

**TOWN OF WAYLAND
BOARD OF HEALTH
MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at 6:30PM
Wayland Town Building/Zoom
41 Cochituate Road, Wayland, MA 01778**

(Hybrid meeting; in person and via zoom)

One may watch or may participate remotely with the meeting link that can be found at <https://www.wayland.ma.us/public-body-meeting-information-virtual-inperson-and-hybrid> Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted in person and via remote means, in accordance with applicable law. This meeting may be recorded which will be made available to the public on WayCAM as soon after the meeting as is practicable. Everyone in attendance must adhere the Town of Wayland's new mask requirement dated August 11, 2021 <https://www.wayland.ma.us/home/news/august-11-2021-announcement-covid19-update-and-new-mask-requirement-wayland-town>

Present: John G. Schuler M.D. (Chair), Brian MacNamara

Remote Participation: Susan Green, Arne Soslow M.D.

Not Present: Robert DeFrancesco D.M.D.

Also Present: Julia Junghanns, Director of Public Health (in person), Sabrina Assoumou M.D. M.P.H (remote participation)

Call to Order: J. Schuler called the meeting to order at 6:34PM

Roll Call: B. MacNamara – YES, S. Green – YES, A. Soslow – YES, J. Schuler – YES

Public Comment, 6:37PM, (2 minutes per comment)

Susan Reed, 58 Glezen Lane – S. Reed informed that masks are mandated amongst our peer Towns. Longfellow Health Club has adopted “voluntary mask zones”. Voluntary Zones include fitness areas using cardio/strength training machines, and all group exercise classes. She said members are most likely able to wear masks while breathing heavily in group settings. S. Reed urged BoH to reconsider and mandate masks.

Jonathan Smith M.D., 10 Old Farm Circle – J. Smith quoted the CDC website, “Community transmission: high. Everyone in Middlesex County, MA should wear a mask in public indoor settings”. He said Wayland should be joining its neighboring communities with a mask mandate.

Caroline Owen, 16 Garden Path – C. Owen urged the Board to reject a mask mandate. She said the BoH does not have the legal ability to mandate masks. She also stated the Town of Carlisle is being sued over their mask mandate, and expressed how she does not want this to happen to Wayland.

Hope Podell, 7 Jennison Road – H. Podell thanked speaker Dr. Assoumou for being present. She expressed that people who wear masks are protecting the people who do not wear masks. H. Podell urged the board to move forward with mask mandate, and expressed her mortification with the Board's decision to instate a mask advisory.

Susan Meyer, 241 Cochituate Road – S. Meyer stated she was in favor of the mask mandate because her husband is immunocompromised, and she is trying to protect him. She grocery shops in other Town's that have mandates, but would prefer not to. S. Meyer told the board a mandate is the best thing we can do for the health of the Town.

Presentation on Face Mask Effectiveness, Dr. Sabrina Assoumou M.D. M.P.H.

6:45PM

Dr. Assoumou is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at BU School of Medicine, and a specialist in infectious disease. She also has an M.P.A. from Harvard in Public Health. Dr. Assoumou goes by her married name, Nagel, and is a resident of Wayland.

Dr. Assoumou gave a 15-minute PowerPoint on mask effectiveness. Her PowerPoint explained that 80% of mask protection comes from the person who is infected, while 20% comes from the wearer. Universal masking works because we cannot tell who is infected, and who is not.

Dr. Assoumou went over some studies of when masking proved effective. She talked about the U.S.S. Roosevelt, and how sailors were stuck aboard the ship due to a COVID outbreak. She said that sailors who were masked had a 70% less chance of infection.

Dr. Assoumou talked about how mask mandates increase mask wearing over all. Mask advisories are not as effective as mask mandates. She compared counties with mask mandates vs. those without. Counties without mask mandates had higher case numbers. Schools without mask mandates were 3.5 times more likely to have COVID –19 outbreaks. From an economic standpoint, increasing masking by 15% prevents the need for lockdowns, and reduces associated losses estimated at \$1 trillion or 5% GDP. CDC says mask mandates are essential if there are 50 cases/100,000 people in a community. Wayland is currently at 200 cases/100,000. 40% of infections are asymptotic.

B. MacNamara asked Dr. Assoumou why the State's website data shows that Sudbury, (who has a mask mandate) shows higher case numbers than Wayland (with no mask mandate). B. MacNamara said he agreed with Dr Assoumou's stance on masks, but questioned if paper masks were even helpful. Dr. Assoumou replied by saying the comparison of Wayland and Sudbury was too small scale, and that her comparison of 68 counties proved that mandates drive down cases. She went on to say any mask is better than no mask.

