



Mission Statement
To provide exemplary experiences, services & spaces that create opportunities for everyone to learn, engage and thrive.

YANKTON BOARD OF CITY COMMISSIONERS

Special City Commission Meeting beginning at 5:30 P.M.
Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Located at the **Yankton High School Theatre • 1801 Summit Street**

Due to the COVID-19 virus, this meeting will be conducted electronically in compliance with SDCL. If you would like to watch the City Commission meeting you can do so by accessing the City of Yankton’s YouTube Live Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD1a1hf1dIkiLVSXnmdRQg/live>

If you would like to participate in the City Commission meeting, you will be asked to state what item you would like to participate in. You will be asked to introduce yourself and make your comments. Alternatively, you can comment or ask questions utilizing the chat function on the YouTube Livestream or email commission@cityofyankton.org.

Rebroadcast Schedule: Tuesday @ 7:30pm, on channels 3 & 45

Due to the policy of the Yankton School District, a properly worn face covering must be worn while in any Yankton School District building. If you cannot wear a face covering due to a medical condition, the accommodation is the City of Yankton’s YouTube Channel.

I. ROUTINE BUSINESS

1. Roll Call

2. Public Appearances - Avera Sacred Heart Representative-Update on Avera Sacred Hospital

Public appearances is a time for persons to address the City Commission on items not listed on the agenda. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this item of the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action will be taken. Each person has up to three minutes to speak. Comments made during the Public Appearance Comment period of the agenda may be on any subject. There shall be no personal attacks against the Mayor, members of the City Commission, City Staff, or any other individual.

II. OLD BUSINESS

1. Public Hearing - Recommendation from City Health Board Ordinance #1044 Second reading and public hearing of Ordinance #1044, an ordinance recommendation by the City Health Board regarding COVID-19 Temporary Mask Ordinance

Attachment II-1

Due to health concerns associated with gathering, written comments are encouraged for this public hearing. Written comments for the public hearing associated with this ordinance can be emailed to commission@cityofyankton.org. Alternatively, letters can be written and sent to the Yankton City Commission, Yankton City Hall, PO Box 176, Yankton, SD

57078. All comments will be collected and made part of the official record. All comments for the public hearing should be received no later than 3:00 pm on Tuesday, December 8, 2020. If you have provided comment on this matter within the last 30 calendar days (November 8-December 8) this information will be included in the public record and does not need to be resubmitted.

Anyone who wishes to attend the meeting in person and make a comment about the Agenda item listed above, will be asked to sign up to speak at the meeting. A sign-up sheet will be located inside the Yankton High School Theatre at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the City Commission meeting. City staff will be present to assist you in signing up to make comment. Speakers will be heard in numerical order.

Please proceed to the microphone and wait your turn. Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between you and others. Each individual will have up to three minutes to speak. Time allotment is at the discretion of the Mayor. The Mayor may limit the overall time for the public comment period on any agenda item. Comments are to be made to the Board and not towards any other participants in the audience.

We ask the public's assistance in maintaining a professional decorum.

III. NEW BUSINESS
NONE

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

V. ADJOURN THE MEETING OF DECEMBER 9, 2020

Should you have any reason to believe an open meetings law has been violated please contact the Open Meetings Commission at the South Dakota Office of the Attorney General at: 1302 E. Hwy 14, Suite 1, Pierre, SD 57501-8501 or by phone at 605-773-3215.

TEMPORARY ORDINANCE NO. 1044

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE REQUIRING THE WEARING OF FACE COVERINGS IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS TO SLOW THE COMMUNITY SPREAD OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS CAUSING COVID-19 DISEASE.

WHEREAS, the City of Yankton has the authority pursuant to SDCL 9-29-1 to pass ordinances for the purpose of promoting the health, safety, morals, and general welfare, of the community; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to SDCL 9-32-1, the City has the power to do what is necessary or expedient for the promotion of health or the suppression of disease; and

WHEREAS, an outbreak of the disease COVID-19, which is caused by the novel coronavirus, has been confirmed in more than 100 countries, including the United States; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a severe respiratory disease caused by a virus transmitted by person-to-person contact, or by contact with surfaces contaminated by the virus. In some cases, especially among older adults and persons with serious underlying health conditions, COVID-19 can result in serious illness requiring hospitalization, admission to an intensive care unit, and death; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have declared the outbreak of COVID-19 disease as a public health emergency; and
WHEREAS, in response to the spread of COVID-19 Governor Kristi Noem issued Executive Order 2020-30 which declared a state of emergency to exist in all counties in the State of South Dakota through December 30, 2020; and

WHEREAS, in the last few weeks the number of active cases of COVID-19 have accelerated rapidly in both South Dakota and Yankton County; and

WHEREAS, over the last month the number of people in South Dakota who are dying from COVID-19 has also been increasing; and

WHEREAS, as of November 30, 2020, the State of South Dakota has 17,184 active cases of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the increase in the number of active COVID-19 cases has caused a corresponding increase in the number of people hospitalized which is straining the capacity of the City's medical facilities; and

WHEREAS, if no action is taken to slow the spread of the virus causing COVID-19 in the community, it is likely to overwhelm the capacity of the City of Yankton's healthcare facilities to treat those with COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, it is important that control measures be taken to reduce or slow down the spread of the virus causing COVID-19 in order to preserve the functional workforce and to protect the health and safety of the City's residents, especially for seniors and those with underlying health conditions that make them particularly vulnerable to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the CDC and the vast majority of medical professionals are recommending the use of face coverings by the public to slow the spread of the virus causing COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the City is implementing a mandate that people wear face coverings in public in the hopes that it will slow the spread of the virus causing COVID-19 and avoid the need for further restrictions on businesses and limitations on public gatherings in the City; and

WHEREAS, the Board of City Commissioners of the City of Yankton has determined that it is in the City's best interests to adopt a requirement that face coverings be worn in public in an effort to slow the spread of the virus causing COVID-19 disease and prevent the City's medical facilities from being overwhelmed by the recent surge in new positive cases.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Board of City Commissioners of the City of Yankton that:

I. DEFINITIONS

"FACE COVERING" as used herein shall mean a covering which, when worn properly, must cover the nose and mouth completely and can include a paper or disposable face mask, a cloth face mask, a scarf, a bandanna, a neck gaiter, or a religious face covering. Masks that incorporate a valve designed to facilitate easy exhaling, mesh masks, or masks with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or material, or vents are not sufficient face coverings because they allow exhaled droplets to be released into the air.

"PREMISES OPEN TO THE PUBLIC" is broadly defined to mean any location or entity that employs or engages workers, including all private-sector entities, public-sector entities, non-profit entities of every variety, regular commercial or business establishments, private clubs, public transportation (including buses, taxis, ride-sharing vehicles, or vehicles used for business purposes) and any place which is generally open to the public, including daycare facilities.

II. FACE COVERINGS REQUIRED

Within the City of Yankton, all persons must wear a face covering in a manner that completely covers the nose and mouth in premises open to the public where 6-foot social distancing cannot be achieved or consistently maintained. The owner or operator of each premises open

to the public must make reasonable efforts to ensure that all patrons, employees, and other persons within the indoor public place are complying with the requirements of this ordinance. The owner or operator of each premises open to the public shall post a visible sign at each public entrance notifying patrons of the requirement that face coverings must be worn upon the premises. Nothing in this ordinance should be construed as preventing any business, organization, or property owner, from adopting and enforcing rules or restrictions on the wearing of face coverings or social distancing requirements that are more restrictive than the provisions in this Ordinance. The restrictions set forth in the above paragraph shall not apply to an individual:

- (a) Under the age of five (5) years old; however, parents and guardians of each child aged three or four are encouraged to have such child wear a face covering if the child can remove the face covering without assistance;
- (b) Seated at a public place to eat or drink, or while immediately consuming food or beverages;
- (c) Who is receiving dental or medical care that prevents them from wearing a face covering;
- (d) Who is obtaining or receiving services that reasonably requires the temporary removal of a face covering in order to obtain or receive the service;
- (e) With a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the individual to wear a face covering;
- (f) Who is engaged in swimming, showering, exercising, or a sports activity where the nature of the activity or the level of exertion makes it reasonably impractical to wear a face covering, provided that minimum social distancing of six feet or more is maintained to the extent possible and further provided that all spectators, coaches, and non-participants wear a face covering;
- (g) Who is a public safety worker actively engaged in a public safety role, including but not limited to, law enforcement personnel, fire fighters, or emergency medical personnel, in situations where wearing a face covering would seriously interfere in the performance of the individual's public safety responsibilities;
- (h) Who is engaged in an occupation reasonably preventing the wearing of a face covering;
- (i) Who is asked to temporarily remove a face covering to verify his or her identity for lawful purposes;

- (j) Who is providing a speech, lecture, sermon, or broadcast to an audience or officiating a ceremony or religious service so long as six feet of distancing from other individuals is maintained;
- (k) Who is seated at a desk or standing at a stationary workstation provided that the desk or workstation is shielded from the public or other employees by a solid wall or protective glass, plexiglass, or plastic barrier or partition;
- (l) Who is alone in an office, room, vehicle, the cab of equipment or machinery, or an enclosed work area; however, in such situations, the individual should carry a face covering to be used when the person is no longer alone;
- (m) Who is communicating with an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing or who has a disability, medical condition, or mental health condition that makes communication with that individual impractical while wearing a face covering, provided that minimum social distancing of six feet or more is maintained to the extent possible;
- (n) Who is playing a musical instrument that cannot be played while wearing a face covering, provided that a minimum social distancing of six feet or more is maintained at all times; or
- (o) Who is only in close proximity to those individuals who reside within the individual's own household and no others.

III. NO PENALTY

There shall be no fine or other penalty for any violation of this Ordinance; however, all property and business owners are encouraged and directed to refuse service and turn out all persons refusing to cooperate with the terms of this Ordinance with enforcement assistance provided by the Yankton Police Department under existing laws applicable to trespass.

IV. ORDINANCE SUNSET DATE

This ordinance shall remain effective until 12:01 a.m. on March 1, 2021, unless extended, amended, or terminated by ordinance. Following recommendation of the City Board of Health, the City Commission may suspend or, once suspended, reinstate enforcement of this Ordinance by resolution at any time before the expiration of the ordinance.

V. IMMEDIATE EFFECT

This ordinance is hereby declared necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health, safety, and welfare of the city and shall become effective immediately upon its passage and publication pursuant to SDCL 9-19-13.

Dated this ____ day of December, 2020.

CITY OF YANKTON

Nathan V Johnson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Al Viereck, Finance Officer

(SEAL)

First Reading:
Second Reading:
Published:
Effective:

Becky Soucek Can the ordinance be found anywhere before tomorrow night?

B

Becky Soucek Thank you!

D

Dave Mingo City of Yankton website or the city's Facebook page will have links.



