

Dubuque County Board of Health Meeting Minutes of February 24, 2021

Mr. Bechen called the February 24, 2021, Dubuque County Board of Health Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Tom Bechen, Diane Pape-Freiberger, Katie Jones, Suzanne Stroud, Adam Hoffman, Hendrik Schultz, Corey Young, Dr. Valarie Peckosh

Members Absent: Dr. Bobby Koneru

Others Present: Patrice Lambert, Dubuque County Health Department; Samantha Kloft; Dubuque County Health Department; Ann McDonough, Board of Supervisors; Nathan Gilmore, Dubuque County IT; Dawn Sherman, Dubuque County Human Resources; Ben Fischer, TH; Ed Raber, Interim Board Executive Director; Wayne Kenniker; Mike Johnson; Nichole Weber; Carol Chesterman; Brad Parks; Lisa Kritz; Lisa Tyler; Erin Buxton; Sherry Buxton; Rose Metcalf; Lindsey Mescher; Joel Pusateri; Michael Heeren; DeVon Welty; Dorothy Gable; Joshua Mohr; Kelly Duher; Jerry Beacom; Nicole Wolf-Murphy; Becky Topping; Michael Freymann; LeeAnn Breitbach; Jessica Mihalakis; Tom Miller; Theresa McDonough; James Metcalf; Bob Beardsley; Amy Vorwald; Ruth Esser-Recker; Shari Flatt; Wes Struebing; Marla Cruise

Additional Notes: None

1. Roll Call

2. Public Comments

None

3. Approval of Agenda

Tom Bechen suggests moving item #8 and #9 to the top of the agenda in respect to all individuals who have joined for the mask mandate resolution public hearing.

Diane Pape-Freiberger made the motion to approve this change and move the mask mandate resolution to the top of the agenda. Hendrik Shultz seconded the motion. 7 Aye, motion carried.

4. Mask Resolution Public Hearing

Ed Raber and Nathan Gilmore provide brief instruction for all speakers and share their screen to display the list of speakers.

Community members who had registered in advance to speak at the public hearing were recognized at this time. Each speaker was given 3 minutes to share their thoughts on the mask

mandate resolution. See page 6 for a complete list of speakers, as well as written-in comments that were also collected prior to the public hearing.

Tom Bechen thanks all speakers who participated in the mask mandate resolution discussion.

Hendrik Schultz made the motion to take a 10-minute recess. Corey Young seconded the motion. 8 Aye, motion carried.

5. Mask Resolution Discussion/Action

Diane Pape-Freiburger also thanks the public for providing comments on the mask mandate resolution. She also adds that she has personally received many positive comments about continuing the mask mandate in the County.

Hendrik Shultz states that he appreciates all concerns and issues brought to the BOH tonight. From an infectious disease point of view, the pandemic is not over yet. Vaccines are helping to reduce the risk, but a large majority of people who want the vaccine still have not been vaccinated. There is also still no treatment available for COVID-19. This is important for the public and BOS to understand. It is also unknown how the variants will play into this in the future and the impact they will have. Eventually the community will go back to normal, but what will normal look like? Hendrik does not think COVID-19 will go away, and like the flu, we will have a reoccurring baseline of the virus each year. What can change is how many people can get the disease vs. the infection. The 65+ category is somewhat arbitrary as there are many people under that age group that are still at risk. In addition, vaccinating everyone in this current phase will not be enough for immunity. It is reassuring that we have more ventilators to help those with COVID-19, but we need the people to run them. In the future we will have more staff to work in the hospitals as more of them are vaccinated. The mask mandate would be a temporary solution to aiding the current situation.

Katie Jones adds that some people who do recover have long term health effects due to COVID-19 and the more we can protect people before they get COVID-19, the better. She also mentions mental health, which was brought up by many speakers. This is on the BOH radar and Katie suggests adding this to the next meetings agenda. Many people are concerned for their children, but Katie believes her kids would rather wear a mask and play with their friends than be in a lockdown. Katie agrees with this too when thinking about her own mental health. If wearing masks are going to help us go back to some normalcy sooner, then Katie supports it.

Valarie Peckosh comments that she is very saddened to see this all get political. She shares that the mission of the Dubuque County Board of Health is to “promote and advance healthy behaviors and environments in order to reduce the risk of disease, injury, disability, and premature death. Valarie believes that the mask mandate resolution fits into this definition. She adds that as a dentist, she wears a mask all day every day, it just takes getting used to.

