



## **OBSERVER REPORT**

**BOARD OF HEALTH:** 6/29/212 LWVM Observer - Thomas Krueger

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

Meeting Posted 48 hrs. in advance

Meeting held in a Handicapped Accessible Location - not applicable

Public allow to Participate in the Meeting - yes via Zoom.

### **REORGANIZATION**

After the recent election, the board has a new member, Joanne Greer Miller. Each year the board "reorganizes". Todd Belf-Becker was nominated and elected as the chairperson, Helaine Hazlett, the vice chair, and Joanne Greer Miller, the communication officer.

### **MINUTES**

The minutes of 5/29 were accepted and those of 6/8 were accepted as revised

### **COVID UPDATE**

Andrew gave a brief update, noting that there had been NO new cases in MHD. He discussed the "break-through" cases, case contracted after vaccination. There have been 4,034 in over 4 million vaccinated, represent less than 0.1%. Of these 284 were hospitalized (7% of the break through cases) with 75 deaths. The specific conditions of these deaths, e.g., underlying conditions, time after vaccination, etc. are not available at this time.

DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) relayed a clarification to the schools about facial covering indoors and safety requirements. As of 6/19 they encourage those who are vaccinated to wear masks; those unvaccinated should wear masks. In the fall all mask and COVID safety precautions are to be lifted and future recommendations will be made in coordination with the MA DPH. All are watching the emergence of the Delta variant, especially for children <12.

The MHD vaccination rate is as follows: 13,927 fully vaccinated (72% of the MHD population), 1,897 with first dose (11%); these represents 83% of MHD residents.

On Thursday, 7/1/21, those who have been vaccinated can register for the MA Vax-a-Million prizes. A drawing of a \$1M for those >18, and a scholarship of \$300,000 for <18 will occur each week for five weeks. Register on line a [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov)

## MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

The group met on 6/28 with Joanne chairing the meeting. Ben Day discussed partnering with the MHD Female Humane Society for grant money. Other topics included: forming a speaker series/workshops to support the community with possible locations at the library, school, COA, etc.; working with a technology team to connect with people; anticipating the needs of children returning to school, especially about anxiety issues; working with other in the community, e.g., faith organizations; etc. The task force will continue to meet throughout the summer. The next meeting is 7/12/21 at 7PM. Helaine made the board members aware of a Children Friends and Family Services series of courses, Mental Health SOS, that is free and began Tuesday 6/22 and will continue weekly through 9/14.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Beach water sampling has begun and will continue through the summer. Samples are collected each Wednesday at different MHD beaches. All have been normal except for a one-day high result obtained at Gashouse Beach. There is higher potential for contamination after large rain events with runoff draining into the ocean.

The GFAO budget for the department to the town is still in progress.

At the transfer station work is proceeding on the final location for the scales and scale house as well as plans for the swap shed. Considerations need to be made for traffic flow.

In 2014 at the Town Meeting, Article 29 was passed banning the use of polystyrene containers for food containers, etc. An exemption at the time was given to the school for use in the lunch rooms with the idea that this would be temporary. Since that time, the schools have continued using the polystyrene trays. Discussion then followed about finally banning the use. This could be done by amending the by-law, and would require a public hearing prior to such an action. As next steps Todd will reach out to the superintendent and school committee. Andrew will discuss the process with the town lawyer.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One resident asked if there would be a mandatory vaccine requirement for schools. Andrew replied that he and other health directors would look the state for guidelines. He did note that several MA colleges are making it mandatory.

Finally, Helaine proposed an accommodation to the retiring police chief, Bob Picariello, for all of his help during the COVID crisis: he is to be congratulated for how he helped maintain the public's health.

The meeting was adjourned with the next scheduled for 8/10/21 at 7:30pm. Hopefully, the meetings in September can be in person, although a hybrid one might be possible but the technology is challenging.