[Wubbajan8 hours ago](#)

Finally

1

[REPLY](#)



[Jessica Justra14 hours ago \(edited\)](#)

I'm saying No to A Mask Mandate. I have My Rescue Inhaler

Dear Yankton City Commission,

I was happy to read in the P&D that the City of Yankton was considering a mask mandate, with penalty...and then very much disappointed to see a couple of days later that the proposal failed. What struck me was the editorial a few pages later, on the very same day--a plea to shop locally.

My first thought was--"I would--if I felt safe." I go out very seldom, only for things I really can't have someone else shop for, and do so masked and as quickly as possible. Last week I went to Walmart, where there was an employee offering a mask to anyone entering who didn't have one. The two people in front of me waved him away. Perhaps half the people I saw inside were wearing one. Next quick stop, Dollar Tree, which has a sign posted saying that no one may enter without a mask. The woman who went in right in front of me was maskless; I thought perhaps she had one in her pocket or purse, but no such luck. She went about shopping unimpeded. None of the next three shoppers I saw wore a mask, and then a fourth rounded the corner with a mask--hanging below her chin, worthlessly. My next thought: Amazon, here I come.

Simple deduction: many older people, and people with numerous other risk factors, cannot feel safe shopping in Yankton stores as long as this continues. Might those who resist wearing a mask out of simple consideration for the wellbeing of other people be convinced by the reality that mask wearing is good for the local economy?

This is not just my fancy--here's a one-minute video that references several studies indicating the effectiveness of wearing masks both to decrease hospitalizations and to shore up local economies:

<https://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow/watch/studies-show-benefits-of-mask-mandates-to-economic-activity-96579141970>

Perhaps Yankton's city commissioners need to revisit the issue, as did those in Brookings. There, they have a mandate--and I heard a news report on SDPB just this morning indicating that Covid cases there have decreased, as most people have gotten used to wearing a mask in public. The CDC, *The Lancet*, the *New England Journal of Medicine*, and other reputable sources have all come to the research-based conclusion that wearing masks in public does decrease the incidence of Covid cases.

Yours, Sr. Marielle Frigge

Dear Commission Members:

We are extremely disappointed that you failed to enact a mask wearing ordinance for our city. Our state and Yankton County have a horrible record of infection and deaths, and clearly something must be done. The vast preponderance of medical opinion is that mask wearing greatly reduces the transmission of the Covid 19 virus, and our own school board has asked to enact such an ordinance. Regardless of the alleged difficulty of enforcing a mask wearing ordinance that carries a penalty for noncompliance the vast majority of our citizens are law abiding and will wear a mask if the law so requires. We urge you to reconsider this matter.

Respectfully,

William L. Heubaum

Mary L. Heubaum

I have immunity compromised family members living here, both at your local school system and at a large retirement apartment complex. I believe in supporting our key players in the local community, like Doug Ekeren and Avera, who have advertised in our local paper about COVID awareness and the need to socially distance, wash hands, and wear a mask when in close quarters/public. Why won't we help our regional hospital CEO in this time of crisis? Education is fine, but action is better. If Sioux Falls and Rapid City can pass a pro mask policy, why can't we?

Steve Huff

City Commission,

I just wanted to say that I agree with Catherine Crandall's letter (that I believe you've received by now).

I would add that if wearing seat belts, texting while driving, speed limits, etc. can be enforced, and are NOT considered to be an infringement on our rights, then so should a mask mandate. These things save lives. What is more important?

Patricia Zahrbock

In Brookings, our mask mandate is approximately 80 days old and it's clearly having a positive effect. Over the past 7 days, Brookings has had the lowest number of average daily cases (74) per population size among the SD counties with the ten most populated cities. (1/5)

Michele Termansen

Commissioners -

I believe education is important, I believe that education in lieu of a mask ordinance is ineffective. A combination of the two is what I would like to see.

The vaccine being available to our community is multiple months away. What can we do in the meantime?

We as a state continue with the 'Do the right thing' strategy. For a number of people this means that if they feel sick they will consider wearing a mask. Well there's a real problem with that. There is more evidence every day pointing to substantial asymptomatic transmission of COVID-19. People with mild or no symptoms will tell you they did not feel sick, they are surprised to find they had the virus.

By now, I'm sure most will know someone who had mild symptoms and survived. I'm almost as sure that most will know a person that had terrible symptoms, maybe even someone who lost their battle with covid.

How do we honor healthcare's tireless work for symptomatic patient's survival?

How do we keep symptomatic patients out of the hospital?

How do we keep our businesses open and healthy?

How do we keep our children attending class?

Prevention – prevention is how we do this.

Wear a mask in addition to the other prevention methods.

Education tells us masks help slow the spread of COVID-19. Other states and communities have shown that mask mandates can go hand in hand with keeping businesses and schools open and healthy. Our knowledge of the virus and how to battle it evolves every day. Hanging onto what little was known in the first part of the year and using it as a shield to do nothing gets us nowhere.

I ask that our Yankton residents voluntarily wear a mask, because it is the best way to honor.

I ask that our leadership in Yankton introduce a mask ordinance, because it is the best way to keep our community healthy and functioning.

I know these are not easy decisions, but they do make very real differences in people's quality of life.

Cheryl Otto

Hello all! I've been in your shoes. I know tough decisions. This mask mandate is rather a no brainer. I applaud you for your apparent decision to reconsider mask requirements. I am concerned, however, with your reticence toward an enforcement piece. Please allow me to give you an example as to why a penalty would not mean more work for the YPD.

There is a Pooper Scooper ordinance on the books. Is this enforced? Rarely. Does it work? Yes. Why? We were mocked for passing this. Some were saying that we will be having poop police. Guess what? Sometimes putting an ordinance on the books with a small fine is enough to encourage cooperation. Have businesses put signs on their doors saying, "Masks must be worn per city ordinance #####.") It has an effect. John Harris is a super guy. Just pull him aside and say, don't sweat the enforcement. There are tons of ordinances on the books that are only enforced if someone complains about something. Brookings has such an ordinance, they don't enforce it. People do.

Put a small fine (\$25) with this. Count on peer pressure. See what happens. Good luck and stay safe.

Terry Crandall

I will make this short because by this time in the pandemic you have gained enough information on the pros and cons of masks, etc. in slowing down the spread of Covid. Most of Yankton's citizens have too. But here's the deal-it's time for a mask ordinance, not forever, but for a while. It's working in the schools. Menard's has a mask ordinance and that's about the only place I feel safe going in to shop. I notice lots of construction workers, painters, young and older men and women there all wearing masks and nobody is making a fuss about it. I see them put their on masks in their cars and in and out they go.

Get the mask ordinance going and let's move on with this. I would love to feel safe shopping in a small downtown shop. If not, I guess I will go to Menards.

Thanks for your consideration and service.

Kay Koliner

I would like to express my support of the proposed mask ordinance. Our local health care workers and educators are stressed and it is time for us to step up and support them as a community. If a mask ordinance were in place, I would also be more likely to support local businesses.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Johnson

Please listen to the medical community. We need to do all we can to curb Covid. Pass a mask ordinance with fines for businesses and individuals that do not comply. Remember that you represent the people not the Chamber of Commerce.

Lola Harens

I do not feel that the city of Yankton needs to implement a mask mandate. We have all been inundated with information and each one decides which is right and which is wrong. I personally get breathing problems when I mask. Another family that I know are all on inhalers because of the daily use. I'm sure there are more of us out there. We have enough upheaval in America. Leave it alone.

Commissioners,

Thank you for moving forward with a mask mandate. Please pass this to protect our citizens. I choose where to shop based on whether the workers and other shoppers are wearing masks. I personally feel there should be an enforcement mechanism, if at all feasible. This pandemic has gone on too long, and we should not relax our guard now that vaccines are on the horizon.

Lilah Gillis

Please enact a mask ordinance. By now, we have more than enough education to know how important and life saving it is to wear masks. It's time for a mask ordinance!

Mary Lee Stewart

I support a mask mandate in Yankton, SD. Currently I don't do any local shopping due to the lack of a mask mandate. If the mandate is passed, it will be safer to shop in Yankton provided there are fines for people who do not wear masks.

Marcile Pederson

The first responsibility of any government in a representative democracy is to keep citizens safe.

Listen to the health care professionals.

Do your job. Pass a mask mandate with an enforcement mechanism.

Mary Pat Bierle

Dear Yankton Mayor and City Commissioners,

An oft stated comment "Let people choose if they want to or don't want too...it is their right. Be kind to all"

I find this statement incongruous and reckless.

An individual in SD cannot choose to drive as they wish and there are laws in place against 'reckless driving'. Reckless driving is defined as:

- "Carelessly and heedlessly in disregard of the rights or safety of others," or
- "without due caution and circumspection and at a speed or in a manner so as to endanger or be likely to endanger any person or property."

On masks from the CDC:

"Your mask helps protect those around you

COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets. Respiratory droplets travel into the air when you cough, sneeze, talk, shout, or sing. These droplets can then land in the mouths or noses of people who are near you or they may breathe these droplets in.

Masks are a simple barrier to help prevent your respiratory droplets from reaching others. Studies show that masks reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth.

You should wear a mask, even if you do not feel sick. This is because several studies have found that people with COVID-19 who never develop symptoms (asymptomatic) and those who are not yet showing symptoms (pre-symptomatic) can still spread the virus to other people. **The main function of wearing a mask is to protect those around you, in case you are infected but not showing symptoms."**

That last line is important to understand and employ. The main reason a mask is worn is so that an asymptomatic person can protect others around them. It is not a kind action and it is a rather reckless action.

Therefore, the choice to not wear one is affecting the health and freedom of those around you. A 'kind' action would be to take an action that promotes the health and well-being of others.

The day after the last city commission I called three businesses which I frequent and asked if they would consider implementing a mask mandate, help educate the public, or consider mask only hours.

The responses:

- We don't have enough people in our store at any one time so we don't view it as an issue
- It is not our job to educate the public
- It is up to corporate. So, I called corporate headquarters...the answer, "It is up to the state, county or city."

The community of Yankton is a kind and caring place. Unfortunately the mask issue has taken been utilized to drive too many other agendas. Masks are simply a tool. A tool which helps prevent Covid-19 transmission, a tool which exemplifies kindness and compassion for others, a tool that prevents a reckless behavior that could reduce the health and well-being of others or even cause death.

Locally we have seen what mask can do in our schools for the young Yankton Gazelles and Bucks. It is time to stop passing the 'Buck' and pass an ordinance to Mask Up.

Thank you for your consideration and service

Wayne Nelson-Stastny

Please help us shop local by supporting the mask ordinance. We will enter local stores again if everyone is wearing a mask.