Suzie Stroud adds that the BOH is composed of volunteers who are not political but doing the best with the information they have. Everyone is feeling the impacts of the pandemic including

Suzie who has a father in a nursing home and a middle school student at home. She believes masks are working in the community.

Adam also adds a thank you for all written and verbal comments shared. He adds that while he thinks masks are important, he also trusts science and health care professionals. He believes we are headed in the right direction and he would like to continue that way.

Tom Bechen states that the most recent mask mandate resolution states: "The provision of this proclamation shall continue until the Dubuque County Incident Management Team declares that Phase 1B is completed in Dubuque County, or by June 15 2021, whichever occurs sooner."

Diane Pape-Freiburger comments that data on the Iowa COVID-19 dashboard will not provide a specific number for those 65+ who have been vaccinated. To use data we do not have a handle on is a concern. She also adds that hospitalization data shows Dubuque County residents that are hospitalized with COVID-19, not how many COVID-19 patients are in our hospitals. Diane would like to set a date rather than the completion of 1B to determine when to revisit the mask mandate.

Hendrik Shultz responds that he agrees with Diane's comments about hospitalizations. He believes the BOH needs to consider the at-risk population and get as close as possible to vaccinating all of them. He understands that there is not a perfect solution but reaching a majority of 65+ would be a good start. His concern is that population, as they are they ones dying from COVID-19 significantly more than the other age groups. Vaccinating those in 1B will ensure more workers to support others during the pandemic.

Diane asks if June 15 is too soon. Hendrik responds that one measure will not fix all and expresses his support for including both a date and data to determine an end date to the mask mandate resolution or begin loosening restrictions.

Diane is concerned about the potential lack of accurate data. Hendrik believes we can get a pretty good sense of this data with Patrice Lambert and the Incident Management Team's work.

Valarie Peckosh suggests that the mask mandate resolution go until June 15, unless 1B is not completed by then. It is difficult for the BOH to predict where we will be in June with limited information about the number of vaccines coming into the County. Hendrik suggests getting as many people vaccinated as possible before June 15.

Katie Jones believes the public would appreciate the BOH revisiting the resolution at a specific time. Suzie Stroud adds that this would also improve transparency between the BOH and the community.

Tom Bechen adds that 8 weeks ahead of June 15 is mid-April. This would be when the BOH revisits the resolution. Hendrik would like to include a note in the resolution about reassessing

the situation 8 weeks before June 15. Katie Jones does point out that the resolution already states that the resolution can be reevaluated or modified at any time.

Diane Pape-Freiburger made the motion to approve the mask mandate resolution as written. Katie Jones seconded the motion. 8 Aye, motion carried.

The mask mandate resolution will now go to the BOS for action on Friday, February 26, 2021 for final approval.

6. Approval of Minutes

Diane Pape-Freiburger comments that in item #3, Diane and Hendrik both agreed that every life matters whether it was in the 80% or 20%.

Diane Pape-Freiburger made the motion to approve the Minutes from February 11, 2021 as amended. Hendrik Schultz seconded the motion. 8 Aye, motion carried.

7. Board of Health/Board of Supervisors Liaison

Tom Bechen starts the discussion by explaining that Supervisor Ann McDonough has recently been appointed the BOS liaison to the BOH and he would like to set the rules for engagement. In other counties, there is an agenda item that allows the BOS liaison to bring any issues to the BOH.

Supervisor Ann McDonough responds that it is up to the BOH how to utilize this opportunity. She adds that the aim is to improve communication both ways.

Tom adds that maybe it is best to let this develop overtime rather than set rules or guidelines right now. He also comments that Ann and he may have discussions offline to stay aligned.

8. COVID-19 Update

Patrice Lambert shares that she appreciated hearing everyone's point of view on the mask mandate. She adds that the IDPH does calculate a burn rate for how many vaccines are administered each week. Last week Dubuque County had well over 100%, because we were working on 5 dose vials. The IDPH is now counting 6 doses a vial. Stacey Killian will collect burn rate information from each provider on a weekly basis to stay on track. She adds that the providers in Dubuque County have been excellent to work with. The IMT received notification this week that Dubuque County will be receiving the same amount of vaccine that they did the previous week, but that this may increase in the near future. The IMT continues to meet weekly with all local providers, including pharmacies working through the federal program. Lastly, Patrice shares that there was an ad in the papers advertising the new County vaccine hotline phone number for those 65+ who do not have a regular health care provider. If a provider has cancelations, names from this list will be provided.

Diane Pape-Freiburger asks if pharmacies report their vaccination numbers to LPH or does the state know that. Patrice responds that we meet with them weekly to get information on their end. Pharmacies are required to report to IRIS after giving the vaccine, like all other providers.

