

# **GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

Board of Selectmen's Report

Executive Assistant's Report

Reports from Town Officers, Boards, Committees and Commissions

Board of Health

Fort Meadow Commission

Lake Boon Commission

## **SELECT BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT 2022**

The Select Board are the Chief Elected Officials of the Town of Hudson. As the senior elected officials, the Select Board are the primary policy makers for the town. They serve as appointing authority for the Executive Assistant and most non-elected committee positions. They must also approve all employee appointments. The Select Board are also the statutory licensing authority for the town, as well as being charged with executing most contracts for the town.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The Annual May Town Election had Judy Congdon winning her bid for election and Select Board member James Quinn won his bid for reelection. Following the vote, the Board undertook its yearly reorganization by electing its officers; Scott Duplisea elected as Chairman, Michael D. Burks, Sr. as Vice-Chairman, and James Quinn as Clerk.

### **APPOINTMENTS AND PERSONNEL**

In 2022, the Board approved appointments of several members of the community to serve on Town Boards and Committees. We thank not only our past Board members all for their years of service to the Town of Hudson, but also those recently appointed for their anticipated contributions as we all work toward our common goal of improving our community.

### **LICENSING**

As the licensing authority for restaurants, alcohol establishments, automobile dealers, and other commercial activities, the Select Board are regularly busy with licensing matters. The Board issued approximately 180 licenses in 2022.

At the end of 2021 the Town was granted an additional all alcohol retail license. This came about due to the increase in the population reflected in the most recent federal census. The Board approved issuing this additional license to Buscemi's Convenience Store located on Cox Street in September of 2022.

### **CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS**

In 2022, the Board was pleased to sign numerous contracts throughout the year for the rehabilitation, repair and/or replacement of town streets, buildings and equipment. The Town's Chapter 90 apportionment for Fiscal Year 2023 is \$579,469.79. Chapter 90 funds are State monies allocated for roadway projects such as resurfacing and related work.

In June the Town signed contracts with Mass Broken Stone for the milling and overlay of miscellaneous roads in Town which totaled \$1,217,155.00. Another notable contract was for a contract with Wright-Pierce for the design phase of the WTTF improvements in the amount of \$1,268,000.00.

### **TOWN MEETING ACTIONS**

The May Annual Town Meeting had voters approving the sum of One Million Six Hundred Seventy-Five Thousand Four Hundred and Thirty Five Dollars be taken from available funds for the replacement and purchase of vehicles and equipment for Fiscal 2023 Taxpayers also approved an overall FY23 budget of approximately \$87 million.

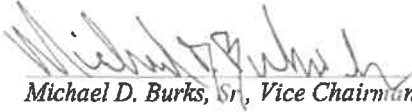
## FISCAL ISSUES

At its annual tax classification hearing in December 2022, the Select Board voted to set the minimum residential factor available for FY23 at .87845 resulting in tax rates of \$14.60 per \$1,000 Residential and \$28.88 per \$1,000 for Commercial and Industrial properties. They also approved an excess levy capacity of \$1,435,196.00.

### HUDSON BOARD OF SELECT BOARD

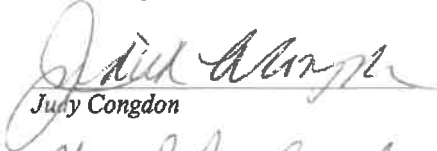


*Scott R. Duplisea, Chairman*



*Michael D. Burks, Sr., Vice Chairman*

*James D. Quinn, Clerk*



*Judy Congdon*



*Shawn Sadowski*

## EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic set the stage in early 2022 for an inflationary period that had not been witnessed in this country in decades. The mismatch between supply and demand that the pandemic helped to create led to sustained increases in the Consumer Price Index over many months. Prices in virtually all categories increased throughout the year in spite of a series of efforts by the Federal Reserve to calm demand. The labor market, however, remained strong throughout the year as employers continued to hire.

At the Annual Town Meeting in May, the voters approved a FY2023 operating budget that was balanced using conservative revenue estimates. Town Meeting funded successor collective bargaining agreements for the AFSCME municipal units as well as for the Police Patrol Officers and the Police Superior Officers units. And, a \$1.67M capital improvement program was approved for municipal and school departments.