Kevin Kuhl

Dear City Commissioners,

Please take proactive measures to flatten the curve of new infections. I just checked the Yankton Federal Prison Camp statistics on Bureau of prison website and for 12/02/20 it said that twelve staff members and 2 inmates have active COVID 19 cases. I do not know how often this Prison Camp updates their lists. Also, I just went to the website for Department of South Dakota on 12/03/20 and Sacred Heart Hospital has 21 persons in COVID19 Occupied Hospital beds with two persons on ventilators. The South Dakota Human Services Center on 12/03/20 is listing 13 COVID 19 Occupied Hospital hospital beds. I do not know of the magnitude of infection in any area nursing homes and I do not know the measurement of burnout from healthcare workers being overwhelmed. Please support the healthcare workers and other essential workers who do so much each day to care for our illnesses and injuries. Send a strong message and pass the ordinance and do it as soon as you can for the health and safety of everyone in our community.

Lia Azeal-Davis

Please pass a mask mandate. We should be following the recommendations of the CDC. If the Governor chooses to ignore science, then we as a community need to help ourselves. If the children of this community can wear masks for 8 hours a day without complaint at school then the adults can to. If we are all in this together, then let's start caring for one another.

Again, I support this mask mandate.

Kirchner, Jennifer

-

City Commission:

I write this in support of the mask ordinance. My wife is high-risk with underlying conditions. Even without an enforcement mechanism, an ordinance will give the general population and businesses the encouragement, support and rationale to “do the right thing” to protect our loved ones and neighbors.

Mike Gillis

I strongly encourage passage of the new proposed mask ordinance. The increase in our pandemic numbers is unacceptable and appropriate action must be taken! How many deaths will it take till you know that too many people have died?

Thank you!
Bill Cope

I am writing in support of a mask mandate. As an employee of Yankton School District I am proud to say we are in session due the compliance of our students and the mandate we initiated at the start of the school year. I fully support our school board's decision prior to the last commission meeting requesting a mask mandate. Please hear the requests of our medical community and make the decision to mandate masks so as to alleviate the stress the pandemic is putting on our health care providers. I would like to see some sort of penalty along with this mandate, but certainly understand something is better than nothing. MASK UP!!!

Sincerely,

Marc C. Bies

Dear Commissioners,

Please consider passing the mask ordinance next week. As a teacher, I am wearing a mask 8-10 hours per day while at school or working activities and it's not a big deal! I can breathe, students can hear me, and most importantly, a mask ordinance at school has helped us to keep kids in school and activities going for an entire semester. A mask ordinance in the community will help to keep businesses open and the economy going. Wearing a mask is the least I can do to help protect others in the community. Do what is best for the community— require us to wear a mask in indoor public spaces!!!! I wear a mask to protect you; you wear one to protect me.

Sincerely,

Angie Luken

Thank you for considering a stronger mask mandate for our great community. We believe, when not at home, masks should be worn outdoors when proper distance cannot be kept and always when indoors. Thank you for your efforts to slow the spread of Covid19.

Sincere, Merle & Virginia Larson

Please add an amendment to the mask ordinance. Fine businesses and individual who refuse to comply. Businesses will come back when we provide a safe atmosphere. Think of this as important to health as the sewer system.

Lola Harens

Hi this is Amberlee Mueller. I am a Paraprofessional with the Yankton School District. I wear a mask everywhere I go. Wouldn't think of going in a place without one. I have a 4 year old little boy and a husband at home to protect, along with my parents and family. I even go shower and clean up before I pick up my son from daycare. I do what I can myself. I wear a mask and a shield at work. I feel more protected by doing this. Yankton school district has provided us with them and I'm going to use it! I think we should have a mask mandate because, you can see how well it has done to keep us in school. Sure they are not 100 percent but if you even have any chance at all to protect other people, why not do it. I wish more people would wear them to protect me and my family. I need to keep working for my family. I can't afford to not work. Wouldn't it be great to be able to see our grandparents and feel safe doing this. The faster we get this under control the better for everyone. Brookings has done it and looking better. Let's do this Yankton. Please consider this mask mandate! It's very important with all these people dying. Help save lives! Amberlee Mueller

Please help bring more shoppers to Yankton this Christmas Season.... Approve the mask ordinance.
Kevin Kuhl

I am writing this letter in hopes of making a difference. My name is Victoria Mendoza and I am a Paraprofessional at Yankton High School. I think we have come to a point (I think we have come to a point a long time ago...) in which it is an absolute necessity to have a mask mandate. People are getting sick, and even more tragically people in our own community are dying. I wear a mask everywhere outside of home. It is a small thing I can do to protect others from germs I may transfer to them, as well as protect me and my family from germs in the outside world. I think we should AT LEAST have a trial run of a mask mandate. I feel strongly that our cases would go down and give our hospitals some much needed relief. Please, please for all our health consider passing a mask mandate for Yankton. Thank you for your time and consideration. –
Victoria Mendoza

My husband and I are strongly in favor of Ordinance #1044 as we believe we must do everything possible to slow the spread of COVID in our community.

Therefore, I respectfully request that you pass Ordinance #1044 and put it in effect as quickly as possible. Thank you.

Kathy Wibbels

On Covid and an ordinance to address it

Friday, December 4th

Yankton County wide infection rate is 42 times higher than Yankton School District student infection rate.

Some numbers to consider

Today in the Yankton School District at noon Pre K - 12th grade

Number of active cases = 2

Enrollment 2,774

Active infections rate 1:1,387 Percentile 0.07%

County wide

Active cases today = 611

Population of County 2019 census = 22,814

Removing school children from the calculation

Active infection rate 1:33 Percentile 3.04%

The numbers are clear...personal choice or requirement

"Teach the children so it will not be necessary to teach the adults" Abraham Lincoln

Wayne Nelson-Stastny

12/5/2020

Attn Yankton City Council:

Along with many friends, my wife & I were appalled by Yankton not promoting masking, a proven effective measure, for curbing deadly Corona-19 virus spread. Yankton's self imposed high risk environment necessitates, regrettably, alternates for our safe immediate shopping &, possibly, future residences.

Yankton deserves an effective plan: 1st, C-19 is a deadly highly contagious disease that won't wait 5 months. 2nd, We've had 8 months "education" & 5 more won't promote acceptance or learning by a fact resistant vocal minority. 3rd. \$38,000 is too high for a too late redundant education with improbable success.

C-19 has primarily airborne transmission, often by asymptomatic carriers, so along with avoiding crowds, social-distancing, hand sanitation & no face touching for protecting ourselves, masking is most effective for protecting others & ourselves.

Yankton infection rates are high because we do not consistently follow CDC's most significant recommendation, masking.

5 months delay in masking will cost lives. Time is clearly our enemy & we must act now with a clearly defined & enforceable mask mandate.

Our citizens deserve a clear masking mandate ordinance with enforceable power (relaxed) & minimal penalty (perhaps \$25). Giving businesses ability to post entry notice calling out the ordinance # gives credibility & helps us do what we know is best & promote peer pressure enforcement. Brookings' ordinance in effect only since September has reduced infection rate to lowest of SD large cities. Successful enforcement can be analogous to the "Pooper Scooper" & "Barking Dog/Noise" ordinances creating conscientious pet owners with rare police involvement.

Thanks for considering what we feel is best for immediate & long term interest of all Yankton residents and your ongoing service to our community.

Sincerely, Eugene & Mary Ellen Hornstra

As I am sitting in my living watching College Basketball I am so proud of the young ladies who are wearing masks. Their love for the sport and their families come first. We in SD have this misconception that wearing a mask is weak. Our own MMC women could not play their basketball game because Covid numbers were too high. What a disappointment for the few fans that are allowed to watch and support them.

I have lived in Yankton since 1981 I have always felt a sense of pride living in a community that surrounds people who are suffering. Look at the history, one person has cancer you may not know them but you send money or attend a fund raiser. 2020 hits with COVID 19, the love or support of the fellow man goes in a political state instead of a human state.

I am a local female small business, owner, yes my business is hurting. Few people are traveling and if they do most find a way to take their pets. I have tried to support our local businesses, but with few of them wearing masks I have taken my businesses to stores that do support the health of everyone.

You nine people have been given the power to make sure Yankton does not become a death town. Look at the numbers of people getting COVID and dying, it is not only the elderly. This pandemic does not have a political, gender, ethnicities or age status. It takes the lives of people who are loved by someone.

If this town cannot survive wearing masks and limiting numbers of people for social distancing it is a pretty poor example to our youth.

Becky

To the Board of City Commissioners: Please reconsider, and enact a mask mandate for our community at your meeting on Wed., Dec. 9, 2020. Save time; use the one implemented by Brookings, SD.

Please read this “view of us” from outside our bubble and see if you cannot urge improvement in controlling the spread of COVID-19:

Covid-19 Came for the Dakotas <https://nyti.ms/3qtS77r>

Lois Varvel

Dear Yankton County Commissioners,

I write to you today as a proud Yankton native son and former resident who has great concern not only for the health of my elderly parents, who are currently Yankton residents, but also for the health of all Yankton's residents when I strongly encourage you to vote to require masks to be worn whenever one is inside a business or public building or whenever 6-foot social distancing is not possible. I have worn a mask for many months now. I do not look at mask wearing as a political statement as many do. I look at mask wearing as an important courtesy to others, especially those over 70 years old who are the most susceptible to severe illness and death after contracting the virus. I also look at mask wearing as a small patriotic act that one can do in our time of war. With this virus expected to kill a half-million Americans that to me is multiples more deadly than the wars in Vietnam or Korea and almost on par with the deadliness of World War II. Mandatory mask wearing would be a small and temporary sacrifice to ask of your residents when other Americans sacrificed much more during those other wars.

Good leadership requires making difficult judgments and decisions. You will hear both criticism and support from your citizens no matter what you decide about masks. It seems to me that when America is so close to the distribution of vaccines to end the pandemic, the least you could do as leaders to help win this fight would be to vote to require masks as a temporary protective bridge to the vaccines. I believe if you ask the good people of Yankton to wear masks in order to save the lives of their neighbors, not overwhelm your one hospital and medical workers and help win this war, the great majority of them will support your decision and you will save lives.

Thank you for your service to Yankton and consideration of my note.

David Balfany

Commissioners -

I'm writing in support of the proposed mask mandate. Hopefully it can give some protection to local businesses who would like to require masks but are afraid of customer reaction. We have had a mask requirement in our office since August 1 and it has been nearly universally respected. I believe most people in Yankton support mask wearing, although I realize there is a very vocal minority. Thank you for your service to Yankton during what has been a very tough year for everyone.

Sincerely,

Sheila Woodward

If shoes and shirts are expected ...and no smoking....why not masks in middle of a health crisis. Please show leadership by requiring masks in this pandemic.

Kevin Kuhl

To Mayor Nathan Johnson and City Commissioners:

You are in a unique position to protect the citizens you represent from the terrible consequences of contracting Covid 19 by simply voting yes to a citywide mask mandate.