Diane comments that there is a rumor Johnson County has vaccinated cancer patients. She found that this is not true. Patrice replies that the IMT hears rumors such as this often, and it is best to get information from a credible source.

Diane asks how the new COVID-19 hotline is going. Patrice responds that Samantha Kloft has been recording voicemails this week, but the responsibility will shift to the VNA soon. Over the weekend there were about 373 calls into the line. The answering machine does hold 450 calls, but Nathan Gilmore with Dubuque County IT has been able to expand that.

9. COVID-19 Funding Requests

None

10. Next Meeting

The next Board of Health meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 6pm via Zoom.

11. Public Comment

Ann McDonough – Many people have contacted Supervisor McDonough with positive comments about the vaccine clinic at the mall. Also, she is receiving many contacts asking if those 65+ can get an update from their health care providers about where they are in their vaccination list.

Nicole Wolfe-Murphy – Asks what is the projected end date for the end of phase 1B. She also stresses concern about the long-term effects of the COVID-19 vaccine. Lastly, she asks if all ventilators have ever been used in one day, week, or month in Dubuque.

All other comments were on agenda items and will not be recorded at this time.

12. Adjournment

Diane Pape-Freiburger made the motion to adjourn at 8:40pm. Hendrik Schultz seconded the motion. 8 Aye, motion carried.

The following comments were addressed to the Dubuque County Board of Health by citizens of Dubuque County for their meeting on February 24 2021. The meeting regarded a Mask Mandate Resolution for the County, and included a public hearing.

1. Chris Boxleiter

I am writing to put my comments into the record and to be read in at the 2/11/21 Dubuque County hearing.

The arrogance thru which Dubuque County and the City of Dubuque have conducted themselves over past 8-9 months is staggering. They have shut down local businesses, instituted draconian and nonsensical policies that virtually every common sense individual rolls their eyes at. I wonder sometimes if Dubuque government officials have even read the mask mandate proclamation.

Only the policy makers look at themselves and think, "we have done a good job". You have completely ignored any sense of individual liberty and freedom in your decision making to see who can virtue signal the most.

For months I have asked commonsense questions about mask efficacy and the potential downside of the mask mandate of local officials. To date, not one official has given me a substantive answer on these topics. I only receive back platitudes. Their lack of answers were clear though, they have no clear evidence that mask mandates work. As one city official put it..."doing nothing is not an option" when challenged with many questions he didn't have an answer too. When I read this I knew we were in trouble.

If our "leaders" are acting on a whim to say they "did something" without any discussion on the negative side affects, the infringement on personal freedoms, or their ability to recommend certain practices vs impose them....then that is disqualifying in my book. We all know you were just following other counties actions. No independent thought truly went into this decision. You did it because it was the easy thing to do.

I have posited that government officials across the country should leave masking decisions to the individuals and businesses. The government should play absolutely no role in telling a free citizen what they where on their face. I am sickened by the lack of a public response to these measures. While privately many people tell me the mandates are a joke, they gleefully wear them in public to not be shamed. WHEN WILL THIS STOP!

There are voluminous studies that shows masks have provided virtually no benefit and to the contrary have shown a pattern of COVID cases skyrocketing only after mask mandates were imposed (Dubuque being one of them). COVID 19 has ran its course in every corner of our country essentially following the same pattern, regardless of public policy. These mandates have been instituted to provide a false sense of protection.

Furthermore, in March of 2020 the CDC's blanket policy on masks being effective against spread of COVID or other like viral diseases was to recommend against mask wearing! Now we have bureaucrats seriously telling us to wear two masks at the same time. These are not serious people. In light of rolling out a vaccine in our community you are looking to make your policies more restrictive. What is the point of even having a vaccine if you are getting more restrictive as immunity grows each day? Should we expect to wear masks for years? You of course never think this many steps ahead...

If you feel at risk or are an at risk individual wear a mask. Stay home 24/7 if you would like. Get the vaccine, be cautious. But the 99.9% of us who have virtually no risk of COVID 19 should not stand for these draconian measures any longer. This is clearly about power and virtue signaling, typically those in government are the best at it.

