



OBSERVER REPORT

**BOARD OF HEALTH - 4-11-23 Hybrid
LWVM Observer - Thomas Krueger**

**Members in Attendance - BOH : Andrew Petty, Todd Belf-Becker (chairperson),
Joanne Greer Miller, Helaine Hazlett**

1. Town Meeting Leaf Blower Article

MHD residents, Jeanne Stahl and Kathy Breslin, presented Article 48 to the board asking for the board's support. Previously an article had been passed at town meeting banning the use of gas-powered leaf blower (GPLB) from Memorial Day until Labor Day. The residents above noted that the Green Committee had already supported this. Over 200 towns with seven in MA have enacted restrictions on GPLB; California will ban them by 2024, and Mass Medical Society, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Lung Association, and others are in support. GPLB have significant health impacts, especially 2 cycle motors - 30% of the fuel is unburned, and running a GPLB for 1 hour emits the same pollution that car does after 1000 miles. The health effects extend to lung, cardiovascular and diabetic disease. Leaf blowers effects are via pollution, noise (GPLB emit low frequency noise that is much more penetrating), and particulate matter. The time period when banned is during the summer when people are outside, windows are open, and there is little need. (NOTE - electric powered leaf blower can be used year around.)

The BOH chair stated that the board has not historically supported citizen articles. If the bill is passed the HD as well as the police department will be charged with enforcement. The process would be as follows: a call can be made to the health department or police department; an officer or HD official are then authorized to levy a fine. The fine would be for the homeowner, not the landscaper. NOTE - if the article is passed, there will be NO enforcement this year: the article has to go the town clerk, then to the MA attorney general, and this process takes ~ 90 days, past Labor Day.

2. Budget Update

Mr. Petty reported that the HD presented to the Fin Com one week ago and the budget was approved. Mr. Petty reminded the BOH that when the budget was formulated, no change could happen to employee hours or the HD would lose grant funding. This left the only source for saving to be the contribution the HD gives to mental health services, MHD Counseling Center. When this "savings" was included, the budget was \$303, 879. Fin Com was able to find savings in other budgets, so that the HD budget was

now \$313,091, only a \$1088 cut to the mental health contribution. (After town meeting, the BOH will look to see where the remaining ARPA funds can be allocated.) The BOH ratified the above budget.

In the other HD budget for waste removal, a change was made so that the revolving account dollars could be used for waste disposal, maintenance, and the final lease payment for John Deere loader - these terms are such that after a 3 year lease the department owns the JD equipment. This budget item was \$1,488,200. This budget was ratified by the BOH.

3. Tobacco Control: A local regulation to control the psychoactive substances, Kratom and Delta 8, will be going to the town counsel soon. These substances are already banned by the state, but local regulation will allow enforcement.

4. Mental Health Task Force Update

- The MHTF met on 4/10 and discussed their participation in the upcoming Healthy Kids fair at the YMCA on 4/29 from 11am-1:30 pm. There will be a table there with lots of information available.
- The weekly MHD Current publication has offered the MHTF a monthly column that will discuss mental health issues. A subcommittee is already working on this.
- The MHTF is applying to the HD for the following ARPA funds: \$2500 for promotion materials, advertising, and website maintenance and monthly updates; \$7500 for a young adult and adult speaker series. The total is \$10,000. This was approved by the board.
- Dan Bauer, principal for MHS, a valued member will be leaving the task force as he takes on a new job. Michele Carlson, the new principal for MHS, was suggested as his replacement. Her appointment was approved by the board.

5. Transfer Station Update: The HD director, the architect and civil engineer will soon go before the MA DEP (department of environmental protection) to see if the further TS renovations will be seen as a new project or a revised one (the landfill had been closed.) Depending on DEP's decision, if it is deemed a "new" project there will be a 4-month delay as the project is certified; if a "revised" one, then the next steps in the renovation can proceed more rapidly.

6. Transfer Station fee schedule: Mr. Petty attended a MA recycling committee recently and met several vendors who recycle Freon (the refrigerant). Currently the TS does not take any appliance that has freon. The vendor would come to the TS, remove the freon, and the TS could begin taking air conditioners, refrigerators, freezers, etc. The cost would \$25 per unit. (The vendor would come only after 25 units had been brought.) The process would be similar to televisions, etc - pay for the sticker, attach to the unit, etc. (Note - if it is a refrigerator, the doors have to be removed.) Mr. Petty is looking into vendors for propane tanks (20 lb and 1 lb) recycling.

7. Director's Report

- The North Shore Public Health coalition (Swampscott, Lynn, Marblehead, Danvers, Beverly, and Salem) are working on a body art regulation, including micro blading, tattooing, etc.

- Sun safety - all town employees who work outside will be provided with sun screen, life guards umbrellas, etc.
- Narcan for overdoses - there are 24 kits at the office, each has two narcan units, fentanyl test strips (concern is about “press pills” which often have unknown compounds), nitro gloves, and a face barrier for CPR. No questions about the kits will be asked.
- MA new behavioral health hotline - card with info is at the office - 833-773-2445 - available 24 hr/d, 7d/wk, 365 d/yr.
- New program for Northshore mothers - new mothers can have a home visit by a local nurse to answer questions. This is a one-time visit and a new mother has to call for the service.
- Diaper drive - the acceptance of new unopened diapers at the HD ends on 4/28
- COVID test kits - still available outside the HD office (these have an expiration date of September); after 5/11 the kits won't be provided and people will have to use health insurance to obtain from a clinic or doctor's office.

The meeting was adjourned and the next scheduled for 5/9/23.