Masks have been proven to be an effective deterrent to the spread of Covid 19. Brookings has had a mask mandate since September and it has made a big difference in reducing the spread of the virus.

Please note yes to a mask mandate.

Sincerely,
Carol Williams

Some interesting comments in the article that the City Commissioners can take into account while considering a masking requirement.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/05/opinion/sunday/covid-north-south-dakota.html>

Kevin Kuhl

although meredith and i've been gone from yankton for many years we have an enduring affection and attachment to our "hometown" and try to stay abreast of developments.

we were surprised to read there is ambivalence about mandatory masks.

i stay in close touch with the leading scientific authorities in the fields related to global virus epidemics.

they all say masks are critical in containing the virus

in the devastating flu epidemic of 1918 south dakota's governor peter norbeck shut down the state and from rapid city to sioux falls merchants and local officials cooperated.

refusjng a mask in this crisis is the equivalent of ignoring a tornado funnel on the horizon.

tom brokaw

yhs '58

Commissioners:

I urge you to enact a mask mandate for Yankton with penalties like those applied to seat belt violations. Once this pandemic is under control (no new cases for a number of days or some other criteria you determine), the mandate can be lifted. It is your responsibility to ensure the safety of the people in Yankton and a mask mandate is a reasonable way to do that.

Sincerely,
Jay Williams

Please, please, do the right thing and pass the mask mandate. It will save lives!

Cheryl and Terry Winter

I am strongly in favor of a city ordinance to require masks to be worn in Yankton. As citizens we need to step it up, wear masks and prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in our community. I ask you to pass this ordinance at this critical time.

Barb Mechtenberg

It has been studied and proven that wearing masks is helpful in preventing the spread of the coronavirus.

Personally, I favor a mandate with a civil enforcement penalty. However, let's not make the perfect the enemy of the good. Pass the proposed ordinance and join the enlightened cities in our state who are working to control this deadly disease.

Celia Miner

Good morning City Commissioners,

I find myself once again reaching out to you all to strongly encourage you to reach a compromise for a new mask ordinance in the City of Yankton. This letter will not focus on the difficult position you are or the evidence in support of masks or mask mandates that I previously shared. This letter will focus on the dire situation our medical community is in. You previously heard testimony from an individual claiming to speak for the Yankton Medical Community in opposition of any mask mandate. While that individual may be in the health care industry, I am quite confident she is not employed within the Yankton community. I am certainly not going to pretend to speak for Yankton's diverse medical community, but I will be speaking from my viewpoint as the Infection Prevention Coordinator for Avera Sacred Heart Hospital. I am also a volunteer with Servant's Heart Clinic, serve on Yankton School District's COVID-19 Advisory Committee, and I am the Chairperson for the South Dakota Infection Control Council. I am certified in Infection Control and Epidemiology through the Certification Board of Infection Control and Epidemiology (CBIC).

When I begin my day, I pull a roster of patients in our ICU and our COVID unit. I find all the new names—every day there are plenty of admits. I report hospitalizations due to COVID to the South Dakota Department of Health and Nebraska Department of Health, if applicable. I also report the deaths due to COVID. This is unfortunately almost a daily occurrence. I have never seen so much death due to one illness in my entire career. Pre-COVID, Avera Sacred Heart saw anywhere from 2-5 deaths per month and many of those patients would be considered “expected” deaths. They are either on hospice, but needed inpatient support or at the end of an illness. Death is never easy, but the infrequency of it for our providers, nurses, RTs, etc was manageable. Before I was the IP for ASHH, I was a float nurse spending the majority of my time in the ICU and the Emergency Department. I can tell you almost every single death I saw in that role. Perhaps not all the details, but I can recall the situation, the sadness I felt each time for the family left behind, and the situation in which the patient died. Car accidents, cancer, suicide, old age. I may not remember every name at this point, but I remember each person. I now report death almost daily and while I am not considered a front line healthcare professional (HCP), I did not hold these people's hands as they died, I feel pain for every name I have to type in. The HCP that are caring for these patients are exhausted. They have seen death at an unfathomable rate in the last 2 months. You may be saying to yourself: our mortality in Yankton isn't that bad? Perhaps she is exaggerating? Please remember that in Yankton, we are so fortuitous to have a truly excellent medical community. Our various providers serve miles past our city limits. I have reported deaths for Knox, Cedar, Pierce, Dixon counties in Nebraska. In South Dakota, I have reported deaths for Yankton, Clay, Turner, Bon Homme, Charles Mix, Minnehaha, and Gregory counties. If these people come to our community for healthcare, surely they also come for shopping, work, and recreation. Our community is blessed by our providers, as are other counties, but at this point, it resembles a curse.

I am also the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Coordinator for ASHH. I essentially have to manage all our PPE to ensure that we have enough. Under ordinary situations, I encourage all HCW to use the PPE they need to feel safe. We follow standard precautions which is meant to treat all bodily fluids as though they could be potentially infectious. COVID is on the forefront

of everyone's minds, but my job demands I continue for other diseases like Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and MRSA that we continue to see as previously. PPE would include masks, respirators, gowns, gloves, eye protection, and other equipment used to not only protect the HCP from the infectious patient, but the patients from a potentially infectious HCP or the infectious patient he/she just cared for in the room next door. We have been and continue to actively ration and conserve our PPE. We are wearing the same surgical mask each day when normally we would change it after caring for one patient for one encounter. Because of a shortage of isolation gowns, and because the price has quadrupled, we are no longer able to use disposable gowns leisurely. We are using laundered gowns that need to be sent out for cleaning. There is a looming threat of a glove shortage of which there is no good conservation tips I can recommend to staff. Just last week, I sent out an email to all our department heads encouraging them to discuss with their staff the potential of a glove shortage and when it is appropriate to use gloves and when not to. I wish I had the time to tell you why all these circumstances are scary and exhausting, but please take my word that as we see record high rates of hospitalizations and as we care for the patients with COVID that require so much PPE to be used, it is imperative that you act now and enforce a mask ordinance to help reduce these numbers.

As you know, South Dakota will be receiving COVID-19 vaccine from the state. Avera, Sanford, and Monument Health will be allocated a certain amount of vaccine to distribute in phases to frontline healthcare workers, EMS, long term care residents & staff, other essential workers, educators, and so forth. There is so much promising data supporting these vaccines. I will be serving as Yankton's Vaccine Coordinator. I am excited for this role because I want to go to Ben's for a drink, I want to eat a piece of Festus at Charlie's, I want to take my kids to the park without worrying as I chat with other parents, and I want to travel again. Mostly, however, I want to stop seeing deaths in my community. I yearn for a normal rounding in the nursing units when I can chat with the other HCP about mundane things and not about how we are going to mitigate this issue or that issue. I need a break from the news of another death, the constant crisis involving PPE, the new guidelines coming out, and the barrage of questions I field at work, at home, at the store from concerned people. A widely accepted vaccine will allow for so many things, but people will remember that before the vaccine was available, you all did the right thing, the moral intervention, and enacted a mask ordinance that required masks in all public areas.

I disagree with one of the commissioner's statements on November 23rd that Yankton is doing pretty good. She stated when she was in Hy-Vee recently that almost everyone was wearing a mask. I have found almost the exact opposite. There are times when I have been in Hy-Vee that maybe only half the population are wearing masks. I recognize the politics of a mask ordinance, but I am close to begging for you to look past the issues and go forth with the ordinance. Other cities have implemented strategies to mitigate the enforcement. You were elected with the confidence of Yankton citizens to make the right decisions for our community even if they are hard decisions. I return to my previous analogy of using the ordinance like a dial instead of a switch. Dial up if needed or dial down when widespread vaccine is allowed and accepted. This ordinance is only temporary.

In the end, I am speaking as just one medical professional. Please help me care for our healthcare professionals and pass a mask ordinance this week. A mask ordinance in the city of

Yankton will decrease infections which will decrease hospitalizations and deaths. By decreasing hospitalizations, our HCP will not constantly be in crisis mode for PPE. By decreasing deaths, for our healthcare professionals alone, this will improve their mental health. We will never forget this pandemic. However, many people's memories with it will be takeout food, time at home with their family, and perhaps even financial difficulties. Our memories will be death, constant crisis, deniers, and rationing. We can turn a corner though with a mask ordinance.

Thank you for your consideration,

Elizabeth Healy, BSN, RN, CIC | Infection Prevention, Quality Department

Dear Yankton City Commissioners,

I am writing this letter to you as not only a citizen of Yankton, SD but also as a Certified Nurse Practitioner practicing in the specialty of palliative care. I care for patients with serious illness across many healthcare spectrums from clinic to long term care to hospital settings. My role is to provide care to those with serious illness with a focus of relief of suffering and providing extra support to patients and families. This is done along side of active treatment for their illness, and at times also when patients are near end of life.

I know that you have been presented the science and facts on the efficacy of masks as one of three mitigation strategies to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19 within our community of Yankton, SD. I presented you with scientific evidence to support this strategy in a previous letter addressed to the commission. Likewise skilled members of the Health Board presented recommendations based on science, and a public health need in our community. I strongly regret not being able to participate in the health board meeting as an alternate health officer. However, during the meeting time I was caring for patients in most need of our care.

I am now asking you with a sense of urgency to please consider taking a strong position of support for the proposed city ordinance for mandatory masking within Yankton.

I have the privilege to work alongside of dedicated nurses, advanced practice providers, physicians, patient care techs, housekeepers, the list goes on and on. But I can tell you healthcare providers across the spectrum are growing weary, fatigued, and overwhelmed. When we care for patients suffering from the COVID-19 virus, it takes skilled staff. It takes physically and emotionally healthy staff. As the cases continue to rise, and I work alongside of skilled clinicians taking care of our own family, neighbors and friends, I have become worried about the sustainability of working in the climate that we are seeing unfold before our eyes. We become healthcare providers because we want to serve and care for others, and as healthcare providers we are committed to doing so. However we look to our government and local elected officials to help us in this battle. We need your help to slow the spread of this virus in order to allow us to care for your family, neighbors and friends when healthcare is needed for COVID-19 and non-COVID 19 related conditions.

What is making our healthcare providers grow weary and overwhelmed? The volume of patients that we are caring for results in a significant increase in demands, but it is important for you to understand why. Caring for patients in isolation without their loved ones sitting at their bedside, or for long term care residents who have not received human contact from family in months can be distressing as healthcare providers. Our team members spend their days constantly donning and doffing PPE, washing their hands, ensuring they haven't contaminated themselves or their peers' workspaces. They are responding to alarms, administering lifesaving medications, applying lifesaving respiratory support, holding the hand of someone who is lonely or worried. They are facilitating facetime visits for loved ones who cannot be at the bedside, updating worried family members who are not allowed visitation in the hospital, praying with patients for healing and peace, and ensuring comfort for those who are fighting their battle and for those who are nearing end of life. We celebrate with patients as victories are achieved in their recovery,

and comfort those who have set backs in their journey. We are comforting family members on the phone, helping family and friends say good-bye to their loved ones through virtual means, and holding the hands of patients at end of life so they are not alone.