2. Abby L. Jones

I read the article in today's Telegraph Herald regarding the proposed county mask mandate extension. First of all, I want to say that I am a strong supporter of the county mask mandate and fully support the extension of it. My concern however with what I read in the article is the logic being used to extend it until Phase 1B is complete or by June 15, whichever comes sooner. My husband (age 45) falls into Phase 1C as an individual aged 18-64 with underlying medical conditions which per the CDC "increase the risk of serious, life threatening complications from COVID-19". He suffers from two conditions that the CDC has deemed fall into this category – Chronic Liver Disease and a Weakened Immune System from using Steroid or Other Medications. His hepatologist at the University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics has advised him to take extreme precautions including avoiding any interactions with the general public, i.e. going into stores, restaurants, sending our kids back to school, etc. So with that said, I have to disagree with the comment from Dr. Hendrick Schultz that with the completion of Phase 1B "We'll have the highest vulnerable population taken out of the risk zone." I can say for certain that my husband is at a much higher risk of life-threatening complications than the vast majority of those in Phase 1B, with the exception of those aged 65+. For that reason, I would argue that the mask mandate should be extended until those in Phase 1C with underlying medical conditions are vaccinated as well.

I would also like to take this opportunity to plead my case for my husband and others like him to be vaccinated sooner. I have been working tirelessly to get a vaccine for my husband in spite of him falling into Phase 1C for the sake of our children who are suffering greatly by attending school virtually as they've watched their classmates at Resurrection Elementary attend school in-person 5 days a week since the beginning of the school year. My heart breaks every day as I see them missing out on in-person learning, building friendships, participating in the sports they love, and trying to keep them active while we've essentially been locked in our house for almost a year. I understand that you're held to the state's guidelines in terms of vaccine distribution and I have and will continue to email and call Kim Reynolds, Kelly Garcia and Rob Sands on an almost daily basis to express my concerns.

I have also contacted Grand River, Mercy, Walgreen's, Hy-Vee, and the VNA in hopes of my husband possibly receiving a leftover dose to prevent even one from going to waste. If there is anything you can do to help us out and get a vaccine for him it would be so greatly appreciated. We simply want to be able to send our kids back to school without them having to worry about putting their dad at risk. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you. My contact information is listed below.

3. Larry and Darlene Boeckenstedt

We are supporting your mask mandate because we feel it is the best thing to do to keep everyone safe and to get rid of the virus, We wear a mask to keep other people safe, so we think other people should wear one to keep us safe. It is the least we can do.

4. Joni Lucas

I would like to weigh in on the proposed extension to the mask mandate. We are not out of the woods yet. It is premature to end the mask mandate when SO many of our citizens have not yet been vaccinated. For the most part, people are accustomed to wearing them so it is not asking a lot for people to continue for awhile longer. Until it is safe to discontinue. I will do whatever is necessary to rid our world of this deadly virus.

5. Wilbrhook5

Way to be useful idiots for the ruling elites with your face diaper mandates. Communist scum!

6. Dorothy Gable (see attached)

7. Andy and Anna DeWitt

We would like to register our opinion on the extension of the mask mandate. We are both health care providers and have kept a very close eye on the rise and fall of the COVID cases in Dubuque county. We also have a good understanding of immunology and microbiology. As of now, there are 191 deaths due to COVID in Dubuque county. That number is over the last year and comprises approximately 0.2% of the population of the county. Every death is tragic, as we all recognize. In the last 2 months, the positivity rate has dropped significantly in the county. This could be from the mask mandate, but this is occurring nationwide. Deaths are also decreasing significantly. We have treatments that are fairly successful if used at the first sign of infection. These are known as monoclonal antibodies (bamlanivimab and etesevimab). We also know more about this virus and are much more knowledgeable about how to treat patients than we were in the spring and early summer of 2020, so survival has improved. As we write this, the positivity rate in Dubuque is 6.3% and there are 13 people in the hospital that are COVID positive. It would be interesting to know what the numbers were on this date 2 years ago for influenza. I obviously understand that this is not influenza but the statistics we currently have would line up with our normal influenza numbers in past years. We were not wearing masks or even considering wearing masks back then.

According to the CDC the mortality rate of COVID is the following for each age group: > 70 years old- 95.4%, 50-69 years-99.5%, 20-49 years-99.9%, 0-19 -99.997%. This means that everyone under the age of 50 has a higher survival rate than the common flu.

Vaccinations are going well and a large portion of people over 70 have received theirs in the county. These are the ones at risk. The risk under this age is much less. Those of us who have had COVID should be able to be without masks anyway as we are immune. 12,195 people in the county have tested positive since this began. That is 12.2% of people who are immune to this virus. These are the people who have been tested. There is likely a significant portion who have had the virus and were not tested that are now immune as well. The latest study out of the UK has studied immunity at least up to 8 months and even then, the T cell and B cell population has persisted. This is important because this shows that the body can "remember" the SARS-CoV-2 virus. If it encounters the virus again, the memory B cells can quickly gear up and produce antibodies to fight the re-infection. Those who have recovered from COVID-19 could have immunity against reinfection for months, or perhaps even years, the authors of this study said. Yet even though we suffered through the infection, we still have to wear a mask for no scientific reason. People say we need to "follow the science." This is the science! It seems that people want to pick and choose the science that perpetuates fear.