### American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

In 2022, significant investments in the Town's public works infrastructure were initiated, funded largely by once-in-a-generation federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars administered by the U.S. Treasury. Hudson's direct ARPA allocation was \$5,937,485. These funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and fully expended by December 31, 2026. After public listening sessions were conducted in late 2021 and early 2022, the Select Board voted on April 8, 2022 to program the majority of ARPA funds in ways that will benefit the residents of Hudson for many years.

### Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements

With considerable assistance from ARPA funds, stormwater infrastructure at various locations throughout town received much needed investments in 2022, with additional projects in the queue. Deteriorating culverts were replaced at Cox Street, Temi Road, and Chestnut Street. Drainage repairs were made in the Green and Florence Street neighborhood correcting a persistent flooding issue over the years at this location. And, perhaps the most visible stormwater project involves the culvert and bridge rehabilitation over the Danforth Brook at Main and Houghton Streets which will be completed in early 2023. In November, Town Meeting authorized the establishment of a stormwater enterprise fund as a first step toward the implementation of a program to maintain future compliance under the MS4 stormwater permit with the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

### Finances

Local receipts revenue as of June 30, 2022 documented good evidence for a local economy continuing to perform well. Excise tax revenue on meals and retail marijuana purchases significantly surpassed estimates, as did fee revenue for licenses and permits. The local adult-use commercial marijuana market remained strong, although new legislation which went into effect on November 11, 2022 now grants the Cannabis Control Commission more oversight of host community agreements and imposes new limits on how municipalities can calculate marijuana impact fees. This will have financial implications with agreements currently in place with marijuana establishments in Hudson.

In November, Town Meeting authorized the establishment of enterprise funds for the water and sewer utilities. There are important benefits that will accrue to the rate-payers when these enterprise funds are funded on July 1, 2023. First, any year-end surplus (i.e., revenue received over budgeted estimates as well as departmental turnbacks) will remain within the enterprise fund in subsequent fiscal years and not close out to Free Cash as in prior years. These surplus funds, called retained earnings, will be available

potentially to moderate future year rate increases and to fund future capital investments. Second, segregating water and sewer finances from the general fund removes any possibility of circumventing Proposition 2 ½ restrictions (i.e., rate revenues improperly supporting General Fund expenses).

### Water and Sewer Capital Improvements

The rate increases to support water and sewer operations approved by the Select Board had been anticipated now for some time. On the water side, the \$5.6M permanent PFAS filtration system at the Chestnut Street facility came online in 2022. And, while the terms of the SRF borrowing are very favorable, the rates were increased to fund the increase in debt service costs. In addition, funds were approved for the replacement of the filtration media at both the Cranberry and Chestnut Street PFAS facilities. Some of this expense was offset by funds obtained from the settlement with Precision Coating in the PFAS litigation. And, a \$2.5M water meter replacement project was re-authorized in November.

On the sewer side, the Phase 2 Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement project, also funded via the SRF with a 2% interest rate with \$1,119,263 in state APRP principal forgiveness, was put out to bid a second time in October after the original and only bid came in higher than the original figure authorized at Town Meeting. In November, an additional borrowing authorization of \$6.9M was approved. Supplementing the borrowing authorization, \$1M in Hudson's ARPA funds were allocated to address the significant cost increases to this project.

### Downtown

Hudson's downtown continued to remain a destination in the region supported by the numerous local restaurants and small businesses and with leadership from the Business Improvement District. With strong advocacy from our state delegation, Hudson received a \$400,000 legislative earmark from the state's ARPA allocation to implement Phase 2 of the South Street Riverwalk project which includes ecological restoration, riverbank enhancements, and accessibility improvements to Cellucci Park and the stake park. The BSC Group was awarded the contract to provide design and construction administration of this important project.

In August, the Commonwealth's Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) conveyed the Hudson Armory to the Town to pave the way for the building to be re-purposed as a performing arts facility in accordance with Chapter 43 of the Acts of 2022. In May, Town Meeting authorized the Select Board to enter in a multi-year lease agreement with the Hudson Cultural Alliance. The Alliance continued its fundraising and planning efforts throughout the remainder of 2022.

### Proposed INTEL Redevelopment

I would be remiss if I did not include in this report the proposed redevelopment of the INTEL site at 75 Reed Road. Atlanta-based Portman Industrial filed a site plan application with the Planning Board in August which proposed a 1.3M square foot logistics and warehouse facility on this industrial-zoned parcel. Several well-attended public hearings were held throughout the late summer and fall. And, after some receiving strong opposition from residents of the community, the developer withdrew its application without prejudice from the Planning Board. It is anticipated that INTEL will put the property back on the market next year.