This is not a battle that healthcare workers can fight alone...I am asking for your leadership. By supporting the proposed masking ordinance, you can help support us as healthcare providers in this fight against COVID-19. You can aide in the safety and health of our community, and as a result relieve some of the strain on our healthcare system, and most importantly prevent suffering among those affected by this virus.

Thank you for your service to our community.

Respectfully,

Katie Huff, DNP, FNP-BC

The medical and scientific advantages of a real mask mandate are so irrefutable that I won't belabor the point. Commissioners should know that personally I wouldn't feel comfortable shopping in Yankton unless there is an enforced mask mandate. I only go into grocery stores now because I have to get food but why would I go Christmas shopping in Yankton stores with so many folks going maskless. I can shop Amazon Prime in total safety. Why take the risk? I am a huge advocate for shopping locally but without a mandate with real enforcement why would I risk my own health or more importantly the health of my loved ones?

Daniel Johnson

To the Yankton Board of City Commissioners:

My name is Katherine Balfany. I am the granddaughter of Jim and Linda Balfany, and, though I am not currently a resident, I am a lifelong friend and visitor of Yankton.

2020 is the only year in my life that my family members and I have not traveled to Yankton at least once if not multiple times in the year. While we have been concerned to visit our elderly family members during this unprecedented pandemic, Yankton's lack of a mandated masking policy in public spaces has made our family's decisions even more difficult. Not only do we worry for the safety of our loved ones in Yankton as they do essential tasks like shop for groceries, but we do not feel safe visiting a place where the spread of the virus is not being controlled with simple measures like masking.

For months, my family and many others have been taking on the personal responsibilities of masking, distancing, staying home when possible, and practicing good hygiene, in order to keep one another safe during these times. We have chosen to sacrifice greatly this year - from wedding parties to holiday gatherings - in hopes that we can contribute to the solution of the pandemic. We are doing all that is in our own power to keep viral spread low until an effective vaccine is in place.

However, personal actions and sacrifices have limited meaning while the general public is not also required to take basic steps to protect others. As an analogy, even if I kept my car in top condition, if others driving alongside me on the highway were not required to comply with vehicle safety standards, I could be injured or killed due to *their* negligence. To make another comparison, requiring masking in public places in order to prevent people from releasing harmful viral particles into the air is very similar to prohibiting smoking in public places to prevent people from releasing harmful toxins into the air. These rules are made out of love and care for our neighbors.

It is not an overreach to ask citizens to distance and wear masks indoors in public spaces. It is a pragmatic public health precaution that protects not only human lives but also the healthcare system and the local economy. The data shows us that community masking prevents viral spread, which saves lives, but also makes people feel more comfortable in going out and about to spend money at local businesses. Limiting viral spread also reduces strain on our amazing healthcare workers and makes it safer for folks to go get the other, non-COVID-related medical care they need.

I am writing out of love for my own grandparents but also for the whole Yankton community. I have done all that I can as an individual to protect the Yankton citizens I know and love, and now I am asking that you do *all that you can do* as leaders to care for your community. I respectfully ask that your Commission implement a mask mandate in order to protect the lives and livelihoods of your citizens.

With respect and gratitude,

Katherine Balfany

Eugene Hornstra

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1449968548666347/permalink/2731308073865715/>

We support the Mask Ordinance for Yankton with health markers to lift the ordinance. Our school district has shown us that masks worked there this fall. Let's get behind it for the greater Yankton community.

Sincerely,

Tom and Brenda Johnson

Dear city commissioners,

You all know me & by now you know that I am spending my second week on the COVID 19 unit at Avera Sacred Heart. I wore a mask all the time. Unfortunately, too many didn't wear masks. That's why I am sick,

Look to Brooking & look at their numbers. They are much lower than Yankton. They mandate masks as should you to protect the citizens of Yankton.

It will protect those who need protection. It will protect businesses & individuals. Do the right thing. Pass the mask mandate for all!

Sincerely,

Paul Harens

Thank you South Dakota and Yankton for being fair and balanced in this unusual time. You have relied on a thinking citizenry to govern their own lives.

Many other countries and large cities & states have had long & heavy handed lockdowns. They have created more stress, heartache and death than the virus.

Worse, lockdowns don't seem to have worked,. The virus still easily spreads. Every place has it. Their measures were as ineffective as using an umbrella full of holes to stop the rain.

Locally, this fall, the Yankton county stats show daily new c19 cases picked up but now appear to be slowing (other than an odd single day spike December 2 -due to prison testing?), Hopefully c19 hospitalizations stay low this winter cold & flu season. The overall influenza rates are trending lower than prior years- so far. Stay healthy with strong immune system support.

I'm thankful that we have not used these ineffective freedom snuffing laws. And I hope we dont start down that road this week,

So recommend masks. It may help a bit.

But don't start creating conflict by imposing unfriendly lockdowns, fines and arrests.

We of pioneer rootstock dont need the group-think of big city politicians.

Curt Bernard

ps- Fact Check -- Brookings is not "better" due to lockdowns - as some claimed .

The % of tests which are positive (positivity rate), is not a random sample of the population infection rate. Instead it is impacted by how widely testing includes not-sick people. The positivity rate doesn't measure the infection rate or immunity rate of the general population, just the infection rate of those sick enough to show up for a test. So it is not comparable city to city.

A guy said recently, he attended several covid funerals of late. He is up in years, so I should have asked how many funerals he attended in the same time last year. Overall death rates are pretty flat to prior years

As a nation, we started this year of covid with experts saying "15 days to slow the spread". They said it was to not overrun our hospitals and buy time to counter this unknown virus. Fortunately, our hospitals stayed fairly empty, but hot spots came and went. South Dakota better protected nursing homes.

Now we see fear of a dark winter. Yes, lack of exercise, little sun, living inside- all make the cold and flu season bad every year.

We wait to see what the vaccine does.

Meanwhile, what could we do to reduce sickness this winter?

Fact Check - Initially national death rates were high, but have now dropped to about as low as a bad flu season. And fortunately the mortality rate for those below age 60 is almost zero. And the survival rate for ALL age groups, increases to almost 100%..... if they are healthy & have a strong immune system.

That is the key, not masks and isolation.

Better protection is in boosting natural immunity. So what can the government do to be healthier, boost people's natural immunity?

With those well known facts, we must do more than a mask law. And fines forcing people to government rules would just increase anger & stress.

Many other countries, large cities & states have had long & heavy handed lockdowns. They have created far more stress, heartache and deaths than the virus.

Their lockdowns have not worked. The virus still easily spreads. They have plenty of cases.

We need better solutions. We need a winter plan.

We need a committee of medical and fitness experts to develop a fact based, wise winter action plan to build health and people's immune systems. We can't rely on only a vaccine.

A stronger, more healthy citizenry will have far more protection than thin masks, hand washing & isolation this winter. The key is that our safety is in building health and immunity.

Thanks Curt Bernard of Yankton SD

ps - A few starter ideas :

- Put a \$35,000 fund aside so this is more than words. So the committee can help fund some of these.

- Exercise & fitness helps immunity. Encourage walking groups. Winter video golf clubs. Bowling. Ax throwing/darts/cards /theater/ pool nites - with masks

- A positive attitude and hope reduces stress & improves immune systems.

- Stress kills immunity. - maybe free Yoga passes. Art /video/scraping/ educational classes. Encourage a full 8 hours sleep. Stop watching high drama news before bed!

- Financial stress is one of the worst stressors.. Employment helps. Steady job income. Or SD Cares rent relief to cut financial stress. Part time internships to get seniors \$ & moving. Keep the heat on with utility help. Thanks that we have steady SD schools and daycares so job income is steady for families.

- Fight stress from isolation & loneliness. Get out sometimes. Encourage vs discourage Christmas, family activities, churches, outings and social activity- with masks of course.

- Do "Sitting kills" "Back away from that TV/PC/phone/ game screen!" or - "MOVE!" ad campaigns.

- Give free SAC and Lifetime fitness club passes to those who never use those facilities - maybe free winter passes to over 50's to get them out and moving & encourage getting healthy. Or tanning passes to boost light/ vitamin D therapy

- Diet is critical to good health. Partner with grocers have onsite nutrition experts at our food stores to show & teach buying and cooking their right diet. Clubs to show & discuss best healthy diet videos and book readings.

- Ask restaurants to do "Best Health Booster" specials or drinks. Cut carbs and sugars.

- Make winter Fridays fast days - Eat less & burn some excess fat, reset your body?

- Work with nursing homes,retirement villages and schools to set best diet examples.Lunches high in greens, veggy drinks, meals with fats & proteins, but low in sodas, carbs & sugars & salt?

Curt Bernard

Dear Sir or Madam,

I write you to express my support for masks. I grew up in Yankton and graduated from YHS in 2005. I have several close friends and relatives who still live in the area. In particular, I have a relative who fits multiple high-risk categories and thus I am very concerned for this person's health. I am also concerned for their health of all of the citizens of Yankton, especially as positive tests, hospitalizations, and deaths in the state continue to rise. Please adopt reasonable measures to protect public health so that all of Yankton- and the people who care for them- can get through this crisis.

Thank you.

Best,
Felicia Barnes

I support mandatory masking.

John P. Blackburn

This Is Jessica Justa. I'm Not In Support of A Mask Mandate. Masks should be optional.

We are urging the commission to support a mask mandate at their Wednesday meeting. There has really been quite enough discussion about this issue, but with the rising number of cases and hospitalizations in our city, it seems the answer is clear. The commission members must do the right thing for its citizens. We believe that a strong argument for taking this step, aside from providing protection for those of us with preconditions and the Biblical concept of “loving our neighbor,” is that the onus of a mask requirement can be removed from the businesses. A city ordinance would make a mask necessary and not the management. It can also increase the business for other establishments. If I go into a store and see people who are not wearing a mask, I turn around and leave. I had a problem with my back recently and called to make an appointment with my chiropractor. When I asked what COVID precautions were being taken by them, the receptionist replied that the staff needed to wear masks but a mask was not required of the patients. I decided that office was not going to have my business.

Thank you for your consideration of our message. We will be listening with interest to see which commissioners truly have taken seriously the safety and well-being of its citizenry.

Jim and Linda Balfany

Commission members,

I am writing to ask you to institute a mask mandate for Yankton. It would be worth it if only one LIFE was saved.

Thank you,
Myrna Hunhoff

Good afternoon,

I am writing today to ask for reconsideration of a mask mandate in Yankton County.