There is such a depersonalization that has occurred in this county since masks have been required. People don't look each other in the eye at the grocery store or even say hi anymore. We urge you allow us to return to some sense of normalcy. It is time to relax this mandate. We need to see and recognize our neighbors.

Thank you,

8. Geri Buelow

I am a Registered Nurse. I support the mask mandate laid out by the board of health. I have been a nurse for almost 45 years. The science behind Masks show that masks reduce spread of infection. We as citizens need to listen to doctors and scientists. We need to protect our communities, businesses, schools and citizens especially those who have an increased susceptibility to disease. Please extend the mass mandate until we reach herd immunity.

I have lost a cousin and her husband to covid, and a coworker. Friends of mine have lost siblings, parents and grandparents to this horrible pandemic. I don't know anyone who hasn't been touched by it. Please continue the mask mandate.

9. Daniel Givens

To the members of the Dubuque County Board of Health-

I would like to write with strong support of continuation of the mask mandate for Dubuque County. I understand the need to have an end date and not continue this indefinitely, and rather than establish an arbitrary end date, I would support the proposed timing of ending the mandate after phase 1b of vaccination.

As you are aware, COVID19 is a respiratory virus, and masks are extremely effective at reducing transmission. As an Otolaryngologist, I am exposed to coughs and sneezes all day, every day. While wearing a KN95 mask and Face shield during these procedures, I never contracted COVID19 (as evidenced by negative antibody testing prior to my vaccination). Additionally, I performed two airway surgeries on COVID19 positive patients, where blood and respiratory secretions were coughed on my face shield, and these methods were effective protection for me. I also performed a facial reconstructive surgery on two COVID19 patients, each lasting 1.5 hours, with my face less than 18 inches from theirs, and my mask and shield prevented transmission. All of these scenarios were prior to my vaccination.

It is easy to dismiss masks due to public opinion, and lack of published scientific studies, however I hope that the above provides a real-world anecdote of the efficacy of masks.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any further questions.

10. Meghann Toohey

I support the proposed resolution to extend the Dubuque County mask mandate until phase 1B of vaccinations in the county are completed. I'm a resident of Dubuque. Thanks.

11. Lavonne Cohen

My family and I fully support upholding the Dubuque County face covering mandate to continue to slow the spread of COVID-19 to protect its citizens.

This is especially important given that tragically, COVID-19 hospitalizations AND deaths continue in Dubuque County:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/dubuque-iowa-covid-cases.html>

Also, the more contagious, perhaps more deadly, COVID-19 UK variant has been detected in nearby Johnson County, Iowa and we do not yet know for certain if the vaccines will be effective against it:

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/health/2021/02/01/more-infectious-u-k-variant-coronavirus-found-three-iowans/4340227001/>

Meanwhile, Iowans' vaccinations are happening at a MUCH slower rate than ideal since we are 47th in terms of COVID-19 supply; this is NOT the time to remove COVID-19 public health measures!

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/2021/02/04/iowa-gov-kim-reynolds-covid-news-conference-thursday-feb-4-vaccine-schools-police-laws-legislation/4377240001/>

Tens of thousands of Iowans trying — and mostly failing — to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine in recent weeks after eligibility under the state's vaccine distribution plan opened to those aged 65 and older:

<https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/health/like-the-hunger-games-many-older-iowa-residents-unsuccessful-in-finding-covid-19-vaccine-feel-pitted-against-each-other-for-survival-20210222>

I send my gratitude to you all especially when Governor Kim Reynolds rescinded these protections for Iowans' health AGAINST public health experts' guidance and without even consulting them! I am STUNNED! <https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/health/iowa-covid-restrictions-mask-mandate-rules-lifted-gov-kim-reynolds-20210208>

I care for multiple, very vulnerable family members and they depend on me. I need to stay healthy to keep them healthy and wearing masks are a simple, proven public health measure to ensure this.

I thank you for following the advice of public health experts and NOT a politician whose continued utter lack of leadership during this pandemic has proven time and again that she is more concerned about the upcoming bid for her 2022 re-election than the health and well-being of the Iowans she was elected to serve! She does not seem to comprehend that Iowa's economy and its citizens cannot fully bounce back unless and until the pandemic is under control.

