD BOH letter will be on the agenda at the next meeting.

7. Transfer Station Update - Andrew Petty

As background articles were passed at town meeting in 2014 to cap the landfill (as required by law) and to build a new transfer station. The cap was finished in October 2018 and all settlement and legal issues resolved by 9/24/20. The funds that remained after all the cost above are ~\$1.25 million. (The Inspector general’s office reviewed the case and found no faulty with the expenditures.). The BOH in the past year asked Andrew to proceed with the architects and estimators seeking estimates for two options: option A = proceeding with the original plan for a new transfer stations; option B = a limited one dealing with the pit structures, scale house, etc. The cost estimates for the two options came in as Option A = \$6.5 million, Option B = \$1.6 million. (These costs

result from architects work that is then sent to another firm that does the cost estimating.) In either option better flow through the transfer station would be paramount.

The breakdown of costs for Option B are as follows: pit structure \$131K; staff support building \$469K; scale house, \$299K; swap shed, \$290; and site work \$474K - total = \$1.66M.

Clearly the pit structure built in 1975 needs work. The scale house is using only a temporary structure and needs addressing. The cost for the swap shed at \$290K seems too high.

In further discussion Option B could be started sooner. The additional funds would still have to be sought via town meeting. When asked about how durable the repair, Andrew said that it would be. The estimated construction time for Option B would be 6 months, for Option A, 12 months.

A public comment period followed. Comments included wanting a full accounting of the costs; without a full accounting unlikely to get funds from town meeting; a need for work to be done as it unsafe; workers feeling it is unsafe and unhealthy at the transfer station, etc.

In response Andrew reiterated that the town was under MA mandate to close the landfill and had to capture all the exigencies. No building could be constructed unless the landfill was completed. Extra costs included litigation.

The board decided to postpone a vote until the next meeting in one week's time.

8. Director's Report - Andrew Petty

Andrew read the curbside trash and recycling limits and when it should be place at the curbside. Recycling is mixed together, but no plastic bags, or styrofoam. Household hazardous waste will occur four time a year.

9. Public comment

The public comment was limited to 16 minutes (the meeting had already run 2 hours and 10 minutes). As before each person was allowed 2 minutes, name and address were requested, and no comment would be from the board. Comments during this time were all about the indoor mask mandate. Comments included: masks don't work, mask have detrimental effects on children, BOH not responsive, BOH shouldn't have emergency power, what metric will be used to lift the mandate.

Town counsel was asked about the BOH emergency powers and stated that such power is in MA state bylaws.

The meeting was adjourned with the next scheduled for 1/18/2