COVID-19 has presented a huge challenge to the world, the country, the state of South Dakota, and most importantly the city of Yankton. It does not discriminate based on age, gender, or political affiliation. Someone is dying of COVID-19 every 30 seconds. Just because someone is old or sick does not mean they should die of COVID-19. By allowing the public to freely populate businesses and common areas in town without masking, the city is allowing community spread that can be prevented. There was clearly a question early on regarding whether or not masking was the best option when we simply had no idea how this virus operated. There are people far smarter than I who have been working tirelessly to figure this thing out. It has been determined that masking **does** help not only protect the person wearing the mask, but also the people surrounding the person wearing the mask.

I was born and raised in Yankton, and unlike many people my age, I am so unbelievably proud to say that my childhood and experience in the Yankton Public School system was excellent. I am now attending medical school thanks to the wonderful teachers who taught me. I take tremendous pride in being from Yankton and I keep up with the news often. I was so saddened to hear that the city denied a mask mandate and so **proud** to see that the very education system to shaped me into the person I am took steps to petition for a mask mandate. Listen to the teachers who are shaping the minds of young people despite a dangerous pandemic exploiting the fact that they are already overworked and underpaid. Allow them the opportunity to keep kids in school, by creating a safe environment in the community for their families to work and live.

I appreciate your time and I know this is a very difficult time for everyone. No decision will be unanimously supported among the people of Yankton. Let people argue over the need for aquatic centers and gas stations. Do not let people argue over saving lives.

Best,
Amber Livingston

Absolutely you should make mask wearing mandatory! This is the easiest way to protect ourselves and our neighbors. We have been wearing masks at school since the beginning of the year and have had only three cases. The bigger problem is the number of kids that need to quarantine because their parents are sick with covid or they are a close contact to someone outside of school. There doesn't need to be a punishment for those who don't or won't, but hopefully it will give everyone the nudge they need to wear masks whenever they are out in public. Please be the leaders you were elected to be and help keep everyone safe.

Thank you,
Sherry Rockne

On behalf of the hundreds of vulnerable adults and children's served each year by Lewis & Clark Behavioral Health Services, I strongly encourage the adoption of Ordinance #1044, Temporary Mask Ordinance. The Ordinance is a critical step to protect public health. Your support for this much needed action is appreciated.

Thomas S. Stanage, Ph.D.
Lewis & Clark Behavioral Health Services

We encourage you to mask up Yankton! It will encourage more local shopping instead of people ordering online! Also, it saves lives and it is the right thing to do!!
Follow other cities like Brookings, Watertown— this is not a new idea and it has been proven to work!!
John and Nancy Sternquist

I hope you will vote for a Mask Ordinance here in Yankton. It is unfortunate but a sad necessity in these troubled times.

--

Regards,
Robert Amon

I strongly urge a mask mandate until we have a vaccine that is available for everyone. It all we have until then along with self distancing and hand cleaning.

It will save lives----maybe yours or mine!!!!

Gloria Becker

ps: if it matters...I own property in Yankton city limits

It seems to me like it's a no brainer to protect our Yankton citizens. If pre school students can adapt and understand the importance of masks...
Certainly we as a community of caring citizens we can do the same...what is the hesitancy??

Rita Wentworth

Masks don't work if they did then no one in the long term care where I work would have gotten the virus where I have worked for 31 years. Resident have been kept locked up since March we have been doing all what has been laced out masks goggles sanitize we have been doing it all. Yet they got sick residents and workers. I remember a year we lost 7 residents to the flu. The virus is real but what is being pushed on people is not. Take time to look past the mask. Start by going to YouTube.com and type in Out of the Shadows then look up Senator Scott Jensen look for his clip Don't be afraid share some hope today important video on testing and Dr.Fauci he is a Doctor and a senator in Minn. then go to <https://drcharlieward.com/election-update-webinar-with-q-a/> I pray your eyes will be opened

Karen Schaeffer

Hello,

I prefer to remain anonymous. But I absolutely want this read out loud. If I was not in the vulnerable population & if our community was more respectful, I would be there in person.

Please, I implore you to not use any CARES funding on an education campaign of any kind. It has been almost a year. People know. In fact, if you need any education, you can ask any child or teenager in Yankton who have shown respect towards their community this year by wearing masks at school every day when it was hot and bothersome for them. They understood that that it had to be done and did it. I wish the adults in the community were as mature.

When it is almost the holidays and our food banks need donations, factories have closed or done layoffs, jobs have ended in the town, people are struggling to pay the rent/mortgage, or even know where their next meal is coming from, why are we even entertaining the idea of an education campaign? \$38,000 I believe is the total and that is a significant amount of money. We need to help those who need help right now. It's something our community has unfortunately turned a blind eye during the pandemic. Not ensuring that our neighbor we care about is safe and healthy is such a awful consequence of this pandemic. With this funding we need to quit paying for the entitlement of 'educating those who don't know' when they do and choose to do their own thing, and instead fund the needs of those in the community who would benefit greatly from the funding.

If you could put yourself in their shoes and be in the position where you have been laid off or are ill and are struggling to make the house or rent payments. Or you haven't eaten and food insecure, but saw the city spend \$38,000 on educating the community on something that has been going on for 9 months. It would be an absolute cruel thing to do. It would break you.

To spend that funding on an education campaign now would be that you understand all that I have written here, recognize that there is a problem, but choose entitlement over needy citizens in Yankton.

I implore you to make the right choice. At least this once.

I am writing to ask for your support of a mask ordinance here in Yankton. I thought of this yesterday as I walked into a store with a large sign on the front door at eye level stating that customers couldn't enter without a mask. The three people ahead of me? No masks. What would happen if there is an ordinance in place? Would this business make a point of stopping those three people and asking them to leave until they put on masks? Or would the business just ignore them?

Personally, I have stopped going to businesses where the employees don't wear masks. Does this hurt their business? Perhaps my family of six withholding our business from them does absolutely nothing. But I would love to feel comfortable supporting all businesses in Yankton if I know businesses would follow this ordinance and require masks for employees even if not all customers wear them.

I can't imagine, nearly a year into the pandemic, that there is anyone who hasn't been affected in some way by COVID-19. So far my immediate family has remained healthy, for which I am so very grateful. My family faces numerous risks each day, though, and I want to encourage the commission to take a stand and show they are doing everything they can to encourage the safety of the citizens of this city. This is for my husband, who works in a correctional facility and is in contact with multiple COVID positive persons each day. This is for my oldest child, who works at a grocery store, and asked her manager to give her a different position that would put her at less risk of contact with customers because there were too many customers ignoring the safety requirements requested by the store. It's heartbreaking as a parent to sit with your child as they try to calm down after a panic attack at the thought of going into work for eight hours. This is for my brother who is an ICU nurse working with COVID patients each day, who is himself medically at risk. This is for my sister in law, a teacher, who began treatment for breast cancer at the start of the pandemic. This is for my parents, considered at highest risk, who I haven't hugged since last Christmas.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email and for reconsidering a mask ordinance.

Sincerely,

Amy Greve Nelson

Dear Yankton Board of City Commissioners,

I would like to ask for your support in implementing a mask ordinance for Yankton. I could fill pages with citations of data and journals about the effectiveness of masks but rarely does anyone actually read the literature presented so instead I will simply tell you my own experience.

As a dentist I have worn masks every day for 8-10 hours at a time for the last 17 years and I assure you that I have non brain or lung damage from this. Since May, my staff has been wearing N95 respirators with surgical masks over them and then a face shield on top of that. We are hot and tired but still suffer no damage. We have multiple patients every day who have tested positive, been exposed or call us after their appointment to tell us they were asymptomatic when they came to their dental appointment. Thanks to our PPE none of my staff have tested positive.

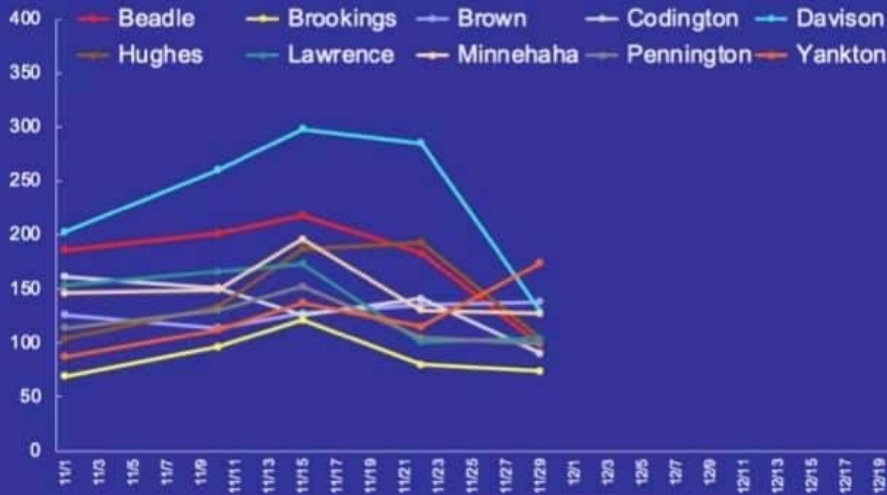
My 14-year-old son is immunosuppressed due to his Crohn's disease and my husband has less than 50% lung capacity from asthma damage. Since March we have been extremely strict to protect them. I cannot trust entering a store in town only to find that the staff and other patrons do not have masks on so I will not support those businesses. At minimum Yankton stores should follow Vermillion and have a sign posted to show their mask compliance.

We all want to believe that people will just do the right thing but clearly they will not as they have had nine months to figure this out. Spending money on an "education campaign" to try and educate people who do not want to listen is a complete waste of resources. If nothing else your support of a mask ordinance would show support and solidarity to the health care workers who are fighting so hard to keep up.

Being elected to your position requires making tough decisions, decisions that might not make everyone happy but are necessary for the health of the community. Please do your part and pass a decent mask ordinance.

Counties with Top 10 Most Populous Cities

Cases per Day Over the Last 7 Days per 100,000 Population



Brookings: Ordinance 20-007: restrictions on reopening effective 5/12/20
 Ordinance 20-010: like 20-007 (includes bar servers), 2nd reading 7/7/20
 Ordinance 20-019: mask mandate in public, 2nd reading 9/8/10

Data from: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/south-dakota-coronavirus-cases.html>

Counties with the top ten most populous cities and rankings based on rate of COVID-19 average daily total over the last seven days and total as of November 29, 2020 (rank of 1 is the lowest rate):

	County	Cases per day over last 7 days per 100K	Rank: Cases per day over last 7 days	Total Cases per 100K	Rank: Total cases	Total Deaths per 100K	Rank: Total deaths
Brookings	Brookings	74	1	6,925	1	46	2
Watertown	Codington	90	2	9,443	7	179	9
Huron	Beadle	98	3	12,318	10	157	8
Rapid City	Pennington	99	4	7,562	2	67	4
Spearfish	Lawrence	104	5	7,774	4	85	5
Pierre	Hughes	104	6	9,409	6	103	7
Sioux Falls	Minnehaha	127	7	10,591	8	95	6
Mitchell	Davison	129	8	12,061	9	187	10
Aberdeen	Brown	138	9	9,292	5	54	3
Yankton	Yankton	174	10	7,763	3	39	1
South Dakota		111		9,032		107	

Data from: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/south-dakota-coronavirus-cases.html> (11/29/20, 2:00pm)

Respectfully,

Dr. Jessie Scott, DDS

Hello,

I am asking for your consideration in voting for a mask mandate in the city of Yankton, SD. I fully support this simple act of putting on a face mask, and to pass a temporary mask mandate. I feel this allows support to many businesses who are wavering, wanting to enforce a mandate, but are not sure if consumers would go elsewhere. I am here to say I would much rather enter a building where everyone is wearing a mask more confidently than if they were not, and I would support the businesses trying to make a difference rather than those who ignore the science of how diseases such as Covid and Influenza are passed to each other.