In addition, there is now a homegrown COVID-19 variant that caused the recent surge of disease and deaths in California. Research shows that the "state's dominant strain packs a triple-threat punch: It can spread more easily than its predecessors, it shows some resistance to antibodies generated by COVID-19 vaccines or prior infection, and it's associated with severe illness and death, [my colleague Melissa Healy reports](#)."

Again, this is NOT the time to ease up on important public health measures such as face masks!

<https://www.latimes.com/science/newsletter/2021-02-23/california-dominant-strain-triple-threat-coronavirus-today>

Gratefully yours,

12. Les Winegarden

I was shocked too learn that at the present rate of giving vaccine to people over 65 it will take the county at least 5 months to reach that goal. That is unacceptable. The governor tells us to call our local people for information and you say not to call. That you will notify us when its our time. Either the state or Dubuque county should take the time and lets us know about the proper procedures. The governor wonders why people are confused! There is a total lack of communication. Furthermore: what is so special about Hormel. Putting them ahead of the most vulnerable is pathetic. Take care of those who are most fragile. As far as the mask mandate, It's working. There is light at the end of tunnel, why pull the plug on what's working makes no sense. Mr. Kenniker's comparison to swimming across a river with a boulder in his arms is just untrue. We should listen to the science and continue with the mask mandate. Let's listen to the people who know and do the right thing. I would rather wear a mask for just a little long then to have to shutdown again. We need better communication and to continue with what's been working, wearing a mask.

13. Linda Rodrigues

Il live in Durango, Iowa.

I am 68 and my husband is 70. I have stage 4 cancer and diabetes. I have tried to get scheduled for a vaccine through every channel I can...even at midnight! There are no vaccines in Dubuque, no sign up sheets, no information on best time to check. It seems that here in Iowa no one seems to know when, where or how. I can't be checking 24 hpurs a day. There has to be a better way.

14. Sherry Buxton

I would like to make a comment on the mask mandate for Dubuque County

My husband was the 21st person to die of Covid 19 in Dubuque County. I took him to the ER on July 5th and that was the last time I saw him until the day he was taken off the ventilator on July 22nd. I got to tell him good by and I loved him and five minutes later he died. I feel like I abandoned him when I took him to the hospital. When I was notified that he had Covid my heart sank. It was the words you didn't want to hear. It was even worse when they tell you he needed to be put on ventilator. Every day when you talked to the nurse his condition was worse than the day before. Because of Covid I no longer have a husband, the kids no longer have a dad and the grand kids don't have their grandpa. We have an empty chair at our table.

I have had several people ask me what Ron died of and when I say Covid some of their response was he couldn't have died of Covid , there's no such thing. All I could say was that is his cause of death on his death certificate.

I also had Covid but I was one of the lucky ones and survived. I do have side effects from it. I now have shortness of breath and have had to see a Cardiologist for my heart. There can still be much more in the future.

I do not want anyone to have to go through what we did. The number of Covid cases has decreased since we had the mandate to wear masks. So, we know wearing mask does work. Why would you want to stop wearing them now? If not for yourself wear them to protect your family, friends, neighbors etc.

We need to keep this mask mandate in place. By wearing a mask, you can save lives.

15. Tony Harvey

I write to you in opposition to extending the county wide mask mandate.

I oppose the extension because I believe it has caused an increase in emotional and spiritual issues related to isolation and division in our county. In addition, the risk has decreased significantly.

1. Isolation – As a leader with the Bridge Christian Community our ministry team witnesses the increased stresses and relationship strains on marriages, families, and children as the restrictions on associating with others continues to drag on. People stay away from worship gatherings and ministry because of the restriction of a mask on speaking and singing with others. The presence of the mask also limits communication through facial expressions – the smile communicates so much.
2. Division – There are people on both sides of the mask debate. By imposing a mask mandate, this will only increase the divide.
3. Risk - The % positivity rate has declined well below 10% and vaccines are being administered. Schools are back in session. The risk is much lower than when the mandate was issued.

I ask that our County Leadership continue to encourage mask use, but not continue the mandate. Let individuals make the decision.

Thank you for your consideration

16. Dave Kramer

I am against your mask proposal. I have a lung problem. When I wear a mask, it limits the amount of air and oxygen I need. Any store or restaurant that requires a mask to enter, I cannot shop or eat there.

17. Lee Robert

Hello,

I've heard that some people in Dubuque County think it's time to stop wearing masks.

