

**Town of Maynard**

**Board of Health**

**Meeting Minutes – January 19, 2022 – Meeting via Zoom**

The Maynard Board of Health (BOH) held a special meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2022, as part of a Joint Meeting of the Board of Health and Select Board, which was held virtually via Zoom. Kathy McMillan, Chair, Lisa Thuot, Vice Chair, and Jodi Larkin, Member, were present. A roll call vote was completed. John Robertson, Maynard Health Agent, was also in attendance. (Note: Other non-BOH meeting attendees will be recorded in the Select Board meeting minutes).

**I. Call Board of Health Meeting to Order**

A motion was made by K. McMillan to open the Board of Health Meeting at 8:18pm, which was seconded by L. Thuot. The motion was supported unanimously via a roll call vote.

**II. COVID-19 Discussion**

Select Board Chair David Gavin thanks John Robertson for organizing the recent COVID-19 vaccine clinics in Town, contract tracing efforts, and stated that he feels lucky that Mr. Robertson joined the Town as Health Agent. K. McMillan noted that the BOH is appreciated of John's efforts, and explained that in 2020, it was only she and L. Thuot serving on the BOH for a period of time.

Health Agent Update: The Town has held 2 highly successful vaccine clinics, one which had 97 persons and the second which had 150+ persons vaccinated. On 12/31/21, the State contact tracing support ended, and the Town's Public Health RN has taken on some of this effort. On 1/13/22, the BOH implemented a temporary face covering order. Previously, the Town had a mask advisory consistent with State and Federal guidelines. The State is promoting personal responsibility to test for COVID-19 and get vaccinated. External communications on COVID-19 are available on the Town website.

The Health Agent has been very busy with housing complaints. The BOH has decided to temporarily meet twice per month. MOUs are now in place with the Regional Health Collaborative for PPE, access to Public RNs, contact tracing, and health agent support. J. Robertson has attended many virtual meetings with respect to COVID-19 since joining the Town as Health Agent.

Select Board Comments/Discussion:

David Gavin asked about possibly expanding the BOH to include extra members. K. McMillan agreed this could be a good idea, because it can help to cover member absences due to vacations, illness, departures, etc. Armand Diarbekirian asked about reviewing the mask order now that there is an approximate 3% infection rate post-holiday.

Jeff Swanberg offered an apology for his statements against the BOH during a 1/4/22 Select Board meeting, in response to L. Thuot's public comment questioning why, and on what basis, he continuously criticizes the BOH and shares periodic misinformation on COVID-19 to the public. Mr. Swanberg did not offer an apology for statements against the BOH made on his Facebook social media page (called "Select Swanberg"), where he represents himself as a Select Board Member. Mr. Swanberg was insistent that he did not violate any ethics nor Town code of conduct.

Mr. Swanberg stated that he feels there is a lack of BOH response to omicron, and did not think the adult vaccination rates in Maynard were correctly reported by the BOH in August 2021. Mr. Swanberg continued his comments by noting his concerns about the rate at which variants are incorporated into BOH decision-making, and noted a dramatic upswing in COVID-19 case numbers. J. Robertson said he was not sure certain what numbers were reported in August, (prior to his start date); however, he explained that the State's numbers can lag behind by at least a week. The most recent vaccination rates are reported as of 1/11/22. K. McMillan pointed out that the BOH had already implemented a mask advisory consistent with State guidelines, and organized two Town vaccine clinics. L. Thuot questioned what Mr. Swanberg considers to be a 'dramatic' upswing in cases, to which no response was provided. Justine St. John questioned Mr. Swanberg's comment that the BOH's decision-making had an impact on the surge of omicron cases, noting a lack of evidence correlating COVID-19 numbers to mask mandates.

Mr. Swanberg commented that Emerson Hospital in Concord is at full capacity with COVID-19 patients. K. McMillan pointed out that Emerson Hospital had just issued a press release stating that they are not at full capacity with COVID-19 or other patients. J. Robertson noted that the Town does not receive data on Maynard residents who are hospitalized.

Mr. Swanberg continued by asking why the BOH is not looking beyond Maynard for a broader context. Chris DiSilva asked if looking just at Maynard data is typical. J. Robertson noted that COVID-19 case count data is only available to each individual town/city. The Maynard BOH only has jurisdiction in the Town of Maynard. However, the BOH has reviewed decisions and policies in place in other area towns. J. Robertson also attends statewide meetings to hear about what is working and what is not.

J. Larkin mentioned that many people seemed to have gathered for the holidays, and that she personally did not know anyone who chose not to gather. Chris DiSilva disagreed and felt that many people stayed home this holiday season.

Mr. Swanberg requested that the BOH consider a vaccine mandate/passport for the Town. K. McMillan noted that the vaccine passport has resulted in a loss of restaurant business in Salem, and would unfairly exclude kids under the age of 5 from entering a restaurant. However, the BOH agreed to add this item to their 1/25/22 agenda per repeated requests from Mr. Swanberg.

David Gavin concluded by stating that he appreciates the work of the BOH.

A question was posed by Mr. Honggang Tan, who is not a Maynard resident but has a daughter who attends a private school in Maynard. Mr. Tan asked if the Town mask order applies to private schools, in particular a school located in a building that belongs to a church. J. Robertson stated that he is checking with the Town Council on this question and will get back to Mr. Tan with a response.

### **III. Adjournment**

The next BOH meeting is scheduled for Tues., January 25, 2022, at 6:30pm. K. McMillan made a motion to adjourn the BOH meeting at 9:19pm. The motion was seconded by J. Larkin. The motion was supported unanimously by a roll call vote.