

# Board of Health Meeting Minutes

## December 28, 2021

**Present:** Holliston Board of Health (BoH): Thomas Ellis (*Chair*)  
Josh Mann (*ViceChair*)  
Jay Leary (*member*)

Scott Moles, *Health Director and Agent*  
Ann Adams, *Health Department Clerk*  
Kristin Abraham, *Health Department Clerk*

Chief Michael Cassidy, *Emergency Management Director*  
Brian Moran, *Covanta Compliance Officer*

Stacey Raffi, *Holliston School Committee Representative*

Thomas Ellis, BoH Chair, opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Scott read the Remote Participation Statement.

Board of Health Roll Call: Thomas Ellis-present, Josh Mann – present, Jay Leary-present

**Public Comment:** None

### COVID-19 update:

- Mike Cassidy gave the Board the latest Town COVID-19 case numbers: active cases = 63, recovered = 1199, 13 = fatalities. These numbers have been corrected to properly reflect the cases in the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN).
- Mike Cassidy now compiles the MAVEN COVID-19 case numbers. He updates the Town website COVID-19 numbers daily, and publishes the DPH weekly updates on Thursdays at 5 PM.
- Holliston remains at yellow risk level by the State's COVID-19 designation.
- The positivity rate has gone down in Holliston and is well below the State rate.
- The Board discussed the current mask mandate for municipal buildings in Town and extending it to all public buildings.
- Mike Cassidy shared the map of the State identifying which towns have mandates.
- The COVID-19 cases and mask mandates in surrounding towns were discussed. The Board discussed the difference between a mandate and an advisory, and mandate enforcement issues.
- Scott said a resident emailed requesting an indoor public mask mandate. Josh said 2 business owners requested the same.
- Stacey Raffi, Holliston School Committee Representative read the case numbers from the School Superintendent's 12-23-21 report. The cases and the vaccination rates are increasing. These School case numbers include staff who may or may not be Holliston residents. The Schools are cautious and concerned about what will happen after the holiday break, as people return from travel and gatherings.
- Mike Cassidy shared his research from the MAVEN cases: Holliston is experiencing community spread and there are no super-spreader events.
- Mike Cassidy explained that the hospital capacity overload is due to several factors including health issues that had been put off at the start of the pandemic, and staffing issues at the hospitals.
- The Board discussed the wording of a mask advisory vs a mask mandate; how to encourage compliance and keep our community healthy and safe.
- Mike Cassidy explained that the Omicron is the dominant COVID-19 variant in Massachusetts. Omicron variant is more contagious, but less lethal. More folks are getting COVID-19 but they have less risk of dying.

- Stacey Raffi requested the Town website have an FAQ section to clarify the misinformation that is floating around. She thinks that the Town, Mike Cassidy and Schools need to work together for clear communications to avoid people panicking.
- Mike Cassidy explained that Holliston is in a better place than we were in the spring regarding COVID-19 numbers. He explained that the COVID-19 decisions should not be made on one data point, but looking at the case numbers, number of tests, positivity rate, community spread, and vaccination rate. He recommends a holistic approach.
- The Board discussed how Holliston people may have good vaccination rates and low case numbers, but the residents travel around to other places that have higher transmission.
- The Board decided to resume the mask mandate discussion at the next meeting.

**Town Clinics:** Scott informed the Board that Fallon will run a COVID-19 clinic to administer 200 doses of COVID-19 to 5 to 11 year olds at Town Hall, January 15<sup>th</sup> from 9 to 1. The second shots will be administered February.

**COVID-19 home test kits:**

- Mike Cassidy said the Select Board approved the purchase of 90 COVID-19 test kits that will be split between the Health Department, Council on Aging and Food Pantry. The intention is to disperse the kits to the population that has been impacted disproportionately.
- The State gave test kits to 102 low income towns in MA. Holliston was not a candidate.
- Scott said that the Health Department may be getting kits as part of a grant.
- Mike Cassidy said the State will be facilitating the towns getting test kits at a reduced rate.

**Bills:** The following bills were discussed:

- Salmon VNA-COVID-19 contact tracing - paid out of the ARPA - \$9,095.25
- Mead, Talerman & Costa LLC – Legal counsel for 49 Central St - \$330.90

**Thomas made a motion to approve the Salmon VNA COVID-19 bill. Jay seconded.**

**Roll Call: Thomas Ellis-Aye, Josh Mann- Aye, Jay Leary-Aye. Passed.**

**Thomas made a motion to approve the Mead, Talerman & Costa legal bill. Josh seconded.**

**Roll Call: Thomas Ellis-Aye, Josh Mann- Aye, Jay Leary-Aye. Passed.**

**Minutes: Thomas made a motion to approve the minutes from December 21, 2021. Jay seconded.**

**Roll Call: Thomas Ellis-Aye, Josh Mann- Aye, Jay Leary-Aye. Passed.**

**Next BoH Meeting** is January 4, 2022.

**Board Comment:** None

**Thomas made a motion at 8:38 PM to adjourn the BoH meeting. Jay seconded.**

**Roll Call: Thomas Ellis-Aye, Josh Mann- Aye, Jay Leary-Aye. Passed.**

Respectfully:

Ann Adams, Health Department Clerk

Approval Date: 1-4-22