

BOARD OF HEALTH
On-Line Zoom Teleconference Meeting
DRAFT August 9, 2021 Minutes DRAFT

BOH Members Present: Joanne Levin; Suzanne Smith; Cynthia Suopis; and Laurent Levy

BOH Members Absent: None

Staff: Merridith O’Leary, Director and Kelly Constantine, BOH Clerk; Kate Kelly and Vivian Franklin, Public Health Nurses; Amy Hutchins, Assistance Health Director.

Public Comment Session: Dr. Levin announced that public comments would be limited to two minutes per person. Most comments focused on the issue of an indoor mask mandate, with comments both in favor and opposed to the mandate.

Motion: Motion made to open the Board of Health Meeting by Suzanne Smith, seconded by Cynthia Suopis. All in favor (4-0).

I. Meeting opened August 9, 2021 at 5:53 pm by Joanne Levin. Dr. Levin announced that the meeting is being recorded.

II. Review Minutes

A. Meeting Minutes from June 17, 2021.

Approval of the minutes were tabled until the next meeting.

III. Presentation: Kate Kelly, CPN and Vivian Franklin, RN – Vivian Franklin reviewed recent COVID-related data, including community transmission rates, local vaccination statistics, breakthrough cases, and information related to the Delta variant in Hampshire County. Kate Kelly discussed the recent regional vaccination efforts and that the Health Department is working with surrounding communities to vaccinate their populations.

IV. Discussion:

Director O’Leary discussed adding another layer back into our prevention strategies to help reduce the risk of spreading COVID. In Director O’Leary’s opinion, a mask mandate for indoor public spaces would likely help curb the need for more drastic measures in the future. Directory O’Leary provided a draft order to the Board members. In the proposed draft order, the Northampton Board of Health would require that a mask be worn in public indoor spaces regardless of vaccination status, with a few exemptions like children under five or if there is a medical reason.

Suzanne Smith indicated that we now have more information than we did a month ago and that the prior assumptions no longer apply. Dr. Smith mentioned that current immunization rates are not helpful when discussing a super spreader event, such as the recent Provincetown cluster, where vaccinated people can unknowingly spread the virus to others. Vivian Franklin indicated that the Health Department had investigated local workplace-related clusters, but that these were not publicized. Laurent Levy asked if there were business owners that expressed opinions or preferences to the Department on the mask mandate and whether, for instance, they had indicated it would be simpler to have a Board of Health order rather than attempting to come up with their own guidelines. Laurent Levy also had a question on what the current Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) were.

Motion made by Suzanne Smith, seconded by Cynthia Suopis, to approve the intention of the draft COVID-19 MANDATORY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR WEARING OF MASKS OR OTHER FACE COVERINGS IN PUBLIC INDOOR SPACES IN THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON that requires mask wearing in public indoor spaces in the City of Northampton with the exception of those eating or drinking, those with medical exceptions and individuals under the age of 5 years.

Those who are performing are not required to mask, but must adhere to social distancing of a least 10 feet from any member of the public. All in favor (4).

Motion Amendment made by Laurent Levy, seconded by Cynthia Suopis that mask wearing is not required in indoor workplaces that are not open to the public, but that the Board of Health strongly advises mask wearing in spaces where social distancing is not possible. All in favor (4-0)

Motion made by Laurent Levy, seconded by Suzanne Smith to authorize the Director of Public Health to finalize the draft with the intent that was approved by the Board of Health with an effective commencement on August 11, 2021 at 12:01 am. All in favor (4-0).

There was a discussion putting the *'The Massachusetts Schoolchildren Pesticide Protection Act'* on the September agenda.

Meeting Closed: Motion to Close Meeting: Motion made to close the Board of Health meeting by Suzanne Smith, seconded by Cynthia Suopis. All in favor (4-0)

Meeting closed at 7:57 PM.

The next scheduled Board of Health Meeting: September 9, 2021, with the possibility of an earlier meeting in August.

Kelly Constantine, BOH Clerk

BOARD OF HEALTH

Date: August 9, 2021

On-Line Zoom Teleconference Meeting

Meeting Document List

The following documents were available to the Board of Health during their scheduled meeting.

These documents are available for review at the:

Northampton Health Department, 212 Main Street, Northampton, MA 01060

- Meeting Agenda
- June 17, 2021 Minutes
- DRAFT: COVID-19 MANDATORY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR WEARING OF MASKS OR OTHER FACE COVERINGS IN PUBLIC INDOOR SPACES IN THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON
- H.926 The Massachusetts Schoolchildren Pesticide Protection Act