

**Lincoln Board of Health**  
**Virtual Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 9, 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; Elaine Carroll, Adm. Asst.

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The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. The next meeting is on April 13, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

**Update on COVID-19 Cases:**

Trish McGean said she is happy to report that Lincoln in general for the last several weeks has been trending down. We are having about three or four new cases a week, which are confirmed cases from the lab and not at home antigen tests that we do not track. Last week Lincoln had four cases and two were three year olds, one was 83 years old. It looks like the general trend is moving in the right direction. She thinks the discussion tonight about masking is a perfect time for Lincoln.

**Update on Mask Mandate at the schools:**

Becky McFall, School Superintendent presented the slide show from February 16 with updates showing the total number in February at 32 and March at 7. The numbers continue to drop and the summary of cases from February vacation until today shows twelve positive cases. The cases on the Lincoln campus represent six individuals who reside in four different households and the cases on the Hanscom campus represent six individuals who reside in three different households. It is important for the school to understand where those cases are located. There is a difference in thinking about those total number of cases versus where are they located. Are they in different classrooms, at different grade levels or are they in one household with everyone isolating together? What that looks like helps the school makes the decisions. Becky does not have information as to whether the individuals were vaccinated after February vacation, but in January the majority of the cases were vaccinated individuals. For the week of February 21 there was one student and one employee testing positive and for the week of February 28 there were eight students and one employee with no severe cases for anyone. In the testing that came back today there were no positive cases in our pool testing and that is the first time that has happened in a very long time. The Board will decide tonight on the town wide mask mandate and tomorrow night the School Committee will make decisions for the school masking requirements. The Federal requirement for masking on buses has ended. The school requires masks for visits to the nurse's office, for individuals in days 6 – 10 following a positive test result or individuals with specific health concerns and the DESE/DPH strongly recommends unvaccinated individuals continue to wear a mask. The school will need to work on making sure there is no stigma attached to those who continue to wear masks for any reason and continue to provide KN95 masks for staff who choose to wear a mask.

One thing that has changed since the last meeting is that EEC, the early childhood organization that has oversight of preschools and some of the after school programs has come into alignment with the Department of Education in terms of reverting to local control around decisions of not having a mask mandate in place. The school will continue maintaining masks for preschools but with the EEC recommendations many districts have moved to ending masks requirements for preschool. This is also a change the school recommends as well. If the rates continue to slow, it seems appropriate to not require masking for preschooler. There are many positive benefits of not masking for early learners of language, which needs to be weighed along with the health around wearing masks. At this point the school is recommending that the school be consistent for all students in preschool through eight in terms of removing the requirement for masking beginning on March 14. She said they will continue to do weekly testing to try to stop any potential spread within the school. Dr. James Young asked whether the spread of positive cases was happening at home or through the school because of the potential of bringing COVID home to vulnerable family members. Becky said except for one case at Hanscom, the overall

spread within the school was pretty low and felt that it is the responsibility of families to choose to continue to mask the students in those cases.

Dr. Kanner said he is reassured about the low numbers particularly in the schools. The level of infection in the school has dropped dramatically, which means that the fear of a student bringing COVID home to a vulnerable family member is less likely now. The continuation of the testing will give the school the information if things start to change. Dr. Kanner said he did not think this three weeks ago and wanted to see the data coming back and having zero positive pools two weeks after February vacation is very important. There is in home testing and if a student has a vulnerable family member, they should continue to wear a mask. He said Paxlovid is a therapeutic pill available at Walgreens by prescription from your doctor, which is highly effective at preventing serious illness and hospitalization. This was not available even a month ago and is another tool in fighting COVID. Because of the continued decline in the State, Lincoln, and the school along with the measures being taken by the school to continue to do testing, Dr. Kanner is in favor of revoking the mask mandate for the schools. Patricia Miller said she supports Becky's recommendations for the schools and agrees to lifting the mask mandate for the schools on March 14. Dr. Mansfield also supports the school recommendations. Patricia Miller made a motion that the Board support Becky McFall's recommendation on masking which Becky will take to the School Committee. Fred Mansfield second the motion. Roll Call Vote: Patricia Miller-aye; Steve Kanner-aye; Fred Mansfield-aye.

### **Revisit the Indoor Mask Mandate for the Town:**

Dr. Kanner said the Board was correct to issue the indoor mask mandate last fall to protect everyone from the worse that could be going on but is comfortable with the data from the State and the Town and feels it is appropriate to reverse the indoor mask mandate at this time. It can now be an individual choice about wearing a mask and should go into effect at the same time as the school on March 14. Patricia Miller said she is also comfortable with March 14 to give businesses a chance to inform their staff. Dr. Mansfield said he is also fine with March 14. The Board's decision not to do this three weeks ago was to see what the trends were and with the lower numbers being very encouraging it seems like the appropriate time to undo the indoor mask mandate. Everyone needs to understand that if the numbers start ballooning like they were in late August, the Board is going to be discussing a mask mandate again. Patricia said if people want to wear a mask then they should continue to do so. Dr. Kanner made a motion to approve ending the Town wide indoor mask mandate as of Monday, March 14. Patricia Miller seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Patricia Miller-aye; Steve Kanner-aye; Fred Mansfield-aye.

### **Minutes:**

Patricia Miller made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 16, 2022 meeting as written. Steve Kanner seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Steve Kanner-aye; Patricia Miller-aye; Fred Mansfield-aye.

At 8:30 p.m. Steve Kanner made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Patricia Miller seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Steve Kanner-aye; Patricia Miller-aye; Fred Mansfield-aye.

*Submitted by Elaine Carroll*

*Approved: April 13, 2022*