I have been an RN for over 20 years, and the Director of the Women's and Children's services at ASHH for the past 10 years. PLEASE, my staff are tired, the community is tired, and I would simply ask you listen to the science, to physicians and the CDC in requiring masks in public facilities.

Thank you for your consideration into this vote.

Renee Tereshinski

Dear Commission,

We are in support of a mask ordinance. All one needs to do is look in the local paper at the number of deaths to see that the current lack of this ordinance is causing devastating effects on our small community. For Heaven's Sake!! What's the big deal to have to wear a mask for a while?

Please leave politics out of your decision and vote "yes" for a mask ordinance.

Jo/Len Huber

As a retired healthcare employee and healthcare educator we want to encourage you to enact a masking mandate for Yankton. There comes a time when the good of fellow citizens must be respected. Masks protect the persons wearing them and those around them. Legitimate scientific studies have demonstrated this. Simply because one does not want to believe the results does not entitle them to endanger others. Those who do not believe in the studies or believe that Covid exists should not control the public health of our community. Its time to cowboy up and make the tough decisions concerning the good of the whole community. We appreciate your service on the commission and will fully support such a decision. Dan and Julie Gergen

Hi all! I know I'm preaching to the choir, but... the Department of Health and Human Services has begun to publicly release the data on the percentage of hospital and ICU beds are occupied by Covid-19 cases by county. Full data can be accessed here: <https://carlsonschool.umn.edu/mili-misrc-covid19-tracking-project>

Yankton County currently has the 4th highest occupancy rate at 33% (Hughes, Davidson, and Bon Homme are the top three). Brookings County (with a mask mandate in place) is in last place at 9%. Do mask mandates work?

I'm not sure if Brookings has an enforcement clause. Not sure if that would help or not.

Keep fighting the good fight!! Terry

Terry Crandall, IDC/DMH/MN

It's a fact that a person could be asymptomatic two days before they feel ill and still give you the virus. Mr Giuliani is a good example of this.

Our schools teach Critical Thinking Skills. We all know in the winter you can "see" your breath. These particles are spreading in all seasons.

We all need to be a part of the solution, not the problem. Wearing a mask means you're concerned about others, not just yourself. You're showing respect for our exhausted Dr's, nurses, EMT, teachers and other community members.

Wearing a mask shows that you are a caring and responsible person.

A mask mandate will also help those who resisted but feel embarrassed to "start now" to have a reason to wear one without embarrassing themselves.

Please pass a Mask Mandate.

Thank you for your time,

Jan Brush

Hello to all!

I want to start by first wishing you all a healthy, safe and Merry Christmas! This year has been strange and challenging for all of us. You are not alone in this pandemic nor are your concerns. You as city commissioners chose to run for this post and have accepted not only the title but the responsibility that goes along with it. It is beyond time for action with regard to the Covid pandemic. There are few benefits to being at this level of government, but it is at this level that we are all looking to for leadership, you have been put in this position by a do nothing state government; that's a bad hand that they dealt you, but we cannot rely on personal responsibility with this. The benefit I have is that I am not on the city commission, I am just a voting citizen, but moreover I am a caring human being that believes in the greater good over the individual and the calls for the need of leadership in the strange and challenging times. If it were easy everyone would do it. This role of leadership was bestowed upon you by the voting citizen and should not be confused for a popularity contest, we actually believed you would lead and be able to make the difficult decision when necessary. It is not only my firm belief but the belief of most that a mask mandate with civil penalties is the needed remedy that our leadership must pass. Science supports this! We cannot just simply sit back, go to rodeos around the country and promote ourselves as individuals when the greater good is suffering and dying. It is unbelievable that I even have to write that, but it is apparently needed. Please do the correct thing here and stop mulling a solution, but act and pass a mask mandate, you will be saving lives!

David Allen

I strongly encourage Yankton to have a mask mandate.

Thank you,

Jill Larson

Whom do you think you will reach spending that foolish amount of money on education for mask wearing. Do you think we have all been living in a cave all this time that all of a sudden those anti maskers will have some sort of epiphany on wearing a mask?

You will be doing nothing but preaching to the choir and the choir knows good and well the benefits of mask wearing.

It is almost demeaning to anyone that you feel this is the way to go. A waste of money that could be used for more sensible things.

And putting info in the press and dakotan is hilarious, people don't pay for the paper and aren't paying for the online version either.

Susan Kudara

just a comment,,, maybe the education fund for public safety could be better spent by helping the small business stay open and safe, such as helping them buy masks for customers, sanitizing products,, ect

Commissioners, PLEASE consider mandatory masks for the safety of the community!!!

Judy Tereshinski



Tina Marie

Assign Conversation ▼

<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/the-dakotas-lead-the-world-in-covid-19-deaths-per-capita/>

Is this the type of publicity the city wants?!? We have had 8 months of education on Covid!! You feel we need three to four more at \$38000?!?! What a waste of money and resources!!! The commissioners that voted against masks should be ashamed of themselves!! How many more people must die?!? How many more must get infected?!?! We are making national news!!! Be smart!! Protect the people of Yankton and vote for masks!!



The Dakotas lead the world in COVID-19 deaths per capita

North Dakota has hit another high in COVID-19 deaths as the virus...

[cbsnews.com](https://www.cbsnews.com)





Gary Swensen

Assign Conversation ▼

SUN 3:26 AM

DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. GARY SWENSEN..



Why suicide rate among veterans may be more than 22 a day - CNN

Every day, 22 veterans take their own lives. That's a suicide every 65...

cnn.com





Craig Selchert

Assign Conversation ▼

MON 7:32 AM

https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2020/05/05/covid-19-fact-check-coronavirus-mortality-rate-misleading/3019503001/?fbclid=IwAR2h5-yntjZeGA1z5PiDc-MISY1KMmmTmsRb7XhoN7Ig_xR8EDoV5MA-R3g



Fact check: Does COVID-19 have a mortality rate of 1%-2%?

There are too many factors that affect the outcome if people are infected wi...



usatoday.com

November 24, 2020

Dear City Commissioners,

It is out of a sense of great disappointment and alarm that I am compelled to address the recent decision to not implement an enforceable ordinance requiring the use of masks during this pandemic.

With that said, I am grateful to those commissioners who demonstrated their care and concern for the citizens of our city and for having the courage to express those concerns in what unfortunately has been turned into a polarizing issue. To those on the Commission who decided to side-step the obvious and simplest means for protecting the citizens of this city, I strongly encourage you to be courageous, to do the right thing, and to revisit this issue again in order to pass an enforceable ordinance requiring the use of masks unanimously. There is strength in numbers, and with a united commission, the message to be responsible will be firm and resolute.

Nobody should have to explain the reasons for doing so. It's embarrassing to do so because the facts and the numbers are there that should give you all the reason for implementing, at the very least, an enforceable ordinance requiring masks be worn in public. Since reason appears to have been side-stepped for what can only be understood as a fear of public backlash, I feel a responsibility to attempt to place the reasons for doing so back at center stage.

I also feel a need to remind those in governance of the Preamble to our nation's Constitution which established why rules and laws are written:

*We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, **promote the general Welfare**, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity... .*

Every state constitution contains similar language, and almost all of those serving in a local, state, and governmental roles take an oath to not only support this language, but defend it at all costs, even when it will result in public backlash. I shouldn't have to highlight something as basic and as straightforward as **promoting the general welfare** and pointing out its applicability in dealing with a global pandemic. Such promotion is not done by suggestion but by ordinance, by the establishment of enforceable legal parameters to accomplish that end.

The citizens of Yankton are currently living in a state that has the highest number of Covid cases per capita in the United States, which also means we have the highest number of cases per capita in the world. With those numbers front and center on the world stage, what permits any of us to avoid promoting the general welfare of our citizens by refusing to create an enforceable ordinance that so easily could accomplish that end?

One of the arguments against an ordinance is that it would be unenforceable because it would have no teeth and people would ignore it and do what they want; that it is better to educate people and rely on peoples' personal sense of responsibility than to establish such an ordinance.

To that argument I offer the following;

1. People are already informed every day by news media, public service announcements, and the increasing number of tragic personal stories from those living in this area. If people don't act informed it is more than likely due to their being willfully ignorant of the information that abounds regarding this pandemic. To date, information has done little to decrease the number of cases or change personal opinion and increase personal responsibility in our state. Throwing more verbiage at it will do nothing to convince the willfully ignorant. Enforceable ordinances will. What has proven to be effective world-wide in changing people's attitudes is when there is leadership demonstrating responsibility and people are given the requirement to follow that example.

2. Law, in the form of an ordinance, is the biggest tool a constitutional government possesses which enables it to educate its citizenry about the need to be responsible because it will contain the language and reason for its existence, and it can be enforced if needed.
3. An ordinance will take the pressure of decision-making off private businesses and other private entities that are open to the public to do so in order to protect their employees and patrons. It will alleviate the risk of such entities facing the fallout they experience by people who are against wearing masks; especially, in the case of the small, independent, and locally-owned businesses.
4. An enforceable ordinance will help prevent public events from becoming super-spreading events.

When this pandemic arrived in the U.S. back in March, my daughter, who lives in Jersey City, NJ and works in lower Manhattan, NYC was quarantined in place for several months. At that time, people only went out of their home to buy groceries or to address other necessities. During that time, Jersey City police were out on the streets in their patrol cars enforcing (educating) that City's ordinances with regard to wearing masks and social distancing. My daughter informed me that if more than two people were walking within six feet of each other or not wearing masks, the police were on their speakers telling them to separate and put on a mask and people did. They didn't go about arresting people, but just having the police educate and verbally enforce such ordinances made a huge difference.

As a result of such measures, the pandemic came under control at that time. Such measures work. If an ordinance brought control to a city that has a population exceeding a quarter of a million people, in a metropolitan area, roughly the size of the southeastern portion of SD, with a population of over 20 million people, what makes one think an ordinance requiring wearing masks would not work here?

