

Lincoln Board of Health
Virtual Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Members Presents: Frederick Mansfield, MD
Steven Kanner, MD
Patricia Miller

Others Present: Trish McGean, Town Nurse; Casey Mellin, Asst. Health Director; Becky McFall, School Superintendent; Abigail Butt, COA/HR Director; Tara Mitchell and Susan Taylor, School Committee members; Elaine Carroll, Adm. Asst.

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m. due to Zoom problems. The next meeting is on March 9, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

Update on COVID-19 Cases:

Trish said in January Lincoln had 196 confirmed COVID cases, which does not include antigen tests that are done through a lab or home tests. In February so far Lincoln has had 8 COVID cases, which is a very good sign. Gov. Baker updated the mask mandate for K – 12 to make masks flexible as of February 28, which is probably not the best timing since they are just getting back to school after February vacation. For the surrounding towns, Sudbury is getting rid of the town mask mandate and school mask mandate on March 7. Concord Board of Health last night voted to rescind their mask mandate in town effective immediately at midnight. Concord schools will lessen the mask mandate on March 7, Carlisle meets next week. The Town Administrator's Office would like us to come up with some language because we may have to adjust it if something happens, and we need to return to wearing masks. Becky McFall has a very good pulse on what is happening because even home tests are reported.

Update on 28 Lexington Road and 28 Sunnyside Lane:

The owners of 28 Lexington Road have decided that they will not be renting out the house in the future because Susan Rask made it very clear that if they chose to rent again they would be at high risk of being in the exact situation with financial liability of having to fix things like the septic and electricity. The tenant is still in the process of removing his possessions to storage before the final health inspection can be done. The owner is being very patient and allowing the clutter to be removed. Once that has been done, Casey will do an inspection of the premises, but at the present time, there is no public health risk.

The tenant at 28 Sunnyside Lane is now accepting services from Minuteman Senior Services for several services. The Housing Commission is going to make some changes to the property to make the client who is in a handicap unit feel safe during the snow and ice situations. This was a squalor situation because she was not able to take the dog outside. Patricia said the only reason the Board was brought into this was the possibility that they might need to intervene if the client was not agreeable to have help come in.

Revisit Indoor Mask Mandate:

Becky McFall had updated slides sent to the Board before the meeting and went through the slides. Tomorrow morning there is a School Committee meeting to discuss mask requirements and decide about how they will move forward. She has received input from about 6 parents, which were almost evenly split about mask requirements. The School Committee is eager to have the Board's thoughts and input for their consideration when they meet tomorrow morning. They launched weekly at-home testing and ended test and stay. They replaced close contact tracing with potential exposure notifications at the classroom or grade level. Updated protocols to align with changes and recommend rapid tests before returning from quarantine or isolation. Expanded access to rapid antigen tests for students for testing prior to returning to school in the case of household exposure and extended Town rapid test kits to Boston resident families

They have updated the dashboard of positive cases over the course of the school year at about 366 with 296 for students and 70 confirmed cases among faculty/staff. September and October were pretty low, but they picked up

in November and December and January had 218 positive cases, but it has dropped off very quickly in February to 27 cases. The positive cases after December vacation on January 3 was 130 and then this week they were down to 6 positive cases. This week only 3 pools tested positive out of 70 pools. It is important to know where the cases are located in order to make a good decision about any action that needs to be taken. The comparison chart for 2018-2019 as compared to 2021-2022 shows only days 69 through 83 as being a big surge in absenteeism in January. Overall, there is not that much difference than a normal school year with flu and colds.

The basics around the mask mandate is that the order ends on February 28 and then the decision reverts to local control to either continue masking requirements or shift to less masking. School buses fall under Federal mask mandates so all students will have to continue wearing masks when riding the bus. All students will need to wear a mask when entering the nurse's office and any individual who tests positive and has been out for 5 days must wear a mask for day 6 through 10 when they return to school. It is recommended that unvaccinated people wear masks. We also want to make sure there is no stigma for anyone who chooses to continue to wear a mask. The list of towns who have made decisions are as follows: Acton/Boxboro and Bedford – 2/28; Concord, Lincoln/Sudbury and Sudbury – 3/7; Belmont is maintaining masking at this time and Carlisle will be determined on 2/17. Most pre-schools are maintaining masking. The school administration is putting forward to the Board and School Committee a recommendation that we end mask mandate and move to the less masking for grades K through 8 on Monday, March 7, which gives them a week following February vacation to look at home tests for student and staff. If necessary they would respond by putting a temporary masking requirement in place to respond to individual circumstances that come up. They would keep the increased ventilation in place along with the testing program and continuing good hand hygiene and distancing as appropriate.

Dr. Mansfield thought the recommendations were very reasonable. If the rate of cases rises the mask mandate will be reinstated. Dr. Kanner agrees with the proposed method put forth by Becky but does not agree with the timing. He said we are taking a bet the current levels will continue to drop. He does not think there is enough time after school vacation, and he does not think there is a need to decide this three weeks in advance of doing this. The State cases were around 1550 and last summer cases were about 158 positive cases. The number of hospitalizations is about 1004 with 38 deaths. He would like to have more data in hand and is not comfortable ignoring what is going on in the rest of the state and would like to see the results a couple of weeks after school vacation to make sure there is no substantial increase over school vacation. Patricia said she is also concerned about school vacation but feels if we look at the data from the week of Feb. 28 and the following week and everything looks fine we could potentially go with the less masking option on March 14, which would give us two full weeks after school break to review the data and make sure there is no increase in the risk. Becky said the results of the testing for that week would be back on Wednesday, March 9, and we should know what happened after that. Tara Mitchell said for the holiday break we did not have the take home kits, which we have now so they test on Monday morning before they come to school and before the PCR test on Tuesday. This should really help us through the school vacation break. Patricia Miller made a motion to have a Board of Health meeting on March 9 and review the data from the last two weeks and if the number support it to hopefully decide to discontinue the indoor mask mandate for the Town and at the school with the step down plan as put forth by the school. Steven Kanner seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Steven Kanner-aye; Patricia Miller-aye; Fred Mansfield-aye.

Casey Mellin said he has been to Lincoln about 12 or 13 times for soil testing and repairs and said there is a new restaurant at the Lincoln Mall called The Tack Room. He has done an inspection and they did a good job on their plan review.

Minutes:

Patricia Miller made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 12, 2022 meeting as written. Steve Kanner seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Steve Kanner-aye; Patricia Miller-aye; Fred Mansfield-aye.

At 8:51 p.m. Patricia Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Steve Kanner seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Steve Kanner-aye; Patricia Miller-aye; Fred Mansfield-aye.