

**TOWN OF ORONO
SPECIAL COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2020 AT 4:00PM**

WATCH ONLINE AT
<https://zoom.us/j/99774347260>

(LINK AVAILABLE AT ORONO.ORG)

*Comments can be submitted via email before the meeting at info@orono.org
and during the meeting by using Zoom comment features.*

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Present: Council Chair Cindy Mehnert, Tom Perry, Laurie Osher, Meghan Gardner, Sam Kunz, Cheryl Robertson, Terry Greenier and Town Manager Sophie Wilson.

2. Public Hearing

- a. To consider Adoption of an Emergency Ordinance Requiring Persons To Wear Face Coverings in the Town of Orono and Requiring Residential Housing Complexes to Implement Operation Plans During the Public Health Emergency and Recovery.**

Public hearing a. opened at 4:02 p.m.

Ms. Wilson and Fire Chief Low provided public information on Covid-19 as a public health risk; Governor Mills' declared state of emergency and relevant executive orders; the Scope of Town Council Authority; the general elements of the proposed emergency ordinance; and specifics related to ordinance Options A-D. *(See the attached presentation)*

Public Comments started at 4:51pm.

Ron Davis asked for clarification from Ms. Wilson about people congregating outside businesses not being required to wear face masks. Ms. Wilson stated that was not accurate: people are required to wear a face covering in public places when entering and inside a business; while interacting with the public with deliveries and such; and will utilizing public transportation and when participating in an allowable gathering. She noted it applies for all 4 options.

Mr. Davis supported wearing masks on sidewalks and public trails. He noted both concentration and duration of the virus are important to consider. He spoke in favor of Option C. He also had concerns about runners on sidewalks.

Leo Kenney asked for a sense of how many calls were received to drive this ordinance. Ms. Wilson commented on several with her and more with Council. Ms. Mehnert stated Councilors

have individually received calls from residents, but did not have an amount to report.

Mr. Kenney felt an emergency ordinance was an overreach by Council. He also noted there wasn't a report on the state of the disease in our state. He noted the state average is down to 2.3% from a 7% high in the state. He noted the percentages of cases being down.

Cameron Bowie commented that he generally supports an ordinance, but had questions of implementation. He asked about the fines and where the revenue would go. Ms. Wilson noted the legal expenses associated with going to court and ultimately it being a net cost.

Mr. Bowie asked about the steps to alleviate staff's exposure to people without masks. Police Chief Ewing spoke of the risk involved and his staff wearing N95 masks to reduce some exposure. He also noted minimizing exposure and seeking compliance to reduce exposure.

Mr. Bowie spoke of people dining in restaurants and removing their masks. Ms. Wilson spoke of being seated in a restaurant as meeting the requirement; however, businesses would be seeking voluntary compliance, educating and reaching out to the Police Department, if needed.

Sarah Howorth supported Option C to lock down exposure. She asked how, upon passing, the ordinance would be communicated to the community. Ms. Wilson said she would work with the University to notify students and reach people through electronic media, the sign board, postcards, education and voluntary compliance.

Ms. Howorth asked about the area that would be covered on College Avenue and Park Street. Ms. Wilson described the areas as College Avenue (from the bridge to the town line) and Park Street (from the intersection with College Avenue to Black Bear Lane, The Reserve). She asked who has jurisdiction over the fraternities. Ms. Wilson stated the University and the Campus Police have jurisdiction over them.

Nadine Jones spoke in support of the ordinance. She noted the University is doing a great job keeping the students safe. She spoke of supporting the K-12 students and keeping them safe.

Fran Palmeter expressed concern about how many people have communicated to Council that there is an issue. She noted "close contact" is defined by CDC as within 6-feet and an exposure of 15 minutes or more. She spoke against having to wear a mask outside. Doug Palmeter noted inconsistency and confusion with the CDC guidelines and the declared emergency. Ms. Wilson stated the emergency is the risk to public health and safety that has caused Council to consider this ordinance.

Shawn Brickell did not feel that masks need to be required outside. He supported Option D, wearing masks inside in public spaces.

Nancy Prisk stated she has been wearing a mask both indoors and outdoors when meeting people. She supported working closely with the University. She spoke in favor of the ordinance to support all the students.

