

Board of Health

Meeting Minutes – Helaine opened the meeting on December 12th, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.

Members in attendance: Chair Helaine R. Hazlett, Vice Chair Joanne Greer Miller, Tom McMahon, & Health Director Andrew Petty.

1. Meeting Minutes from 09/12/23, 10/10/23, 11/14/2023

Meeting minutes approved as received. Joanne motioned to approve, Tom Seconded, all in favor. Motion passed.

2. Marblehead Counseling Center Yearly Update

Ruth Ferguson President on video conference, & Ron Grenier Vice President of the Counseling Center updated Board members. The center has been fortunate to have consistent support from the town and key individuals/organizations for over 50 years, including recent support for infrastructure upgrades and staff hiring. The Center's clinical staff report increased multiple mental health issues among all age groups, particularly among younger populations, with many layers of treatment required and a growing need for longer-term care. Marblehead residents make up 39% or 124 individuals on the waiting list. Adolescent percentage on waitlist: 70% (last year). Helaine emphasized the need to address the long waitlist for mental health services in Marblehead. Joanne highlighted the financial constraints faced by the town, including the need to prioritize funding for essential services like the Counseling Center, while also considering the need to serve other communities. The Counseling Center is considering restarting groups, such as a women's group, to provide additional support to the community.

3. Mental Health Task Force Update

Joanne spoke about the Community Needs Assessment to address mental health concerns. Also, a program on screen-time's impact on youth, with a focus on strategies for parents and families. Brian from the YMCA mentioned a new director of mental health and wellness, and the group is interested in partnering with them.

4. Transfer Station Update

Trailer replacement completed, minor work on utilities, staff happy with improved living conditions. Andrew anticipates the bid process for construction project to take at least a month, with potential for early construction due to mild winter weather. He wants a detailed breakdown of costs for the swap shed and other projects to ensure transparency and accountability. Tom planned to work on a statement for the community addressing concerns about the misuse of funds in the past. Andrew discussed the need for a more streamlined sticker system, hoping to make it easier for residents to renew or purchase stickers.

5. Holiday Schedule

Transfer Station will be closed on December 23, Monday the 25th and again Saturday December 30th & Monday January 1st. Dates to be posted online and sent to email list.

6. Mattress Fee Increase

Andrew discussed mattress recycling costs and proposed fee for residents with stickers to remain at \$35.00, higher fees for non-residents, commercial, and non-stickered use at \$75.00. \$75.00 is the average of other local costs.

MOTION: Tom moved to proceed with the increase for non-stickered/commercial mattress disposal to \$75.00. Joanne seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

7. Website – Mental Health and Physical Health Resources

Tom discussed the importance of addressing underlying health issues to prepare for pandemics, citing US obesity rates as a concern. Highlighted the importance of addressing mental and physical health issues in the community, suggesting resources such as the Counseling Center, Mental Health Taskforce, and local fitness facilities. Discussed the importance of community in mental health, sharing his personal experience with CrossFit and how it has helped him build a supportive network. He mentions the lack of centralized resources for health, suggesting a direct link to a website with information on various mental and physical health services. The importance of highlighting local health resources, such as nutritionists, to promote a healthier population. Andrew suggested adding a list from the Northshore Health Collaborative to the town website. The Board discussed the idea of a spring fair or event to promote mental and physical health.

8. Director's Report

Andrew mentioned limited COVID-19 test kits available at the office and encouraged potentially infected people to call for curbside pickup. He reminded residents to recycle properly and collapse cardboard boxes to fit in recycle bins during the holidays. Provided information on leaf collection, including that it is only for leaf and grass, no sticks or rocks, and no pumpkins. Discussed Chris Herren, former NBA player turned addiction recovery advocate, to speak at Marblehead High School in January.

9. Public Comment

MOTION: Joanne moved to adjourn the meeting. Tom seconded. All in favor, Meeting ended at 9:05 p.m.