

# BOARD OF HEALTH

# MINUTES

12-23-21

Town Hall, 30 Martin Street, Essex, MA

Ms. Sally Ann Rich, Clerk, Dr. Fares Mouchantaf, Member, Ms. Erin Kirchner, Health Agent and Ms. Ann White, Administrative Assistant, participated remotely.

Dr. Mouchantaf, acting Chair, called the Board of Health meeting to order at 7:00 pm and announced that the meeting was being held virtually.

Ms. Pereen called the Board of Selectmen meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Among others participating remotely: Chief Francis, Guy Bradford, Donna Roy, Steve Woodman, Eian Woodman, Tina Lane and Jodi Harris.

Pursuant to Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2020 (the "Act"), as amended by Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting of the Essex Board of Health will be conducted via remote participation. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found within this posting below.

No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Town of Essex's website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

### **Access Information:**

Online: Go to <https://join.freeconferencecall.com/essexboh>. You may need to download the Free Conference Call software to your computer or mobile device. Call-in, audio only: (701)802-5235, Passcode: 8394489#.

Ms. Rich suggested to the Chair, Dr. Mouchantaf, that public comment be limited to 15 minutes total time, with each speaker allowed two minutes, and with only one opportunity to speak. The Chair agreed.

Roll Call Vote: Ms. Rich, Aye, Dr. Mouchantaf, Aye. **Vote: All in Favor.**

Clarification of Topic for the Meeting: Possible vote(s) on COVID-19 public health emergency, relative to wearing face coverings in public places. Mask Mandate to be considered for all public indoor spaces due to an increase in positive Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations. As per Health Agent Kirchner, the positivity rate for the town of Essex is currently 10.7%.

Public comment and Ms. Kirchner read two emails, addressed to the Board, re: mask mandate.

7:15 pm, conclude open meeting.

Dr. Mouchantaf: 72 Corona Virus studies have shown that wearing masks, surgical masks better than cloth masks, and hand washing offer a relative risk reduction in severe illness and hospitalization rates. 75% of those hospitalized are unvaccinated.

Ms. Rich: Masks, hand washing, social distancing and vaccination all help reduce transmission of the Corona Virus.

Dr. Mouchantaf made a motion for the Board to mandate indoor masking in public spaces. Moving forward, the mask mandate will be revisited at every BOH meeting. Ms. Rich added that masks worn indoors must cover the nose and mouth and is effective for anyone age 2+. The Chair agreed.

Roll call vote: Ms. Rich, Aye, Dr. Mouchantaf, Aye. **Vote: All in Favor.**

Police Chief Francis suggested that the mandate take effect on Monday, December 27, 2021, at 12:01 am. Guy Bradford, BOS, agreed.

Ms. Pereen clarified that the mask mandate would apply to restaurant employees, including those working in the kitchen. BOH agreed.

Health Agent Kirchner asked what metrics would need to be in place to lift the mandate. Discussion. Ms. Rich and Dr. Mouchantaf agreed that to lift the mask mandate, there must be both an increase in the Essex vaccination rate and a decrease the positivity rate.

Dr. Mouchantaf closed the BOH meeting at 7:35 pm.

Mr. Bradford closed the BOS meeting at 7:35 pm.

**Next BOH meeting: 1-13-22**

Prepared by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ann White

Attested by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ms. Sally Ann Rich, Clerk

Signed date: \_\_\_\_\_