In closing, I am grateful for the confidence that the Select Board continues to place in me to serve as their Executive Assistant. I am encouraged by the direction and support that I have received and I look forward to serving for many more years. A special thanks to Fernanda Santos and Teresa Vickery for their support of this office and their dedication to the Town.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Gregory  
Executive Assistant

## Board of Health / Health Department

The Hudson Board of Health and the Health Department team strives to promote the health of our residents through prevention and control of disease and injury. The department is overseen by a three-member elected board that provides policy direction to the staff. Ms. Cassia Monteiro, who is an Epidemiologist, was elected to the Board of Health in May 2022 for a term of three years. Ms. Monteiro joined long-time board members Ms. Christie Vaillancourt (registered nurse) and Mr. Mike Delfino (health inspector).

The Health Department is managed by our Director of Public and Community Health, Lauren Antonelli, who transitioned into the position in May 2022. Lauren previously served as the department's Youth Substance Use Prevention Program Coordinator. In September 2022, Donna Boulé joined the team as the new Health Department Administrator. Also on the team are Eduardo St. Louis (Sanitarian), Kali Coughlan (Mass in Motion Program Coordinator), Michelle Andrade (Public Health Nurse), Alexandria O'Hare (Community Social Worker), Julie Zieff (Youth Substance Use Prevention Program Assistant), Deanna Wu (MetroWest Shared Public Health Services Coordinator), Jessica Twardowski (Regional Public Health Nurse), Thalita Campelo (Regional Health Communications Specialist), Edilane Silva (Regional Community Health Worker), Manizeh Afridi (Regional Epidemiologist), Pooja Shelke, (Regional Epidemiologist), and Bill Murphy (part-time Regional Health Inspector).

Throughout 2022, the department continued to structure our programming into three main areas: Environmental Health, Community Health, and Emergency Preparedness Planning and Response.

### **Environmental Health Programs**

We continued our work in various environmental health programs in 2022 including:

- Onsite Waste Water Disposal Systems (septic systems/Title 5)
- Food Protection Program (food inspections)
- Housing (landlord/tenant, bedbugs)
- Body Art (tattooing and body piercing)
- Tanning (indoor tanning beds)
- Swimming Pools (public & semi-public)
- Recreational Water Safety (lakes and ponds, beaches, blue-green algae)
- Keeping of Animals (backyard chicken coops, etc.)
- Body Works (massage parlors, etc.)
- Hazardous Wastes (household hazardous waste collection events)
- Medical Wastes (including medical sharps)
- Solid Waste (trash and recycling)
  - Transfer Station
  - Curbside Pick Up
- Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention (lead paint)
- Beaver Control
- Mosquito Control (EEE, West Nile Virus)
- Tick-borne Illnesses (Lyme disease)
- Recreational Camps for Children
- Asbestos Control
- Lead Determination
- Private Drinking Water Safety (private drinking wells)
- Nuisance Complaints (odor and air quality, vermin, noise, trash)

In May 2022, the department partnered with the Department of Public Works to launch the much-anticipated town-wide curbside pick-up program. The program was based off of a six-month long study in 2019 that the Recycling Sustainability Committee (RSC) conducted, which recommend a launch of a weekly, town-wide pickup program

that would be entirely voluntary, and paid by users of the service. DPW now manages the curb-side pick-up program and residents can enroll in the program on a rolling basis by contacting DPW.

Our Sanitarian, Eduardo St. Louis, conducts public health inspections under the provisions of the MA State Sanitary Code and other environmental codes, aiding residents in health-related fields. Inspections conducted include but are not limited to food establishments, public and semi-public swimming pools, recreational camps, housing and human habitation, septic systems, soil evaluations, dumpsters, body art establishments and general complaints.

The Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project (CMMCP) continued to provide mosquito control for us in 2022.

### **Community Health Programs**

We continued to work on various community health programs in 2022 including:

- MetroWest Shared Public Health Services
- Substance Use Prevention (MassCALL3)
- MetroWest Moves (Mass in Motion)
- COVID-19 Pandemic Response
- Public Health Nursing
- Community Social Worker Services
- Farmers Market
- Tobacco Control

#### **MetroWest Shared Public Health Services**

Local public health in Massachusetts has struggled to keep up with the changing demands of community health, and the pandemic exposed many of these staffing and resource challenges. As we adapt and rebuild from the pandemic, the Hudson Health Department is committed to providing excellent programming and services. One way to achieve this is by participating in cross-jurisdictional sharing of public health staff and services as a way to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our local public health system.

