

MARBLEHEAD BOARD OF HEALTH

MINUTES, January 11, 2022

Present: Chm. Todd Belfbecker, Helaine Hazlett, Joanne Miller, Andrew Petty, Director
Also Present: Elizabeth Lyons, Esq., Dr. Tom Krueger (League of Women Voters)

Web-based video conferencing meeting of the Board of Health via Zoom.

Meeting called to order at 7:31pm. The following roll call was taken: Ms. Helaine Hazlett, present; Ms. Joanne Miller, present; Dr. Todd Belfbecker, present.

Chairman Belfbecker opened the meeting discussing the setting for this meeting. He noted there was a procedural error at the December 29th meeting. The error was that roll call was not taken to commence the meeting.

MOTION to correct procedural error from the December 29, 2021 meeting. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Ms. Joanne Miller, in favor; Ms. Helaine Hazlett, in favor; Dr. Todd Belfbecker, in favor.

Todd read aloud the Mask Mandate.

MOTION to reaffirm the Public Health Emergency Order implemented until March 8, 2022. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Ms. Joanne Miller, in favor; Ms. Helaine Hazlett, in favor; Dr. Todd Belfbecker, in favor.

MOTION to move pursuant to G.L. c. 30A sec 21(a)(3) that the Board move into executive session for the purpose of discussing potential litigation regarding the Open Meeting Law complaints filed by Mark Pelletier, Andrew Kramer, and Allen Waller the public discussion of which may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Board. The Board will be returning to open session. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Ms. Joanne Miller, in favor; Ms. Helaine Hazlett, in favor; Dr. Todd Belfbecker, in favor.

MOTION to approve meeting minutes of November 15th as submitted. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Ms. Joanne Miller, in favor; Ms. Helaine Hazlett, in favor; Dr. Todd Belfbecker, in favor.

MOTION to approve meeting minutes of December 13th as submitted. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Ms. Joanne Miller, in favor; Ms. Helaine Hazlett, in favor; Dr. Todd Belfbecker, in favor.

MOTION to approve meeting minutes of December 14th as submitted. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Ms. Helaine Hazlett, in favor; Ms. Joanne Miller, in favor; Dr. Todd Belfbecker, in favor.

Andrew reported that since the beginning of the pandemic there have been a total of 2543 cases of COVID-19 in town. From December 24th to January 7th the new cases added were 452 with 47 listed as probable cases. The cases per age group are as follows:

24- 0-4yrs of age	66- 40-49yrs of age
39- 5-11yrs of age	76- 50-59yrs of age
70- 12-19yrs of age	29- 60-69yrs of age
72- 20-29yrs of age	25- 70-79yrs of age
47- 30-39yrs of age	4 – 80yrs+of age

The average daily incidence rate in the past 2 weeks per 100,000 is 145.2. The total number of tests given to residents in town is 92,494; tests given in past 2 weeks were 3,648 with a positivity rate 11.57%. The vaccination rates in the community are very good with the following numbers: 5-11yrs of age- 61%; 12-15yrs of age- >95%; 16-19yrs of age- >95%; 20-29yrs of age- 93%; 30-49yrs of age- >95%; 50-64yrs of age- 93%; 65-74yrs of age- 93%, and 75yrs of age+ >95%. The booster rates 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 stated that much has been changing regarding guidance about isolation. Presently, if a person has a positive rapid antigen or PCR test, they should isolate for 5 days. Once the isolation period has ended for the next days 6-10, a mask should be worn. 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 days. Also, all COVID-19 statistics that the health department has is from confirmed tests via rapid antigen or PCR via the MAVEN system. The health department will receive 7,560 at home test kits with two tests per kit. These kits will be distributed in environmental justice neighborhoods.

Helaine gave a SALT (Superintendent Advisory Leadership Team) update to the Board. On January 4th, a brief meeting held. There are no plans to return to remote learning. On January 2nd teachers and staff were given COVID-19 at home test kits to enable them to feel more comfortable to return to school after the break. The mask mandate in the schools is in effect until February 28, 2022. The staff is pitching in when there are teacher absences. Their efforts are appreciated by all. KN95 masks will be available to students when needed. The school department has their own dashboard providing cases of COVID-19.

Joanne updated the Board on the Marblehead Mental Health Task Force. The task force is in full support of the police chief, Dennis King and is seeking a grant providing ways to deal with crisis intervention and jail diversion. A program will be held on 1/31/22 at 7pm at the high school auditorium. The topic will be suicide awareness and hopes to educate students and families from the community. Dr. Mark Libon, Ph.D. is providing input to the task force. He previously led a program called MARBLEHEAD CARES, a program about substance abuse. They hope to use his experience and build on it. Also, the task force is seeking student interns to join.

Judith Black and Lynn Nadeau of Sustainable Marblehead came before the Board and 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 Massachusetts 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.). Marblehead Light Department owns about 4% of the proposed plant. The Peabody Board of Health has written a letter against the construction of the plant, and would like the Marblehead Board of Health to write a letter as well. Todd responded by stating we will revisit this topic at the February meeting. The Board thanked Sustainable Marblehead for their concerns.

Transfer Station Update

Todd provided a background recap on the transfer station project. The 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 Board in the past year asked Andrew to proceed with the architects and estimators seeking estimates for two options: Option A which is the original plan for a new transfer station; Option B which is a more 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. In either option a better flow through the transfer station would be what ideal. 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. In a final note, 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.

Todd opened the meeting to public comment only relevant to the transfer station. The following citizens offered comments:

Jack Attridge – 67 Beach Street
Dan Albert – 15 Leicester Road
Kevin Rockett – 13 Taft Street
Megan Sweeney – 23 Beacon Street
Jimmy Zissson – 2 Mound Road
Jean Lamkin – 19 Devereux Street
Jenn Schaffner – 20 Casino Road
Jack Attridge – 67 Beach Street

Andrew read aloud Article 34 of 2015 and also the ballot questions were read.

Andrew read aloud the trash and recycling collection notice which was sent out with the town census.

Todd opened the meeting to the public comment period. The following citizens offered comments on the mask mandate:

Kevin McKernan – 24 Foster Street
Sarah Fox – 46 Beach Street
Dr. Paul Milone – 4 Winslow Square Lane
Kim Crowley – 21 Roosevelt Ave
Garett Trombly – 2 Homestead Road
Emily DeWitt – 154 Atlantic Avenue
Cathy Crist – 1 Gerald Road

Helaine asked town counsel if the Board is entitled to declare emergency orders. The response given was that the Massachusetts state bylaw states the Board of Health has the authority to enact.

The next meeting will take place on January 18th.

MOTION to close meeting. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Ms. Helaine Hazlett, in favor; Ms. Joanne Miller, in favor; Dr. Todd Belfbecker, in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 pm.

Andrea Flaxer
Senior Clerk

List of documents used:

Mask mandate

OML complaint responses: Mark Pelletier, Andrew Kramer, Allen Waller

Article 34

Trash and recycling collection notice