

# Board of Health Meeting Minutes

## February 1, 2022

**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*

Fire Chief Michael Cassidy, *Emergency Management Director*

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

### **Tobacco Compliance Officer Update:**

- Olivia Dufour updated the Board on the MetroWest tobacco compliance activity.
- Mishel Caisapanta was introduced as a Tobacco Retail Agent to help Olivia do the compliance checks in Holliston as well as the other MetroWest towns.
- The Board thanked Olivia for her efforts.

**Thomas made a motion to appoint Mishel Caisapanta as a Holliston Tobacco Retail Agent.**

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

### **Public Comment:**

- Matt Putvinski, 95 Overlook Drive, requested that the Board change the mask mandate to an advisory. The stores that want a mandate can have one, like Fiske's.
- Liz Theiler-Bourque, 17 Norland Street, wants a mask mandate. The Library likes their mandate. Scott explained that individual buildings are able to mandate mask as the situations dictate.
- Christine Schadler, The Corner Market, said the mandate has negatively affected her business. Thomas said that the mask mandate sun downs 2-2-22.

### **COVID-19 update:**

- Mike Cassidy, Emergency Management Director gave a rundown of the active COVID-19 cases in town and the current statistics.
- The number of active cases and positivity rate are down.
- The downward trends are predicted to continue.
- The downward trends across the State do not seem to be effected by the mask policy in the town.
- Scott said the DPH weekly update to local public health officials also said the COVID-19 cases are trending down, even adjusted for the tests done using home test kits.
- Town COVID-19 case numbers: current active cases = 47.
- Holliston remains in the red risk level by the State's COVID-19 designation.
- The downward case trend is also seen in the younger children.
- The COVID-19 spread appears to be within households and neighborhoods.
- Mike Cassidy explained the difference between the case numbers the DPH publishes and the active cases he publishes. They are both taken from the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiological Network (MAVEN). Mike's numbers are active COVID-19 cases in Town, looking at the

specifics of each case to confirm the start and finish date of the case. The State has rolling numbers don't always account for cases that are 10 days old and off the active list, or cases that are shifted to their home town rather than testing town, and other situations. Thomas said that the Board prefer to use Mike's active case numbers.

- Mike Cassidy said the MAVEN data is the data that he and the State both use, but he presents it more specifically for our Town. Mike showed some graphs of the Omicron surge tapering off.

#### **Holliston Public Schools COVID-19 update:**

- Stacey Raffi, Holliston School Committee representative, gave the update from Dr. Kustka, Superintendent's COVID-19 report of 1-28-22.
- The Schools had 70 new cases, or 149 cases in the last 2 weeks, but cases are lowering. The School numbers include School Choice students who are not Holliston residents.
- Based on the latest information Stacey agrees the cases are trending downwards.
- Friday the School staff got home test kits for testing every 2 weeks. The students will get the same test kits for weekly testing if they opted into the program.
- MA Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE) has the indoors school mask mandate extending to February 28, 2022. If DESE decides to lift the mask mandate in schools, the Holliston Public School Mask subcommittee will determine if they chose to follow DESE at this time.

#### **COVID-19 Mask Mandate:**

- The Board discussed the current mask mandate which expires 2-2-22.
- Josh presented his mask advisory sign with the stipulation that business be required to post the sign.
- Thomas felt that mandating the posting of the sign was confusing; either keep the mandate or have an advisory.
- Jay wanted an advisory with no mandate on posting. An advisory would align with the federal and state advisory. He also wants to encourage social distancing and vaccination.
- The Board discussed mask policies in surrounding towns, reasons for different policies, effect of policies, policy wording and timing, validity of policies, policies and the current case trends, etc.
- The Board worked on the wording for a Holliston mask advisory.

**Jay motioned for the mask advisory as currently worded, saying businesses "should" post the sign. Thomas seconded.**

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

- Scott is to get several copies of the sign to each business and do an informal survey of what businesses post or don't post the sign.

#### **Town COVID-19 Clinic:**

- Saturday, February 5 from 9:00 to 11:00 am, at Town Hall. There are 56 appointments for 5 to 11 year old second shots and booster scheduled so far.
- Transformative Healthcare will bring 6 to 8 people, so there is no need for additional volunteers. The Board is welcome to stop by, but there is plenty of coverage.

**Minutes: Thomas made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 18, 2022.**

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

**Bills:** None

**Next BoH Meeting** is February 15, 2022. This will also be the Board's FY'23 budget presentation before the Finance Committee

**Board Comment:** None

**Thomas made a motion at 9:32 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: 2-15-22