



MINUTES OF THE PEMBROKE BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING

September 1, 2021 at 1:00 P.M.
Veteran's Hall, Town Hall Room #6

PRESENT: Thomas Driscoll (Chair), Matthew Newman (Clerk), Adam Gedutis (Member), Sheila Landy (Secretary), Lisa Cullity (Health Agent), William Chenard (Town Manager) Sabrina Chilcott (Assistant Town Manager), Angela Sestito (Administrative Assistant to the Town Manager), Maureen Jasie (resident) and several other Pembroke residents.

Chair Driscoll opened the meeting at 1:00pm and read the statement regarding the recording of the Meeting.

BOARD ACTION ITEM – Discuss and Possible Vote Mask Mandate for Pembroke.

The Chair read a statement stating people were upset about the possibility of a mask mandate and why he felt it necessary to discuss. He would be giving each Board Member the opportunity to express their view. The Chair would allow public discussion.

The Chair stated they would discuss requiring masks to be worn inside, outside of your home, for the next 30 days. There has been a rapid increase in cases in the past 30 days. He would like to slow the spread until 70% of the population of Pembroke is vaccinated. The Chair turned the discussion over to the Clerk, Matt Newman.

Matt Newman thanked the Chair for calling the meeting. He said this is a deeply personal and emotional subject and needs to be discussed. The Clerk turned the discussion over to Board Member Adam Gedutis.

Adam Gedutis thanked everyone for coming. Gedutis stated Pembroke has historically been a follower. He does not believe the Town has to ahead of other towns in regard to mask mandates. He thinks we should follow the Mass guidelines. He does not support going above and beyond them. He asked the Chair why he met with the youth sports director without letting the Board know he was meeting with them. Driscoll stated he said at the last meeting he would be meeting with them. Gedutis reiterated why he didn't tell them he was meeting last week and what the results were. Other members were unaware and were contacted by numerous parents and did not know what was said. Driscoll said there was not an outcome. Options were discussed at the meeting.

Maureen Jasie, West Elm St, asked the Chair what the outcome of the sports meeting was. Driscoll stated it was just an exchange of ideas and nothing was decided at that time.

Clerk Newman stated he has received several emails from sports groups stating they didn't want a mask mandate for kids playing sports. Driscoll stated he thought the sports groups should follow the same guidelines set by MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. As of now there are no guidelines from DESE.

Dana Bean, Fairway Lane, spoke about the COVID numbers and the statistics of hospitalizations and deaths. No one knows what those numbers are. He stated he had COVID. He was the only one to leave the house. He wore a mask and his whole family got it. He discussed his background regarding masks. He taught OSHA classes and says the masks will not stop COVID. Wearing a mask for eight hours is not allowed in the workforce. It is not healthy for anyone, especially children.

Adam Taylor, Gates Ln, questioned the accuracy of COVID testing.

Lynn McGee, Pleasant St stated the CDC just said the PCR test cannot isolate the COVID virus and all viruses result in a positive result. A new test will be forthcoming. She asked why if your mask is working, why would you need everyone else to wear one? Driscoll said he has a family member who is the General Manager of the Broad Institute which does all the state testing and she advised him the importance of masking. McGee said it is all political – masks are ineffective and grow bacteria.

Adam Taylor asked the Health Agent if the vaccine was going to eradicate the virus. The Agent stated the general consensus is the virus is here to stay, much like the flu virus. Taylor said we need to move on. We need to deal with it and go on.

MINUTES OF THE PEMBROKE BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
REMOTE VIRTUAL MINUTES
September 1, 2021 at 1:00 P.M.

Maureen Jasie asked the expressed her concern with masks and the impact of mental health. It interferes with the non-verbal part of communication. It covers 2/3 of the face and damages the children in the schools.

Sabrina Chilcott, Assistant Town Manager, asked the Board how they were going to help the local businesses enforce any mask mandate they may impose. When masks were required state-wide, the burden was shifted from the business owner to the individual. If masks are required, how will the local businesses enforce the mask mandate? The Chair stated Pembroke did a mask mandate three days before the state. Chilcott stated there was a state of emergency. Chilcott asked the Board to discuss how to get any mandate regarding masking to the local businesses in a timely manner.

The Chair went over the process of voting in a Board of Health Meeting. Newman went into more detail.

The Chair stated he called this meeting for this time because he works second shift in Boston, and he cannot meet at night. He did not want to meet over the Labor Day weekend.

Bean asked Mr. Newman if he wore a mask at work (Pembroke Public Library)? Newman said no.

Adam Taylor said today's environment is different from April of 2020 and cannot be treated the same as it was last year.

The Agent talked about state reporting (MAVEN) and how the data is broken down. The fatality rate is not broken down by community.

The Chair made a motion to require masks to be worn indoors in the Town of Pembroke for the next 30 days. This does not apply to residents in their private homes. If the vaccination rate of the eligible residents reaches 70% and our case numbers stabilize or decrease before the 30 days, we will reconvene and discuss.

Newman stated after much thought, he cannot support the motion. The motion died on the floor as it was not seconded.

Newman made a motion to adjourn, the Chair Seconded and all were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.