Discussion on Mask Mandate

A. Soslow commented saying good masks reduce transmission. He said a mandate would bring down COVID positivity, and that we accept other mandates in life (I.e., Seatbelts, helmets, traffic lights) A.

Soslow expressed he did not understand why the board voted down a mandate, and proposed a 4-week mandate.

S.Green thanked Dr. Assoumou for her presentation.

J. Schuler explained that he voted against the mandate because COVID is not as severe as it was in 2021 and 2020. Furthermore, there were no vaccines, a shortage of ventilators, and no KN95s. He said that he thinks the vaccination rate in Wayland is 95%, and that Omicron is less severe and not causing people to get severely ill. Lastly, he said the Boston Globe stated that cases are going down, and that he thinks the cases in schools are dropping. J. Junghanns responded by saying cases are actually up in Wayland schools, numbers from the past 2 weeks show that Wayland public schools have close to 50 cases in each school.

A. Soslow asked J. Schuler what the downside was to a mask mandate. J. Schuler responding by saying the downside is making people do something they may not have to do. A. Soslow thought that J. Schuler was only focusing on a specific demographic of the community, and not focusing on every variable (people at home, immunocompromised) Dr. Assoumou responded by saying there are of school cases and that kids are not able to be vaccinated yet, so masking is the best option.

B MacNamara expressed his concern with preventing covid with only paper masks. A. Soslow responded by saying we aren't looking for perfection, just a solution that will help slow the spread. B. MacNamara brought up the question of why Sudbury is higher than Wayland in case numbers. Dr. Assoumou went through the effectiveness of different kinds of masks.

S. Green said that masking is not perfect, but better than nothing because a lot of students are unvaccinated. S. Green voted against the mandate, but is now for it.

Dr. Assoumou expressed her concern with student's mental health should schools close again. She said that just because cases are beginning to drop again, does not mean they will drop all the way.

A. Soslow said that if he and S. Green vote yes for a mandate, he hopes one person will abstain so the mandate will take effect, but he understands if someone feels strongly enough to vote no.

J. Schuler asked Dr. Assoumou and A. Soslow why they think there is not a state mask mandate. Dr. Assoumou said if she was a government advisor she should advise for a mandate, and that there is one in Boston. A. Soslow responded by saying he thinks it's a political issue, and that he is disappointed in Governor Baker.

A. Soslow shared his mask mandate with the Board; a 4-week mandate that will be reviewed at the end of the 4 weeks. S. Green said she was in favor of A. Soslow's mandate. B. Macnamara asked how it would make sense for restaurants to have a mandate. A. Soslow said ithe mandate would be enforced by citizens, and business owners. J. Junghanns reminded A. Soslow that in order for the Board to impose a mandate, Mass general law 111, section 31 and section 104 must be referenced.

Vote on Mask Mandate:

A Soslow made a motion to vote on the mask mandate he proposed to begin on Monday 1/24/2022. S. Green seconded.

Vote: A. Soslow – YES, S. Green – YES, B. MacNamara – NO, J. Schuler – NO

Motion Failed: 2-2-0

A. Soslow left the meeting at 7:50PM.

Topics not reasonably anticipated by the chair 48 hours in advance if the meeting, if any 7:53PM

J. Junghanns expressed that the school nurses are working very hard and a lot of hours including nights and weekends, and that she is hoping the Selectmen will grant some ARPA fund money to pay for some of the COVID work they have been doing, we don't have the money in the budget to pay for all this work being done to keep the schools open. She also said the Department of Health and DESE is now providing an option that schools can decide if they want to adopt a different testing program instead of continuing with contact tracing and test and stay. There is not a lot of classroom spread here in Wayland. Pooled testing would continue, and home testing would be included with test kits being provided to families for weekly testing (they would be provided with the option to opt in). When covid prevalence is higher, smaller pools are more effective when doing pool testing, the schools have recently reduced the size of their pools.

J. Junghanns reported COVID case numbers by age group, note this does not include rapid home tests in our report, however, the school dashboard includes both rapid home tests and PCR (lab) tests for school cases. W/E 1/7-1/13, 39 individuals under age 18, 84 individuals 18 or older, total of 123. W/E 1/14-1/18 35 individuals under age 18, 37 individuals 18 or older, total of 75. Referencing the Assisted Living facilities; Facility 1, 1 staff person. Facility 2, 3 residents, Facility 3, 16 residents and 1 staff member. All facilities have positive case protocols in place and are doing PCR testing twice a week and rapid tests daily.

Motion to Adjourn:

B. MacNamara motioned to adjourn. J. Schuler seconded.

S. Green – YES, J. Schuler – YES, B. MacNamara – YES

Meeting adjourned: 8:00PM

Respectfully submitted,

Minute taker, Kevin McLaughlin

APPROVED 2/7/22