With the assistance of generous funding secured from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) and the MetroWest Health Foundation (MWHF), Hudson now serves as the lead community in a new regional public health district of eight (8) communities in the MetroWest area, named the MetroWest Shared Public Health Services. We received two Massachusetts DPH awards through competitive processes totaling \$600,000 in annual funding. One award was the Public Health Excellence (PHE) grant, which offers \$300,000 annually. The second award was the Local Health Support for COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing (CT&CI) grant, which also offers \$300,000 annually. The group was also awarded an additional \$361,000 from the MetroWest Health Foundation to hire two full-time staff, support COVID-19 mitigation activities, and more.

Through these funding streams, we are engaging in a shared public health services initiative with seven (7) other municipalities: Ashland, Framingham, Hopkinton, Maynard, Milford, Millis, and Natick. This shared service arrangement will implement programs to fill current gaps in statutorily mandated core public health services in environmental health and public health nursing, and, in coordination with our two (2) epidemiologists, will develop intervention strategies to improve overall health outcomes in the region and address health inequities. In addition, shared service collaborations strengthen existing core public health services by pooling resources, increasing staff capacity, attracting more funding, and providing improved public health programming and outcomes.

As the lead municipality, Hudson is tasked with managing all aspects of grant implementation including, but not limited to, hiring staff and managing grant finances and deliverables. The entire shared services team was hired and onboarded by April 2022. The staff prioritized building their connections and learning about the eight MetroWest communities throughout the year. Some notable accomplishments include:

- The Epidemiologists have provided temporary fill-in MAVEN coverage for Maynard, Natick, and Framingham, requiring them to be flexible and organized as they learned and tackled various communicable disease investigations for the first time.



- The Public Health Nurse worked with Ashland to establish a vaccine clinic for school-required vaccines. The clinic has vaccinated over 200 students who reside within our communities during 2022. These vaccines are crucial in protecting the health of the student body and in allowing kids to go to school and stay in school.
- The Community Health Worker has connected about 400 residents to services—150 of them from Hudson—and she continues to play an important role in being an ally to residents and helping them meet their needs.
- The Health Communications Specialist has worked with staff and colleagues in the collaborative to create various communications campaigns, infographics, and event promotion materials. Reaching residents with timely, relevant, and easy-to-understand information has been a priority for the HCS, especially during a time when misinformation and information apathy has become prevalent in our daily lives.

The MetroWest Shared Public Health Services municipalities, along with about 300 other municipalities participating in the PHE grant, embarked on a baseline capacity assessment process in 2022, led by the Office of Local and Regional Health (OLRH) at MDPH. This multi-phase assessment will be used to provide insight into current health departments' capacities to meet regulatory and statutory requirements. The data will highlight strengths and gaps in compliance, and it will allow shared service arrangements to align funding and resources to help improve compliance, improve public health programming, and expand workforce development efforts. The coalition also agreed to merge the MetroWest Food Collaborative under the umbrella of shared services. More information about the food collaborative's initiatives is provided below under the *Mass in Motion* section.

### **Substance Use Prevention**

In April of 2021, the MA Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) announced that the Town of Hudson was one of 31 youth substance use prevention programs in the Commonwealth that would receive a MassCALL3 grant. MassCALL3, which stands for the Massachusetts Collaborative for Action Leadership and Learning (3<sup>rd</sup> iteration), is an 8-year award under the Substance Misuse Prevention Grant Program. The grant is meant to support local substance use prevention efforts in communities across MA that fit under one of three overarching goals: Community engagement and capacity building; Comprehensive strategy implementation; Innovation and promising practices implementation. Hudson falls under what is called "Part B," the comprehensive strategy implementation goal, as we have a well-established regional collaborative with a strong track record in substance use prevention. Hudson leads the regional group, called the Central MetroWest Substance Abuse Prevention Collaborative, which consists of Ashland, Hudson, Marlborough, Natick, Northborough, Southborough and Westborough. Framingham was a part of our collaborative in the past, but received their own MassCALL3 grant to focus on their large community; however, under MassCALL3, we welcomed Marlborough and Westborough into the group. The grant began in FY'22 (July 1, 2021) and will continue through FY'29. Hudson and the regional collaborative's focus will be on substances of first use among youth, which includes alcohol, nicotine, and cannabis. This is an expansion from our previous substance use prevention grant that solely focused on underage drinking.

