



OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH – 9-19-23 - Hybrid

Meeting Recorded

LWVM Observer: Tom Krueger

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

Transfer Station refund requests - 3 refund requests for \$10, \$75, and \$55 were all approved.

Elaine Leahy of Sustainable Marblehead (SM)

Elaine is the executive director of Sustainable Marblehead who came to the BOH to thank Mr. Petty and the board members, give a brief overview of SM, and to suggest four ways SM could partner with the Health Department. Briefly, SM is a community organization that works to decrease waste, pollution, CO2 emissions by 2040, etc. There are a number of subgroups of SM working on issues, such as conservation, harbors, clean energy, policy, etc.

Elaine enumerated the four ways SM could partner with the HD:

- 1) composting in the community - the more the better, which would remove food waste from the food stream, less costly for the town, extend the life of landfills, decrease greenhouse gases, create compost. SM will in the next year supply an additional 53 bins to MHD
- 2) composting at the schools - composting already occurs at MHS, and the Veterans, and the hope is this can be extended to two other schools
- 3) recycling education - there is a 30% "contamination" in the recycling from MHD residents, and this could be improved
- 4) mental health - encouraging residents to be outside more and use bikes vs cars more. This improves mental health as well as decreases the carbon footprint.

In the ensuing discussion, Mr. Petty said that SM had a great partnership with the department. Regarding composting, Black Earth offers curbside composting each week for \$100/year. This saves the town money and is good for the environment. Mr. Petty plans to use funds for composting bins, of which there are two sizes, a 13 gallon (\$29.50) for outside and a 1 gallon (\$10.00) for inside. To sign up for the program, contact Black Earth online. In addition, there are 8 bins up at the Transfer Station that any resident can use - this does cost the town money, so by signing up for curbside pickup saves the town money.

In further discussion, Mr. Petty talked about the school composting program. The initial composting at the high school began as a senior project and was subsequently expanded to the Vets. He said he would like to see it in all the schools; what is needed is a teacher to champion at each school. The result of such programs would be to make composting second nature.

With respect to recycling education, Mr. Petty referred again to the website recyclesmartma.org which is a source to go to figure out what can be recycled. He hoped to partner with SM to audit our contamination percentage.

Finally, there was discussion about “walk to school”, clean-up days with the next Saturday, 9/23 starting at 10am at Devereaux Beach. SM plans to have fun and games for kids there from 11am on.

Mental Health Task Force Update

The MHTF met most recently on 9/11 and is working on a strategic plan. One priority is membership: making sure they have the “right” members on the board to meet their priorities. They plan to have formal “proxy” members who will be non-voting ones. The MHTF is creating subcommittees which hopefully will lead to an exciting year.

A major priority is community engagement. This will involve a community survey to see what the needs are and what the priorities should be. On 9/22 U Mass Boston who have been doing health-risk assessments will be doing these surveys. A second priority is branding and marketing via social media, the website, brochures, magnets, displays, etc. Legislation and politics are a third priority so that legislators can be informed and be asked for funding.

Ms. Miller, who chairs the MHTF, made note of a recent article in the MHD Current by Dr. Tom Massaro who wrote that mental health needs are actually a public health issue. At the present time there are not enough MH clinicians to address the needs.

Town Bike Rodeo Safety Program

Currently many bike riders cycle without helmets, will text while riding, etc. The HD will be partnering with the police department, schools, park and rec, etc. to have a bike rodeo safety program soon.

Facility Stickers

Currently, MHD facility stickers are \$80 for the first resident car, \$25 for the second, and are displayed on the driver’s side front bumper. The major problem with the system are the scofflaws who use the TS but don’t buy a sticker. The current system requires an employee to monitor the stickers, which slows traffic and when not displayed, subjects

the employee to sometime aggressive pushback. To alleviate this problem, a few solutions were discussed. First, instead of a sticker, one could have a card with more information on it that an attendant could see. A second idea is that of a stickerless system using cameras to read the license plates. This system would “read” the plate information, check with a computer list, and if not on the list would message an employee who would then talk to the offender. When last priced years ago, the system would cost \$60K. One firm, Eagle Eye, was suggested but they only have experience with small parking lots. The major obstacle to these systems is that the TS does NOT have enough employees. The TS operates six days a week, necessitating workers who work M-F and others who work T-S as well as covering vacation days, etc. If considered, the \$60K would have to come from the HD budget. After the discussion Mr. Mahon was in favor of the stickerless system. Mr. Petty was going to analyze costs. But, for the next year, stickers have been ordered with the suggestion that “Marblehead” be omitted from the sticker, and it would just have “Facility Sticker” and the license plate number on it.

Ms. Miller opined that the problem is not the stickers but the residents who have at times verbally assaulted TS employees. She wants the employees to feel safe at their job.

Commercial Recycling Stickers

Currently the TS allows commercial recycling for MHD business owners who reside in MHD or have a business in MHD. The cost of commercial recycling is \$280 a ton, as much of the recycled material that the town was paid for (e.g. cardboard) is no longer. Instead, the town pays to have this recycled. The discussion continued about what size load (in smaller vs larger trucks with a 5-yard construction and demolition limit) by whom (commercial vs residential) of recycled material could be brought. Mr. Petty noted that DEP’s goal is to have more and more recycled.

Transfer Station Facility (TSF) Update

The MHD Planning board has approved the TSF plans, and DEP approval is pending. The next step is for Winter Street Architects to finalize documents, addressing additional services, civil engineering, structural engineering, design team, etc. The cost is \$231,480. The board moved and passed for this expense to be paid. Mr. Petty said that the facility will be solar ready and hopes it could soon go out for bid. He hoped the foundations could be laid before the winter. He noted that there will be lots of interruptions during the construction, but the facility will be open.

Director’s Report

1. Fentanyl test strips and Narcan - these are available at the HD and if needed, One can talk with the public health nurse about use. These are available without any face-to-face encounter. Mr. Petty said that they want the availability to be as easy as possible. There was a discussion about having a mailbox near Mary Alley stocked with these supplies. Vandalism is always possible but would be

monitored. Mr. Mahon noted that drug use is very common in MHD and hopes the word of the availability gets spread.

2. Website - further discussion was how the HD website could be improved to make it more accessible. An employee in the finance department was identified as someone who could help with this.
3. Fall leaf collection - curbside leaf collection (only in leaf bags) will occur the following weeks on the day of trash pick-up: 10/23/23, 11/6/23, 11/27/23, 12/11/23, 4/22/24, 5/13/24 and 6/3/24. These will be listed on the HD website.
4. Household Hazardous Waste - this will occur on Saturday, 11/18/23 at the transfer station. This information is posted on the HD website. (The curbside pick up ended when the firm who did this was bought by another company). The programs is expensive and busy: 0-3 gallons or pounds = \$30, 3-10 g or p = \$40, and 10-25 g or p = \$60. The next date will be in April.
5. Flu shots - the HD will administer flu shots at the COA for those over 65 on 9/26/. 9-11am. One must pre-register. Employee shots will be on 10/11 from 3-6pm.

Public Comment

- A. A reporter asked questions as to whether the Narcan and fentanyl test strips were free - yes; overdose statistics - not available now; COVID cases in MHD - only measure now is waste water amount which on a regional but not town basis has been going up.
- B. A resident asked about who would monitor the \$238K for the next step in the facility construction - Jerry Smith

Next meeting is scheduled for 10/13/23 at 7:30 pm