

Order Declaring a Limited Emergency

WHEREAS, in the Spring of 2021 the COVID-19 Pandemic had seemed to be coming to an end with the advent of vaccines and good vaccination rates, but instead infection rates, and new variants, hospitalizations, and deaths from the COVID-19 virus have been increasing in recent months; and

WHEREAS, in the two (2) weeks between July 14 and July 28, 2021, the rate of COVID-19 infections confirmed by testing have more than doubled in the United States, and those trends continue; and

WHEREAS, on July 1, 2021, in the State of Maine, the average daily case total was 22.1;

WHEREAS, since that time the rate of COVID-19 infections confirmed by testing in the State of Maine has increased at a significant rate to an average number of 67.1 daily cases as of July 27, 2021, for an increase of 203.6 percent, and those trends continue; and

WHEREAS, a majority of the new infections in the United States and the State of Maine involve the Delta variant, a highly contagious SARS-CoV-2 virus strain; and

WHEREAS, the Delta variant has increased transmission, the severity of COVID-19 infections based on hospitalization and case fatality rates, and decreased susceptibility to therapeutic agents; and

WHEREAS, the Delta variant represents 47.6 percent of all sequenced samples collected in July in the State of Maine; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the Delta variant and the increase in COVID-19 infections, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced on July 27, 2021, that fully vaccinated individuals should wear masks in indoor public settings in parts of the country that are experiencing a substantial or high transmission of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention similarly announced on July 28, 2021, that masks are recommended to be worn by fully vaccinated individuals in public indoor settings in almost all Maine counties, including Cumberland County; and

WHEREAS, the risk of COVID-19 virus transmission from vaccinated individuals to unvaccinated individuals (for example children under 12) remains unknown; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the above-described situation, the Town Manager has determined that masks must be worn by staff and visitors to all Town buildings; and

WHEREAS, Town buildings have adequate ventilation under normal circumstances, but does not provide sufficient space to socially distance the number of members that may potentially attend meetings; and

WHEREAS, the technology infrastructure and processes currently exist to continue to continue to allow remote participation in and public access to Town Council, Board, and Committee meetings in accordance with Maine law; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Cape Elizabeth is committed to continuing to provide opportunities for public engagement which are accessible and safe; and

WHEREAS, all Town of Cape Elizabeth boards and committees have or will be adopting a Remote Participation Policy as authorized in 1 M.R.S. section 403-B;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED AND DECLARED by the Cape Elizabeth Town Council that a limited emergency continues to exist within the Town of Cape Elizabeth; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that as a result of the declared limited emergency and the existence of an “emergency or urgent issue” as described above, pursuant to 1 M.R.S. section 403-B and the Town of Cape Elizabeth’s recently adopted Remote Participation Policy, being physically

present for meetings in Cape Elizabeth Town buildings is not practicable at this time, and therefore requires that all Town of Cape Elizabeth boards, committees, and other groups continue to be conducted by remote technology/methods only until the limited emergency is terminated; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that as a result of this declared limited emergency, the existence of an “emergency or urgent issue,” the fact that Town buildings are unable to provide adequate social distancing for full public physical access to meetings, and in order to be consistent with board and committee meetings, the Town Council hereby strongly recommends that all other Town boards and committees also continue to meet by remote technology/methods only in accordance with the requirements of the Town’s adopted policy; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED that this Order is enacted as an Emergency so that it may take effect immediately.