

Board of Health Meeting Minutes

August 19, 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*

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

Public Comment: None

COVID-19 and Face-covering policy:

- Cynthia Lystewnik, Holliston School Committee Chair was present to request the Board's support of the face-covering policy as the Holliston Public Schools are starting up September 1st. She recapped the meeting from the previous night where the School Committee heard input from the parents regarding face-coverings.
- The Schools are recommending a universal indoors masking policy for students, staff and visitors; exceptions made for medical conditions. They feel this stringent policy is important to start with as there will be no remote options for students with missed attendance. They will revisit this face-covering policy in October once the school year has had some settling-in time.
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is providing guidelines to the Schools.
- At this point students under 12 years old (6th grade) are not vaccinated. This may change in the future, as vaccinations are being evaluated for further approval.
- The Board discussed face-covering policies, and vaccination rates and policies. They understood the importance of a universal face-covering policy in the school setting.

Jay made a motion to recommend a universal indoors masking policy for the Holliston Public Schools for students, staff and visitors, with exceptions for medical conditions. Josh seconded. Roll Call: Thomas Ellis-Aye, Josh Mann-Aye, Jay Leary-Aye

- The Board thanked Cynthia for her contributions, and she left the meeting.
- Scott gave an update on COVID-19 in Town.
- Holliston remains yellow risk level by the State's COVID-19 risk designation.
- It is good that the Holliston's vaccination rate is high by local and State standards.
- The Board discussed face-covering policies in the Town; when it is appropriate and necessary.
- Mike Cassidy explained that case count is not the only touchstone. The Delta variant is the most prevalent strain active in Town, but the hospitals are not currently overwhelmed with COVID-19 cases.
- Josh pushed for a Town face-covering policy, especially in municipal buildings. The COVID-19 cases are increasing, and the efficacy of vaccinations decreases with time.
- The Board asked Mike Cassidy what should be the trigger to initiate a Town face-covering policy.
- Mike discussed the CDC recommendations that an 8% positivity rate would certainly warrant a face-covering policy. Holliston's highest positivity rate ever was only 6%. At this point we are at a 3% positivity rate. Mike discussed the meaning and value of positivity rate metrics.

- Mike explained the type of data we have access to and the value and shortcomings of them.
- Jay, a pharmacist, discussed the efficacy of vaccines. The fact that even though the COVID-19 vaccine's efficacy may be dropping to 70%, it is still a "rock star" vaccine, when you consider that the seasonal flu vaccines can range from 30% to 50% efficacy.
- Mike explained the CDC face-covering policy that we are currently operating under: face-coverings required on public transports, and in medical and congregate care facilities. The CDC has recommendations for vaccinated and unvaccinated people.
- Jay mentioned that it is important to be thoughtful in setting face-covering policy and time-frame. It is not helpful to have the policy bouncing around.
- Cassidy and the Board agreed that the public tolerance for face-covering policy is different than the school policy.
- Jay requested that the public be invited to submit their input regarding town-wide face-covering policies. The Board requested this invitation be extended for the next meeting.
- The Board discussed how to best facilitate the community face-covering policy input.
- They agreed the importance of encouraging vaccination and exposure risk reduction.
- The Board will watch the COVID-19 trends vigilantly and call emergency meetings as needed.

Beach Water Testing: Pleasure Point and Stoddard Park water test results passed. The beaches are open.

Minutes: Thomas made a motion to approve the minutes from August 10, 2021. Josh seconded.
Roll Call: Thomas Ellis-Aye, Josh Mann-Aye, Jay Leary-Aye

32 Travis Road has an approved septic upgrade plan that is over 3 years old and hence expired. The owner had extenuating circumstances and has requested an extension of the permit as there are no changes to the design. Scott discussed the plan and recommended the Board waive the fee as there will not be any plan review required on his part.

Jay made a motion to waive the fee to allow the extension of the approved upgrade septic plan for 32 Travis Road. Josh seconded.

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

Bills: The following bill was discussed:

Salmon VNA – July	contagious disease	\$2,479.00
COVID-19		\$2,211.00
BoH		\$268.00

There was discussion of where the COVID-19 funds were coming from so this invoice was tabled until the next meeting.

BoH Meeting Schedule: The Board discussed the next meeting which will be a Zoom meeting on August 31. The September meetings will need to be adjusted for Rosh Hashanah which conflicts with the first Tuesday. The Board would like to have a public hearing at the end of September to address the Food Regulations and Fee Schedule.

Board Comment: None

Thomas made a motion at 8:31 PM to adjourn the BoH meeting. Jay seconded. Passed.
Roll Call: Thomas Ellis-Aye, Josh Mann-Aye, Jay Leary-Aye

Respectfully: Ann Adams, Health Department Clerk

Approval Date: 8-31-21