

Approved March 10, 2022

Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
February 16, 2022, 5:30 pm
59 Main Street, Hatfield, MA

Present: Bob Osley, Chair, Member Liz Kugler; Vice Chair Jeffrey Zgrodnik; Audrey Weston, Heidi Poulin, Steph Moynihan, Danielle Stanisewski, John Garrett, Julia Frisby, Jean Hobbie, Kerry Flaherty, Tim Menz, Sharon Robinson, Sara Lavalley, Sara Sulisz, Jill Robinson, Tania Menz, Jamie Houser, Shelagh Andrikidis, Robert Flaherty, Chief Fire Department, Edmund Jaworski, Select Board Member, Shifra Yonis, Dawn Sacks, Patricia Benson, Christy Boudreau, Karen Guiel, Jennifer Charette, Select Board Chair Diana Szynal, Paul Kokoski and Chris Laflamme

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Osley called the meeting to order at approximately 5:32 p.m.

PUBLIC FORUM

Many residents and teachers came before the Board of Health to voice their support or disapproval of the mask mandate. Kerry Flaherty, Heidi Poulin, John Garrett, Shawn Robinson, Jean Hobbie, school nurse, Patty Benson, Danielle Stanisewski, Julie Frisby, Steph Moynihan, Tania Menz, Philip Andrikids, Audrey Weston, Julie Frisby, presented before the Board. Each person spoke to the Board voicing their support either for or against the mask mandate.

POSTED BUSINESS

TOPIC 1 Discuss School Mask Mandate: Chair Osley informed the Board of the numbers he had available from the Northampton Board of Health. Chair Osley said the numbers are down. There were 8 new cases, under 18 were 2 for the past week. We also follow the DPH recommendations. Chair Osley read the recommendations regarding positive COVID, and if you were in contact with someone with COVID. Chair Osley also reiterated how the mask mandate for the school was imposed. Member Liz Kugler advised the Board that the Board of Health has the authority to make regulations according to M.G.L. c.111, §31 which reads, in part: "Boards of health may make reasonable health regulations." Member Kugler advised the Board that at the previous meeting the Board was asked if the Board could make regulations over the School Committee and the answer is yes. Chair Osley informed the Board that at tonight's meeting the Board would be voting to give the authority back to the School Committee to make the decisions regarding mask mandates. Member Kugler feels that by dropping the mask mandate people have no protection against COVID. She went on that vaccination and masking are the only two protections people have. Member Kugler went on that the Board of Health is the overseer to protect people. Vice Chairperson Zgrodnik addressed the Board about DESE dropping the mandates recently. He went on to say that regular masks don't give protection unless you have a KN95. In my opinion, he went on, if anyone on this Board goes against DESE, DPH and the Health Agent it would be a blatant abuse of power. Member Kugler went on to say that the CDC has not dropped the masking. Chair Osley thanked the those who spoke to the Board tonight. Chair Osley informed the Board that the decisions made at this meeting are made using scientific

fact and not emotions. Chair Osley informed the Board that the decision to be made is hard to make given the fact that it is still cold and flu season, the kids will be out of school next week and coming back with unknown exposure, maybe it is too early to stop the mask mandate at this point. Chair Osley went on we could extend the mandate for a couple of weeks to see what the trend is. Vice Chairperson Zgrodnik made a motion to extend masking in schools to March 5th. No other Board member responded so he came back with extending the mask mandate to March 7th. Member Kugler made a motion to amend to extend it for 2 weeks after every kid in the school is vaccinated. Vice Chairperson Zgrodnik made a motion to extend the mask mandate to March 5th. Chair Osley suggested extending it another three weeks. Vice Chairperson Zgrodnik reiterated that he felt extending the mandate is an abuse of power by the Board of Health. Vice Chairperson Zgrodnik made a motion to extend the mask mandate in the schools to March 12, 2022; Member Kugler wants to extend the mandate to mid or end of April or until all children are vaccinated; Chair Osley asked for discussion; all in favor, Vice Chairperson Zgrodnik-aye; Chair Osley-aye; Member Kugler-no; motion approved. Vice Chairperson Zgrodnik reiterated that on March 12, 2022, the mask mandate authority will go back to the School Committee. Member Kugler re-read Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 111, §31.

TOPIC 2 Discuss Town Mask Mandate: Vice Chairperson Zgrodnik reiterated that the number of COVID cases has declined drastically in the past week and at this point, the mask mandate should be lifted. There is absolutely no need to extend the mask mandate. Vice Chairperson Zgrodnik made a motion to not extend the Town mask mandate which will expire on March 1, 2022, Member Kugler seconded; all in favor, aye, motion approved.

UNANTICIPATED NEW BUSINESS:

CONTINUED OLD BUSINESS:

Member Kugler made a motion to adjourn at 6:50 pm. Vice Chairperson seconded, all in favor, aye, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully,

Karen Brodeur
Executive Assistant