Lauren Antonelli continued to serve as the Youth Substance Use Prevention Program Coordinator and oversaw the MassCALL3 grant program until transitioning into the role of Director in May 2022. At that time, Julie Zieff, the Program Assistant, began leading the work with support from Lauren and other members of the department. In 2022, we continued to lead the regional group of prevention specialists and their community-based prevention coalitions through a 5-step strategic planning process that involved assessment, capacity building, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Sustainability and cultural competence are guiding principles of the process, and we have a strong focus on racial justice and health equity. The regional group spent much of 2022 reviewing and analyzing the results of the 2021 *MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey*, which has guided our prevention planning in a way that is responsive to the needs of the community and is culturally relevant.

Locally in Hudson, the Health Department continues to coordinate the Hudson Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (YSAP), which routinely met throughout 2022. The coalition consists of Hudson residents, parents, representatives from various Hudson businesses, the local media, and more. YSAP continues to work with the Hudson Public School system, Hudson Recreation, and various other youth-serving organizations to address substance use among Hudson youth. YSAP hosted a very successful 5K, in partnership with the Marlborough Alliance for Prevention, in September 2022 and looks forward to making that an annual event.

In addition to our youth substance use prevention work, the Hudson Health Department continues to serve on the Post Overdose Support Team (POST) alongside Hudson Police, Fire, and JRI. POST offers recovery resources and Narcan following an overdose to the person experiencing substance use challenges, as well as, their family and friends. Unfortunately, we saw an increase in overdoses in Hudson in 2022, but thankfully most were not fatal, which we are proud to attribute, in part, to our efforts around educating and distributing Narcan to the community.

### **Mass in Motion**

Serving as the lead community, we coordinated the MetroWest Moves program with our partner communities (Framingham, Marlborough, and Northborough). MetroWest Moves was part of a Mass in Motion (MiM) program funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. In January 2022, the MIM Coordinator was appointed as an ex officio member of the Ad-Hoc Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee. The committee was charged with 1) Creating a Town-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan which addressed both commuter and recreational walking and biking, 2) Developing a short and long-term Bike & Walk Action Plan that prioritizes policies, projects, and programs that can be implemented over the short term (1-5 years) and over the next decade. The Coordinator utilized connections through MiM to help collect surveys used in similar processes throughout the Commonwealth to help draft a survey for residents to allow them to express their interests in the topic. Over 900 surveys were collected and that data was analyzed and included in the final report given to the Select Board in January 2023.

The other major project our Mass in Motion Coordinator continues to lead is the MetroWest Food Collaborative. The Collaborative expanded membership to over 50 community members, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, farmers and funders throughout the MetroWest region. The Coordinator mobilized partnerships and resources to grow the MWFC and the workgroups had these accomplishments over the past year:

Healthy Food Access Workgroup:

- *Monthly Food Access Calendars:* The calendars outline the free food resources available in our core geographic area. They are translated into Spanish and Portuguese, posted on our website and distributed widely via email and print.

- *Outreach to Food Providers:* The Workgroup met with multiple social service agencies serving residents experiencing food insecurity in the community. The goal was to better understand the available resources, access points for those resources, and to identify potential points of collaboration and ways to make the overall system work better for consumers and providers.

Food Equity and Justice Workgroup:

- *Survey of Direct Service Providers:* A survey was sent to professionals who work directly with those experiencing food insecurity to connect them to resources. The goal was to understand common challenges to access, the most common referral points, and where they feel there are opportunities for collaboration and improvement. Sixteen organizations responded to the survey. Results revealed the most common barriers to food access are financial, transportation, lack of awareness of resources, and fear of accessing resources. The most common opportunity cited was to work towards more centralized resources available in multiple languages to create easier access points for those seeking services.

Our mobile food pantry program, which started in early 2020 and is a partnership between the Hudson Health Department, the Hudson Housing Authority (HHA) and Open Table Food Pantry, continued to serve 35-40 HHA residents monthly and grew to serve over 70 community members this year. To meet the high need, a second delivery was added each month for the community members who participate. We continue to rely on the 10-15 dedicated volunteers from the Hudson community to deliver the groceries to residents, and we have also been able to utilize Door Dash drivers, free of charge through their community partnership program, when we are not able to find enough volunteers for a delivery. We fully intend to continue the mobile food pantry here in Hudson, expanding as needed and where possible, in order to meet the food needs of our community.

