

## **ORDER DECLARING A LIMITED EMERGENCY**

WHEREAS, in the Fall 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, a majority of the new infections in the United States and the State of Maine involve the Omicron variant, a highly contagious SARS-CoV-2 virus strain, which was first identified in November 2021; and,

WHEREAS, the Omicron variant has increased transmission, and while vaccines are expected to protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and deaths, breakthrough infections in people who are fully vaccinated and boosted are likely to occur; and,

WHEREAS, 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 Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the positivity rate on January 16, 2022, was 23.5%, up from 7.4% on November 19, 2021; and,

WHEREAS, the risk of COVID-19 virus transmission from unvaccinated individuals to vaccinated individuals remains unknown; and,

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

WHEREAS, the Planning Board is committed to continuing to provide opportunities for public engagement which are accessible and safe; and,

WHEREAS, the Planning Board has adopted a Remote Participation Policy as authorized in 1 M.R.S. section 403-B.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED AND DECLARED by the Planning Board that a limited emergency continues to exist within Yarmouth and the surrounding region; 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 Planning Board recently adopted Remote Participation Policy, being physically present for meetings in Yarmouth Town offices is not practicable at this time, and therefore requires that Planning Board meetings continue to be conducted by remote technology/methods only until the limited emergency is terminated; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED that this Order is enacted as an Emergency so that it may take effect retroactively to January 1, 2022, and will be revisited again on February 23, 2022.