Ethan Geheb asked about the Town's coordination efforts with the University. He commented that the University is taking health and safety very seriously with the possibility of suspension which would cost students large sums of money. Ms. Mehnert stated the University, Town Administration and Fire Chief have been working together with a lot of cooperation between the two.

Ron Davis asked when the Town would take action on this matter. Ms. Mehnert stated it would be discussed after closing the public hearing. Public hearing a. closed at 5:29pm.

3. New Business

Order 20-136 Order, adopting an Emergency Ordinance Requiring Persons To Wear Face Coverings in the Town of Orono and Requiring Residential Housing Complexes to Implement Operation Plans During the Public Health Emergency and Recovery which requires facial coverings to be worn within the boundaries of the Town of Orono in public spaces, including those located outdoors, businesses to enforce the wearing of masks on their property, and large residential complexes to submit and enforce approved plans for preventing and responding to the spread of COVID-19 on their properties (Option A).

No motion was made. The order does not move forward.

Order 20-137 Order, adopting an Emergency Ordinance Requiring Persons To Wear Face Coverings in the Town of Orono and Requiring Residential Housing Complexes to Implement Operation Plans During the Public Health Emergency and Recovery which requires facial coverings to be worn within the boundaries of the Town of Orono in public spaces, including those located outdoors with no requirement for businesses to enforce the wearing of masks on their property and large residential complexes to submit and enforce approved plans for preventing and responding to the spread of COVID-19 on their properties (Option B).

No motion was made. The order does not move forward.

Order 20-138 Order, adopting an Emergency Ordinance Requiring Persons To Wear Face Coverings in the Town of Orono and Requiring Residential Housing Complexes to Implement Operation Plans During the Public Health Emergency and Recovery which establishes specific areas in which wearing facial coverings are required to be worn in public spaces, including those located outdoors, businesses to enforce the wearing of masks on their property, and large residential complexes to submit and enforce approved plans for preventing and responding to the spread of COVID-19 on their properties (Option C).

Moved by Sam Kunz, no second to the motion was made. The order does not move forward.

Order 20-139 Order, adopting an Emergency Ordinance Requiring Persons To Wear Face Coverings in the Town of Orono and Requiring Residential Housing Complexes to Implement Operation Plans During the Public Health Emergency and Recovery which requires facial coverings to be worn within the boundaries of the Town of Orono in indoor public spaces, businesses to enforce the wearing of masks on their property, and large residential complexes to submit and enforce approved plans for preventing and responding to the spread of COVID-19 on their properties (Option D).

Moved by Tom Perry and seconded by Sam Kunz. The vote passed 6-1 (with Council Osher opposed).

Terry Greenier commented he was surprised by the number of people that spoke and hoped for the same turnout at the budget meetings.

Meghan Gardner noted Order 20-139 (Option D) has what we want, but does not address outdoor high traffic areas at all. Ms. Wilson noted, if issues arise, Council can revise the ordinance.

Councilors made the following comments: Option D is the most enforceable ordinance; they were grateful for the public comments and emails; they were glad to hear the complexes are complying with the rules; they asked the community to work together to keep everyone safe; people can wear masks outside if they want to; and Laurie Osher commented that she would like to see a community public health advisory committee.

4. Brief Town Manager Report

Ms. Wilson gave a brief report on the following:

- New temporary gateway signs for Covid-19 safety have been installed (Wash It, Wear It, Want It). Three different types of pole signs have also been displayed on College Avenue, Park Street and downtown.
- UMaine is working closely with the Town and doing an outstanding job at taking the epidemic seriously.
- Joint Community Town Hall Zoom Meeting with UMaine, Old Town and Orono to be held on September 2, 2020. Ms. Mehert requested it be linked to the Town's website.
- Meeting schedule: Council Workshop August 31st and Council Comp Plan Committee September 3rd.

Cheryl Robertson stated she was impressed with UMaine's student move-in process.

Sam Kunz asked when the businesses would be receiving face coverings. Ms. Wilson stated Rob St. Louis would be acting on it soon.

Terry Greenier recognized Town Manager Sophie Wilson and Assistant Town Manager Belle

Ryder for all their efforts through Covid-19, Zoom meetings, bond refunding and more.

5. Adjourn

At 6:03pm, Sam Kunz moved and Tom Perry seconded to adjourn. All voted in favor, 7-0.

Minutes are not verbatim. A video-recorded version is available on the Town's website at www.orono.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy W. Ward
Executive Assistant