### **Ongoing COVID-19 Response**

We continued various COVID-19 related programs throughout 2022. We continued to provide Hudson residents evidence-based COVID-19 education, with a particular focus on encouraging COVID-19 vaccination. The first pillar of our education strategy included direct responses to resident inquiries. When community members contacted

us directly through phone, email, or social media, we provided real-time education or directed them toward relevant resources.

Lastly, the Health Department brought over 10 vaccination clinics to eligible residents. These clinics provided vaccines and booster shots to residents. We also had a steady supply of iHealth COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Tests to distribute to residents, schools, public library, and Senior Center. These tests were also made available to the public at the Health Department Office. We were also able to supply residents with disposable masks.

**Public Health Nursing**

In 2022, Michelle Andrade continued in the ARPA-funded position of Public Health Nurse, providing a linkage between epidemiological data and clinical understanding of health and illness as it is experienced in peoples’ lives. While most nurses care for one patient at a time, public health nurses care for entire populations. By working with whole communities, public health nurses are able to educate people about health issues, improve community health and safety, and increase access to care.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, our public health nurse largely worked on COVID-19 contact tracing and case investigation. However, the work outside of COVID-19 did not come to a halt and our public health nurse carried additional responsibilities including, but not limited to:

- Providing health teaching to individuals and families
- Receiving and making referrals
- Hosting and coordinating immunization clinics, including COVID-19 and Flu vaccines
- Working on health promotion/prevention programs in the community
- Conducting home visits
- Performing case management
- Facilitating and assisting vulnerable individuals with access to services and basic life needs
- Investigating disease and other health threats
- Advocating for improved and increased health care availability and access
- Participating in community organizing activities
- Blood Pressure Clinics for the Hudson Senior Center and others in the community

In 2022, we investigated these communicable diseases:

Disease	Number of Cases
Babesiosis	0
Campylobacteriosis	0
Cryptosporidiosis	0
Cyclosporiasis	0
Giardiasis	3
Group A streptococcus	1
Group B streptococcus	0
Haemophilus influenzae	2
Hepatitis A	1
Hepatitis B	3
Hepatitis C	4
Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis	2
Influenza	143
Legionellosis	1
Listeriosis	0
Lyme Disease	24
Meningococcal Disease	0
Monkey Pox	1
Mumps	1
Novel Coronavirus (SARS, MERS, etc.)	2656

Powassan Virus Infection	0
Salmonellosis	4
Shiga toxin producing organism	0
Streptococcus pneumoniae	1
Tuberculosis	26
Varicella	1

**Community Social Worker Services**

In 2022, Alexandria (Alex) O’Hare continued in the ARPA-funded role of Community Social Worker, providing comprehensive professional social work services to Hudson residents with social, emotional, and economic needs, with specific attention to Hudson’s most vulnerable populations. Our social worker provided many services in 2022, including, but not limited to:

- Conducted referrals to services related to: mental health, substance use, medical, parenting, housing, finances, basic needs, etc.
- Provided information on area resources and services for the elderly, individuals with disabilities, children and families, low-income individuals, and those with a variety of other specialized needs
- Connected residents with community supports to help complete applications for services such as: food stamps, social security disability, fuel assistance, DMH (Department of Mental Health), MassHealth, etc.
- Conducted crisis intervention and one-on-one consultation related to: wellness checks, collaboration with the Jail Diversion Clinician, and therapy sessions
- Provided community education
- Collaborated with community groups to address community needs and concerns, and to strengthen community connections

Mental health referrals provided by the social worker include an intake that identifies the best services for the individual based on their current needs. Mental illness/disorder is a term used to describe a large umbrella of conditions that may affect mood, thinking and behaviors. Common examples are depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, and addiction. Living with mental illness can make normal, everyday life hard in nearly every aspect of life. With mental disabilities having no bias, they are found in all ages, races, genders, regardless of incomes or socioeconomic status. Our social worker makes referrals to therapists, psychiatrists, Department of Mental Health, respite and/or hospital level of care. Until the individual is assigned to a mental health clinician, our social worker provides clinical consultation. Currently, we are in a mental health crisis, and waitlists for services can be between 8-12 weeks, sometimes even longer. The majority of the referrals made in 2022 by our community social worker have been made due to this crisis and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Massachusetts, Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) are combined into one program called MassHealth. Hudson has a large low-income population that is eligible for MassHealth, but do not know where to start or how to apply. In fact, in 2018, Hudson experienced increased rates of those who are without health insurance at 4.1%, compared to the state (3.0%) and the MetroWest region (2.7%). Our community social worker was able to work with many individuals, families, and people with disabilities in 2022 one-on-one to identify eligibility and receive the appropriate documentation to qualify for MassHealth benefits. If an individual/family was not eligible for MassHealth, our social worker identified other affordable health insurance options.