I feel until most employers in Dubuque county feel safe enough to

- 1) Allow their people to come back and work from their business instead at home.
- 2) To stop making their employees take their temperatures when they come to work
- 3) Wear a mask while at work

We should continue to ask everyone to wear masks for the betterment of ALL Dubuque citizens.

Why should we all work together for over a year only to allow us to stop helping each other before we have crossed the finish line.

I don't want to start this all over again and for sure I don't want anyone else to get the virus because some people didn't like wearing a mask

How many non-mask wearing people want to stand up and face the person they gave the virus to?

Do the right thing and keep Dubuque's safe, wear a mask!

Thanks

18. Shirley Brown

I am in total support of the mask mandate. Now is not the time to relax our measures to keep everyone safe. Things may be getting better but we should not think all is well. We have a long road to walk before we don't have to worry about Covid anymore.

19. Laura

Dubuque is one of the very few county's left in IA to go against the governor! Clearly masks have made zero impact on the statistics surrounding COVID.

20. Sue Dravis

I am writing in support of the extension of the County-wide Mask Mandate. Living in a community requires that we each have a basic awareness and concern for our fellow citizens that extends beyond the walls of our home. We share mutual concerns for public safety, education, access to clean air/water and public health just to name a few.

In the last year, we have found ourselves living during a public health crisis. Few of us can say that we do not know someone impacted by Covid. My Father (who did not live in the County) died from Covid. I'll always wonder if someone had been more cautious/pro-active, if it might have spared his contracting Covid. We don't get do-overs on this.

When in public, I support wearing a mask a courtesy for others who may be at risk or compromised. If one life is saved, it's worth it.

21. Rodney Matthews

It is time to get back to business. Please repeal the mask requirement for Dubuque county. Thank you for your consideration.

22. Paul and Grace Rahe

I do not agree with the face mask mandate, cannot see that it makes a big difference, many doctors and nurses do not agree with it, I have asked many. I feel that it is my right as a citizen whether I need to wear one. People that are scared can certainly wear one and I think business places should make their own rules.

23. Beth McGorry

Hi My name is Beth McGorry.

I am in full support of the continuance of the county mask mandate. I hate wearing them. They irritate me. But a friend of mine lost her husband today because of COVID 19. I have been fighting to keep my father safe. I know people think they don't work, don't matter. They believe they take away their freedoms. Losing loved ones, being isolated at home... None of this is ok. But we can do this for our friends, neighbors. The numbers are too large for us to not pay attention to.

You will always find opposition to protections like this... But we wear seatbelts... We follow laws... We have car insurance... We have speed limits... To protect society.

Masks are protecting society.

I ask that you uphold the county mask mandate.

24. Shaun Rice

Good evening,

In the interest of public health, Dubuque county should keep its mask mandate in place. More people are out and about because reported numbers are down, but health department representatives know there are many unreported cases and community spread of covid-19 is still happening here. Additionally, live indoor events have already, or are about to come back and everyone making this policy decision knows, unmasked people in shared interior spaces for hours will lead to more cases.

Lifting the mandate before even a small percentage of the tri-state area population has been inoculated would be foolish and directly lead to more cases and deaths. I urge you to put every Dubuque citizens health before your political aspiration in this once in generations health emergency, and follow the advice of reputable virology experts.

Thank you for your time,

25. Raven Mueller

I'm against the mask mandate. It should be a freedom of choice.

26. IAGENLEE

MASK MANDATE FOR DUBUQUE COUNTY SHOULD REMAIN IN EFFECT UNTIL ALL PEOPLE WHO CHOOSE TO BE VACCINATED ARE VACCINATED.

FOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS TO PUT THE ENTIRE POPULATION INTO GROUPS OF WHO CAN BE VACCINATED FIRST/SECOND/THIRD ECT....

AND THEN OR THE GOVERNMENT TO DROP THE MASK MANDATE IS UNFAIR TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN VACCINATED.

(ALLOWING THE GOVERNMENT TO PICK AND CHOOSE WHO IS OR NOT VACINATED ? WHO CAN REMAIN SAFE AND NOT SAFE.)

THIS MEANS THE HEALTHCARE WORKERS WILL REMAIN AT HIGH RISK AND HOSPITALS WILL CONTINUE TO BE STRESSED WITH COVID-19 AND ASLO THE COVID VARIANTS.

ALSO, THERE IS NO COMPLETED SCIENCE DATA, ON HOW LONG THE CURRENT VACCINE WORKS AND NO COMPLETED DATA ON THE NEW RISING VARIANTS OF COVID.

