



Acton Board of Health

Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2022

7:30 PM.

VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS VIA ZOOM

Present:

Virtual Members Present: William McInnis, Mark Conoby, and Dr. William Taylor

Virtual Associate Members Present: Dr. Singh voting for absent Michael Kreuze and Dr. Jacoby voting for Joanne Bissetta

Virtual Staff Present: Sheryl Ball-Health Director, Heather York- Nursing Administrator

Others Present: Mary Lynn Miller and Eva Szkaradek

1. Opening

Chair - William McInnis opened the meeting at 7:32 P.M. A script was read that was provided by the Town stating why the meetings are virtual during this pandemic and this emergency meeting of the Board of Health was called to order.

2. Regular Business

Health Director Update

Ms. Ball stated the current cases have decreased each day beginning on Jan 20, 2022 and our percent positivity rate has decreased from 16.9% to 13.3%. Ms. Ball stated that we would love to see this go down even further. Ms. Ball also stated that we have about 5.2 million people vaccinated in the State of Massachusetts. Ms. Ball mentioned that we are doing a booster clinic on February 12, 2022 for those 12+ at 30 Sudbury Road.

Nursing Director – Update

Ms. York mentioned that we are at 110 positive cases but cautioned that we also have a significant number of cases that are home testing so we are assuming these numbers are much higher. Isolation and Quarantine guidance, DESE and ECC guidance have changed a lot in the past month and Ms. York is spending some time keeping up with those updates.

Ms. York mentioned Life care of Acton has 10 positive staff and 5 positive residents. Ms. York mentioned that 95% of residents are fully vaccinated and boosted and 70% of staff are fully vaccinated but not boosted so they will be offering a vaccine clinic to increase those numbers. Senior Living at Robbins Brook has 1 resident that is positive and recovering and 2 staff. The Board asked Ms. York about the increase in cases we have seen in the congregate care centers since the last meeting. Ms. York stated that the cases are immediately isolated, however, once identified the cases unfortunately spread since the contact may have occurred before the isolation and it takes quite a few days for those cases to show. Ms. York mentioned that she has spoken



with the director and believes they are doing a great job, isolating and testing their residents to help mitigate the spread. It should also be noted that since most are vaccinated, their cases are relatively mild to no symptoms at all. Ms. York also mentioned that they go into surveillance testing until they are two weeks out without a new positive case and the holidays definitely played a factor with the increase in cases.

The Board questioned whether we could have better preparedness in planning to help prevent these cases and would like to discuss this at a future meeting. This virus, especially the Omicron variance, spreads very rapidly and has been a challenge. The Board also asked about the effectiveness of the home antigen tests. Ms. York stated that she has seen negative antigen tests on residents but positive PCR. Ms. York advised those with symptoms to follow up with a PCR if the antigen is negative and symptoms are present as the home kits may not be picking up the virus due to a low viral load. Ms. York also stated that if symptomatic and unable to get a PCR to re-do a home test within a couple of days as the viral load may have increased. The Board also asked about contact tracing and Ms. York indicated that we are still contact tracing but working off of the State prioritization list that has us focus on Congregate care including group homes and schools. Members of the public asked if monoclonal antibodies were given to the residents of congregate care. Ms. Ball stated it is not known but mentioned that Ms. York had stated that the cases were all very mild.

Mask Mandate - Revisions

Ms. Ball presented the Board with some updated language for the current Acton Mask Mandate. Ms. Ball stated that there are two proposed additions:

1. Require businesses to post a sign on their entry way informing patrons of the mask mandate
2. Revising the language within the current order to clarify and add some businesses to the current order so it is better understood who needs to comply with this order.

Ms. Ball stated that since the mandate went into effect that we have had pretty good compliance but noticed that some businesses had not displayed signs on their doors. Ms. Ball indicated that signs were provided when the mandate went into effect and were sent to our establishments via email. Ms. Ball also offered businesses printed signs if needed. Ms. Ball asked that the Board include this language into the mandate to help the Health Division with enforcement. The Board discussed this and also stated that any sign must be readable within 6' of the door to help our residents and out of town residents in knowing that Acton has a mandate.

In addition, the clarification language was proposed for our businesses and residents to better understand where a mask is needed. The Board discussed this at length and asked Ms. Ball to incorporate the recommendation into the current language rather than add to the document. The Board also asked that we clarify who this pertains to and recommended that we change the language to state: All individuals, including the public and employees, rather than just saying all individuals. The Board also asked staff to add the language that the State requires face coverings on public transportation and health care facilities.



On a motion made by Mr. Conoby, seconded by Dr. Taylor, the Board unanimously voted to add language to the existing mask mandate to require signs at all entry ways that must be readable within 6' of the door. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

On a motion made by Mr. Conoby, seconded by Dr. Taylor, the Board unanimously voted to add additional language to the existing mask mandate and authorized the Health Director to make the changes as noted and submit to the chair for signature. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

Minutes – January 5, 2022

On a motion made by Dr. Jacoby, seconded by Dr. Singh, the Board voted to accept the minutes of January 5, 2022. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

Next Meeting

The next BOH meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2022.

4. Adjournment

On a motion made by Dr. Singh, seconded by Dr. Taylor, the Board voted to adjourn at 8:30 PM. The Chair took roll call and all were in favor.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting;

- Town of Acton script for boards and committees opening meeting
- Board of Health agenda
- Mask Mandate – 2 documents - updated language and additional updates
- Minutes from 1-5-22

Respectfully Submitted,

Sheryl Ball
Acton Board of Health

William McInnis- Chairman,
Acton Board of Health