In 2021, the Hudson Health Department became a referring agency for the Fresh Start Furniture Bank. The social worker continued to make referrals in 2022 for individuals in need of items from furniture and linens to kitchenware and lighting items. This program has largely been utilized by residents under 55 years old. Other assistance for applications that the social worker has been able to assist with is housing, food services, and financial assistance. This includes assistance with South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC), affordable housing, Section-8 housing, fuel assistance and food assistance, among others. Food assistance can consist of referrals to the Hudson Mobile Food Pantry, the Hudson Food Pantry and other area resources.

In collaboration with the Hudson Senior Center, our social worker has set up therapeutic groups. The current monthly groups are: Caregivers' Support Group and Bereavement Support Group. The community social worker has also collaborated with Peter’s Grove to facilitate a monthly Bereavement Group on-site for residents that are

unwilling or unable to attend the group at the Senior Center. There has been a growing need for socialization and an environment where seniors will be able to speak about mental health challenges. The community social worker is currently collaborating with the schools, Boys and Girls club, and the Hudson Public Library to implement therapeutic groups for the younger population. The Public Health Nurse has collaborated with the community social worker to start a program through Uber Health to assist with transportation to medical appointments for residents that are low income and do not have transportation available to them.

### **Additional Community Health Programs**

In 2022, the Health Department, alongside the Conservation Agent and the Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce, managed the Hudson Farmers Market. The market is held in front of Town Hall in downtown Hudson from June to September with some additional shoulder markets in the winter. The market has continued to have great success and offers a variety of products from vendors, including but not limited to: fresh fruits and vegetables, honey, meat, poultry, fish, bread and baked goods. We are grateful to the Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce for partnering with us on this important initiative and working so hard to make it such a success for our community.

In 2022, the Hudson Board of Health continued to participate in the MetroWest Tobacco Control District (MWTCD). Funded by the Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program (MTCP), and comprised of 13 municipalities in the MetroWest area, the program provides tobacco control services to Boards of Health including retail education and compliance checks. Olivia Dufour, the Program Manager who works out of the Framingham Health Department, was appointed by the Hudson Board of Health to complete the necessary inspections in town.

The Hudson Board of Health permits 21 retail tobacco establishments, which is our maximum capacity. All of these retailers were inspected and achieved compliance with State and local tobacco regulations. All retailers were also subject to compliance checks, including structured and supervised inspections where a youth under the age of 21 attempts to purchase a tobacco product. We are pleased that we had generally strong compliance from tobacco retailers in 2022.

### **Emergency Preparedness Planning and Response**

We continue to spend many hours working with other town departments, surrounding communities, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) to prepare and update our Public Health Emergency Plan. Hudson is part of the MDPH Emergency Preparedness Planning Region 4A, which was formed in 2003 to facilitate sharing of resources and development of local and regional plans for public health emergency response.

Our department participated, along with many other town departments, in the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) spearheaded by the Hudson Fire Department. The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) was formed to develop an emergency response plan, conduct annual reviews of the plan, and provide information of hazardous material usage in the community to the residents of Hudson.

The Hudson Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is active. Our MRC unit, which was organized in 2006, is a part of the Massachusetts Region 4A MRC. Our regional MRC is the nation's largest MRC with over five thousand volunteers. The MRC is made up of volunteers who assist in preparing for and responding to public health emergencies, they help to run vaccine clinics and more.

Since 2009, Hudson has Mutual Aid Agreements with Stow, Maynard, Northborough and Southborough to share resources in the event of public health emergencies.

We want to take this opportunity to thank other town boards and staff that have continued to provide assistance in the implementation of our responsibilities.

Board of Health meetings are typically held on a monthly basis and dates, times and locations are posted on the Town Website. As always, public participation in these meetings is welcome.