27. Lil Dryer

2/24/2021

Dubuque County Board of Health

Support of Dubuque County Mask Mandate

Lil Dryer RN

I urge the Board of Health and Dubuque County to continue the mask mandate to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We have been fighting this for nearly a year, and finally, we are seeing a bit of relief due to our current mandate. As an RN caring for immunocompromised, frail, and elderly populations, I feel that this mask mandate is a moral responsibility that our entire community needs to support. I have seen first hand the ravages of COVID-19, and the patients whom will go on to fight the complications of COVID-19 for many, many months after diagnosis.

It is not the time to relax our standards. We need to band together and make the correct decisions to protect our entire community. This includes continuing the mask mandate well into the future. This mandate will not be in place forever, only until most of us are vaccinated and COVID-19 is under control. We are not even close to having everyone vaccinated. Experts are re-doubling their efforts in this regard, but as of now, it looks as if the end of July will potentially be the target date for most US citizens to have acquired COVID-19 vaccination. At this time, vaccinated or not, we all still have the potential to spread COVID-19 to others. By continuing to wear masks, we can keep our rates low until the majority of the population is vaccinated. With the mutations of COVID-19 occurring more and more frequently each day and in many different countries/states, we must continue to protect our community.

Please don't let Dubuque County be a negative COVID-19 statistic. Protect yourselves and those in our community who need us. Continue the Dubuque County Mask Mandate. Thank you.

28. Brad Beardsley

Hello

I don't understand why a number of businesses in Peosta simply seem to ignore the country mask mandate without what appears to be little or no penalty. At the Peosta Rec Center where I and many seniors walk on a daily basis also have some concerns. A few weeks back we submitted a petition signed by 33 members asking for certain times on the walking track that masks be required. The board granted us the time from 8:30 to 9:30 Monday through Friday, as the time that they asked people walking to wear masks. All but a very small group has followed that guideline very well, but our frustration is that the staff

at the rec center will not confront those in constant violation. It would be nice if someone at the center would step-up and enforce the guidelines set-up by their board of directors. During that time period there are a number of seniors over the age of 80 who walk, and many that are mid to late 70s. Seems like seniors asking for 5 hours per week is a pretty reasonable requirement. I have heard that the bowling alley in Peosta for the most part does not require masks. Would be nice to see a mask mandate for a few more months until we get through this difficult time. I should also mention I walk at least two hours per day and wearing a mask is not a problem.

Thanks in advance for your time and have a great day!!!

29. Jane Schuster

To share my input as a health care professional is important to me .

In November both my husband and I contracted Covid. We were quite anymore about three weeks, and were blessed enough to not have to enter the hospital. However we are most Grateful that our city has required mask mandate and that's our numbers have been dropping. It is imperative with nice weather coming and Numbers is just flattening that we not relax this mandate. The science proves that masks work. Why would we jeopardize and put people in situations where more Hospitalizations and deaths may surely occur.

Please maintain the city mask mandate until a larger population have been vaccinated .
Respectfully,

30. Lori Kenniker

I do not believe that there is any reason for the current Dubuque County mask mandate to continue after it ends on March 1st.

Extending it further serves no purpose to the citizens or the businesses that have been and are continuing to be impacted by your decision.

Wearing a mask or NOT wearing a mask should be the decision of the individual Dubuque County citizen. It should NOT be made by someone else.

Thank you.

31. Deb Vize

My name is Deb Vize and I understand that the Dubuque County mask mandate expires on 3/1. I am asking that you extend this for the safety of all. The CDC still recommends the wearing of masks, hand washing and social distancing as it has been proven to help stop the spread of Covid. Please continue this practice to help end the pandemic for all. Thanks for your time.

Those Speaking in Favor of the Mask Mandate Resolution (7):

- Carol Chesterman
- Brad Parks
- Lisa Kritz
- Lisa Tyler
- Erin Buxton
- Sherry Buxton
- Rose Metcalf

Those Speaking Against the Mask Mandate Resolution (15):

- Wayne Kenniker
- Nichole Weber
- Lindsey Mescher
- Mike Johnson
- Joel Pusateri
- Michael Heeren
- DeVon Welty
- Dorothy Gable
- Joshua Mohr
- Kelly Duher
- Jerry Beacom
- Nicole Wolf-Murphy
- Becky Topping
- Michael Freymann
- LeeAnn Breitbach

Those Registered to Speak who did not (4):

- Jessica Mihalakis
- Tom Miller
- Theresa McDonough
- James Metcalf

Those Registered to Listen only (6):

- Bob Beardsley
- Amy Vorwald
- Ruth Esser-Recker
- Shari Flatt
- Wes Struebing
- Marla Cruise
- Recker