



**TOWN OF MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
NOVEMBER 14, 2022
PUBLIC HEALTH PROTOCOL**

We are all tired of hearing about COVID, and many of us have stopped taking precautions. Only a few people continue to wear masks when in public places. The number of reported infections in Manchester has been stable for weeks at two or three active cases, and 75% of those residents ages 6 and up have been vaccinated. As the Manchester Board of Health reminds us, however, these positive statistics tell only part of the story. The number of active cases reflects only PCR testing, and most people are now using at-home antigen test kits. More significantly, virus concentrations in wastewater north of Boston are spiking dramatically, suggesting that there may be an increase in cases on the way. Nationwide, 300 people are dying of COVID every day. Being cautious in holding a large public meeting only makes sense.

Therefore, pursuant to my authority contained in M.G.L. Ch. 39, §§ 15 and 17 to regulate the proceeding, I adopt this Public Health Protocol for the Special Town Meeting to be held on November 14, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. I have developed these measures in close consultation with Drs. Martin Hahn and Tonya Colpitts of the Manchester Board of Health. At its meeting on October 27, 2022, the full Board voted unanimously to endorse it.

LOCATION AND SEATING

The Select Board has decided to hold the meeting at the Manchester Essex Regional Middle/High School. We will use the Gymnasium Entrance for voter check-in.

Seating will be available in the auditorium and in the cafeteria. Voters who choose to sit in the auditorium will be required to wear masks since we will use all the available seats. Voters who decline to wear masks will be seated in the cafeteria with social distancing between pairs of chairs.

FACE COVERINGS

In order to accommodate those who are especially vulnerable or concerned about virus transmission in an indoor space, masks will be required in the auditorium. I strongly encourage all participants to wear a mask while checking in and at all times during the meeting if they are seated in the auditorium, except when recognized to address the voters. Those who decline to wear masks during the meeting will be seated in the cafeteria where masking will be optional, and where pairs of chairs will be separated. I recognize that this

policy is more conservative than current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. That is intentional: my priority is to make the meeting as safe as reasonably possible.

CHECK-IN PROCEDURES

Participants are encouraged to arrive early because early arrivals will help to reduce bottlenecks and crowding. Check-in will open at 5:30 p.m. There will be several check-in stations in the gymnasium lobby.

There will be signs at check-in listing the symptoms of COVID-19 and strongly urging anyone experiencing any of them not to attend. To the extent practicable, volunteers at check-in stations should be recruited from those who have been vaccinated.

MICROPHONES AND SPEAKING

There will be mobile microphones in the auditorium and stationary microphones at two locations in the cafeteria. A voter in the auditorium who wishes to speak should raise his or her hand, wait to be recognized and wait for a teller to bring a microphone. The teller will disinfect the microphone after every use.

A voter in the cafeteria who wishes to speak should go to the microphone nearest her/his seat, maintaining 3 feet of separation from anyone else. Wait for a volunteer to disinfect the microphone and adjust its height. When the volunteer steps away, then go to the microphone. Voters should not touch the microphones.

The longer the meeting lasts, the higher the risk of infection. Speakers must limit their remarks to two minutes or less unless they receive my permission in advance to speak longer. I ask speakers not to repeat comments already made by another voter. I intend to conduct the meeting as expeditiously as possible while respecting the deliberative nature of the process.

LEAVING THE MEETING

I strongly encourage voters to wear masks and maintain at least six feet of separation while leaving the meeting.

November 1, 2022

Alan Wilson
Town Moderator