Respectfully submitted,

Christie Vaillancourt, RN, BSN, NCSN, *Chair*

Cassia Monteiro, *Vice Chair*

Michael Delfino, *Clerk*

Health Department Team

## **Fort Meadow Commission 2022 Annual Update**

### **General:**

The 2022 Fort Meadow Reservoir public boating season started in late April when the Public Ramp was opened for use by the Early Fisherman Club and lake residents to launch their boats, then opened to all Hudson/Marlborough residents on Memorial Day when it is staffed by launch attendants. With the very warm weather early in the season, the Commission struggled to deal with the large, unsupervised crowds on Memorial Beach. Specifically, the numerous calls received to address swimmers dangerously far beyond the beach area and into the boating lanes. Memorial Beach gates are open to the public, but no ropes/buoys are present nor is it staffed by lifeguards until Memorial Day. The Commission has sent several official letters over to the Marlborough Recreation Dept outlining the challenges, but unfortunately no official response or action taken. The Commission is concerned about the safety of the public if this again occurs in the Spring of 2023.

As in past years, the Marlborough and Hudson Conservation Commissions, approved the dropping of the lake 4ft in late 2022 to help control the invasive weeds and clams. This low lake height also provides an opportunity for lake residents to do any approved rock wall or shoreline repairs. Draining typically starts late October or early November and takes approximately 2-3 weeks to drop. The dam is then closed around March 1<sup>st</sup> depending on the thickness and presence of ice and takes approximately 4 weeks to fill.

Boating traffic and interest in water sports continues to grow rapidly. 2022 saw the most boat traffic and water sports use the Commission has ever experienced. With that has brought challenges with inexperienced drivers and general awareness to lake rules and regulations. It is surprising to the Commission that Massachusetts doesn't not require a boating license or boater safety course.

As in past years, the Fort Meadow Commission continued to support and encourage the use of the slalom course in the center of the large basin. This slalom course continued to receive positive interest and almost daily use with little to no boater inconvenience.

The Commission in conjunction with the Marlborough DPW continued to maintain and make improvements to the Gene Hixon Public Boat Launch and provide additional safety buoys where needed to mark underwater hazards and provide important buffers to private property in the congested areas. The yearly spring installation and fall removal of the 14+ buoys on the lake is a major undertaking and marks the beginning and end to the boating season. Several replacement buoys were purchased in 2022, with limited Commission funds. There are plans to continue replacing the older and failing marker buoys into next year.

In addition to the buoy replacements, Ft Meadow Commission funding was used for patrolling the Lake, weed treatment and operation of the Gene Hixon Boat Launch and public dock.

### **Safety:**

Safety remains the number one priority for the Fort Meadow Lake Commission.

As in the past few years, 2022 was a very good year for the Fort Meadow boating community – thankfully, no major issues or accidents were encountered or reported.

As mentioned, boating traffic has increased dramatically again in 2022 – especially on good weather weekends and Holidays. As mentioned in prior annual reports and Commission Meetings, there is a true safety concern resulting from the added boating traffic, along with no formal Massachusetts boater training or licensing requirements. To accommodate, the Fort Meadow Commission in conjunction with the Environmental Police, have stepped up patrols during busy periods, but inexperienced boaters and jet ski operators remain a challenge to the overall safety of the lake.

**Lake Health:**

A new contractor was hired to complete the yearly weed survey, which was completed in early June. The report indicated that there was active and substantial growth of 2 invasive weeds (fanwort and milfoil). A treatment recommendation was provided and applied in late June. Unfortunately, the weed treatment funds available in Hudson and Marlborough budgets did not allow for a full lake treatment. A plan was drawn up based on the available funding that would address the greatest concentration of invasive weeds. A follow up survey in August showed moderate success, but additional funding will be needed in 2023 to address the continued problem areas. An increase to the Hudson Fort Meadow Weed Control budget was requested in the fall of 2022 to help address.

**Summary:**

A schedule of the 2022 FMC meetings and agendas will be available at Hudson Town Hall and on the Hudson & Marlborough Town websites.

The Commission would like to thank the Fort Meadow residents and boaters for all of their suggestions, hard work and commitment to assuring that we had an enjoyable and safe 2022 season.

If you would like further information, you may contact the Fort Meadow Commission through Hudson Town Hall, Marlborough City Hall or you can email me at the address below.

[Gary.R.Pelletier@rtx.com](mailto:Gary.R.Pelletier@rtx.com)

Best Regards,  
Gary Pelletier  
Hudson Fort Meadow Lake Commissioner

JP Onate  
Hudson Fort Meadow Lake Agent