What should be insulting and embarrassing to all is the romantic notion that we South Dakotans are untamable, law-defying "cowboys." Is that where we're at? Is being law-defying cowboys the values we aspire to? Since when has the fear of people ignoring the law become the reason for not establishing laws? Is that the best the commission can come up with for not taking the simplest enforceable measure possible to do address something that is taking the lives of our family members, friends, and neighbors?

People are polarized because there is no guidance, no strong leadership, and no laws defining a safe path forward. As city commissioners, you can do what our state leaders are too cowardly to do. You can do what other city commissions in this state have done and provide an ordinance that strengthens people resolve to be personally responsible. Making responsibility a choice is nothing more than a dereliction of your duty to protect the citizens in your purview.

This pandemic is not going away any time soon. A vaccine will hopefully lessen its impact, but there is no guarantee that it will do so until it is widely administered and, even then, we won't know if it will be as effective as it is hoped to be. In the meantime, people will continue to suffer and die. In my opinion, the proposed enforceable ordinance does not go far enough. It needs to address gathering sizes; especially, during the coming winter months. The defeated enforceable ordinance, however, was a step in right direction. It needs to be revisited and enacted.

I know of individuals with health concerns in our community who do not feel safe and protected enough to venture out because so many people continue to be irresponsible. I am one of them. I know of some very cautious individuals in Yankton who contacted this virus because they ended up in a place where people were not being responsible and were not taking this virus seriously.

I implore you to take to take this virus seriously and demonstrate the responsibility you have as city commissioners to effectively address it by unanimously passing an enforceable city ordinance that serves to protect all of us.

Sincerely,

Norman Wright
2004 Walnut Street
Yankton, SD.

664-8880

Amy,

Can you please add this to the correspondence for the commission? Thanks!

Nathan

From: Frank Kloucek [<mailto:fkloucek@hotmail.com>]

Sent: Saturday, November 28, 2020 7:20 PM

To: nathan Johnson <ogron@hotmail.com>; Nathan Johnson (MKT) <Nathan.Johnson@avera.org>

Subject: Nathan Please pass on to other commissioners and Amy for your consideration

EXTERNAL EMAIL. Proceed with caution. If you suspect phishing use the Report Phishing button or forward this email to phish@avera.org

Enclosed is a sample resolution. Feel free to change it anyway you wish or consider one in any other form. This is a simple thing that can be done to save lives and reduce the spread of this terrible disease. Nathan please do what you can. Thanks and hope you have a safe holiday season. Frank Kloucek 660 0254 I understand Rapid City is considering a mandate similar to no shirt, no shoes, no mask, no service..... If they are not wearing mask and continuing to wear mask in business they can be arrested for trespassing. Also an interesting concept. Nathan, council members and Amy Leon I have lost 7 friends so far and 2 more are very sick. All were anti maskers. This is bad Please do something to make Yankton safer. It is in your hands. We need to buy some time until we get the vaccines in place. fjk

Resolution for Yankton City Commission Consideration

Please feel free to change any way you wish. Also it is your decision on requesting or mandating wearing of Masks.....Frank Kloucek 660 0254

Whereas: The Covid 19 virus has been declared a pandemic in the United States and worldwide.

Whereas: The Yankton City Commission is greatly concerned about the health of our citizens and visitors to our community.

Whereas: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology has documented that the Covid 19 virus travels up to 27 feet and lives airborne for 30 minutes.

Whereas: The Czech Republic has mandated wearing of face masks for all its citizens in public situations.

Therefore: We the Yankton City Commission request/mandate all citizens and visitors in the Yankton community wear face masks when in public situations for the health and safety of all citizens.

Good morning, Amy and Colleen.

I've received some more correspondence for the City Commission over the weekend.

Thank you!

--

Dear Yankton City Commission,

I was happy to read in the P&D that the City of Yankton was considering a mask mandate, with penalty...and then very much disappointed to see a couple of days later that the proposal failed. What struck me was the editorial a few pages later, on the very same day--a plea to shop locally.

My first thought was--"I would--if I felt safe." I go out very seldom, only for things I really can't have someone else shop for, and do so masked and as quickly as possible. Last week I went to Walmart, where there was an employee offering a mask to anyone entering who didn't have one. The two people in front of me waved him away. Perhaps half the people I saw inside were wearing one. Next quick stop, Dollar Tree, which has a sign posted saying that no one may enter without a mask. The woman who went in right in front of me was maskless; I thought perhaps she had one in her pocket or purse, but no such luck. She went about shopping unimpeded. None of the next three shoppers I saw wore a mask, and then a fourth rounded the corner with a mask--hanging below her chin, worthlessly. My next thought: Amazon, here I come.

Simple deduction: many older people, and people with numerous other risk factors, cannot feel safe shopping in Yankton stores as long as this continues. Might those who resist wearing a mask out of simple consideration for the wellbeing of other people be convinced by the reality that mask wearing is good for the local economy?

This is not just my fancy--here's a one-minute video that references several studies indicating the effectiveness of wearing masks both to decrease hospitalizations and to shore up local economies:

<https://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow/watch/studies-show-benefits-of-mask-mandates-to-economic-activity-96579141970>

Perhaps Yankton's city commissioners need to revisit the issue, as did those in Brookings. There, they have a mandate--and I heard a news report on SDPB just this morning indicating that Covid cases there have decreased, as most people have gotten used to wearing a mask in public. The CDC, *The Lancet*, the *New England Journal of Medicine*, and other reputable sources have all come to the research-based conclusion that wearing masks in public does decrease the incidence of Covid cases.

Yours, Sr. Marielle Frigge

L&S Electric, Inc

1600 E. 39th St. Yankton, SD 57078

Phone: 605-665-6612 or 661-1040

Fax: 605-668-1772

November 29, 2020

To: Nancy Wenande

I am sending this to you and I ask you pass it on to the rest of the city commission. We are making the national news. Right up front, and for all the wrong reasons. The Sioux Falls mayor is describing us all as a bunch of contradicting cowboys who will go against any rule or request. Our governor refuses to advise mask use, siding with the outgoing president on too many issues. She had a photo op at the dome to show her wearing a mask and the next four photos of her were without a mask. The dome was requiring masks. Is she above the law? The reporters even pointed out Brookings is not experiencing the same problems the entire state is mired in. They mandate masks and are relatively safe by comparison. North and South Dakota are in the middle of a spike that is worse, percapita, than any other nation in the work. This is third world included. How many more facts do you need?

On Wednesday morning, I was greeted by the reporter reviewing the Dakota's and highlighting Yankton with all we have for facts and data and it was decided to wait on any decision, gather information and try to educate the population. This is ridiculous. If anyone in the public does not know the facts yet, they won't learn by more education. The national exposure to "fake news", alternate facts and the truth is not the truth, has soured our ability for a productive thought process. If we dismiss it, ignore it, just close our eyes it will go away or never existed in the first place. That strategy is not working.

I can only compare this to children playing on a railroad track. You hear a train whistle coming through town. You leave the kids and go to develop a program to better inform and educate the population on the danger of railroad traffic. This pandemic is killing people now, today, as we speak. The spike had over 100,000 new case each day. We have between 1,500-2,000 deaths every day. You need more facts? Over 260,000 dead. Over 13,000,000 infected. Rates of infection going up daily. We need to be proactive now. The experts warn our rates will increase at Christmas because of our activities over Thanksgiving.

It took a fight for a while but public smoking has been shut down. The people dying from second hand smoke or daily use did not meet the numbers we are seeing with Covid. We even shut down smoking in public parks where second hand exposure was almost impossible. We can't mandate a mask because it annoys some citizens? We have had the virus for eight months. Plenty of time to gather facts, data, and count the dead. If we wear masks for eight months the vaccine will be in distribution. Immunity will come into effect and normal life will resume.

Let's resume our lives at that point with lessons learned and more of our friends and relatives alive. The facts are in front of us to be considered. The experts and doctors have been right at every warning they presented to us. The confusion came from the administration hoping to down play this disaster. Well, we did not get back to normal on Easter. The virus did not, and will not just disappear eventually. The campaign said it was turning a corner. It did, smack dab into the middle of this huge outbreak. Do people have to die in the streets to get our attention? We are already stacking bodies in storage units.

Let me know if I have to find some more facts. Mandate the mask for eight months. Save our friends and neighbors. Show some leadership that will help us all NOW.

Harry T. Lane

November 30, 2020

501 Summit St.
Yankton, SD 57078-3855
605-668-8000

Avera.org

Amy Leon, City Manager
416 Walnut Street
PO Box 176
Yankton, SD 57078-0176

Dear Amy,

The City of Yankton was an early adopter of encouraging the use of masks to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. We greatly appreciated the step that the City Commission took several months ago. As the number of Covid cases continue to run at a very high level in Yankton County and the surrounding areas, with most counties having more than 20 new cases per 1,000 people per day, I am writing to ask for further assistance from the City of Yankton. Specifically, I am writing to inform the City that Avera would support a mask mandate in the community of Yankton in an effort to slow down the virus.

I know from last week's Commission meeting that the city is willing to be part of an education program but wants to stop short of a mask mandate. Again I appreciate the efforts; however, we have now been promoting mask wearing for 8 months. I believe the vast majority of people have already decided if they will wear a mask or not. Even with this, Avera continues to run full page ads in area newspapers to encourage or reinforce people's decision to wear masks. Avera will not participate in the new education process as I am concerned that our participation in another education effort could result in mixed messages to the community.

Our hospitals across Avera have seen ever growing numbers of very sick Covid patients. Our internal model had predicted in mid-October that our Covid cases would increase by 50 to 100% in November. They have proven accurate. Unfortunately, the model now predicts another 50 to 100% increase based on the County positivity rates for the past month. Gatherings over the Thanksgiving holiday will likely push this total even further. Frankly my staff are tired of the demands caused by caring for very sick Covid patients in addition to the heart attacks, strokes, car accidents, new babies and others who present to us. Covid is the one group that we can have an impact on with something as simple as wearing a mask. We have moved clinically trained people who have been working in support or administrative roles back to the bedside to help care for all of these patients. We are preparing to pull administrative, finance and other non-clinical staff into roles to help with the administration of the vaccine expected to arrive in small amounts in December. I simply do not have staff left to participate in the Community education efforts that the City and others are proposing to move forward with.

We believe it is time to take action stronger than education and a voluntary decision and as such, we have taken the step to support a mask mandate. This is not a decision made lightly, but the voluntary efforts simply are not working. I wanted you to be aware of this. I would ask that you please share this letter with the Commission. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Douglas R. Ekeren, FACHE
Regional President and CEO

DRE/ss

cc: Nathan Johnson, Mayor

Yankton City and Commissioners

Our family wears masks in and out of businesses and to church. Most everyone does.

There would be no reason to spend \$15,000-38,000 to tell people to do so.

The nature of people will do what they believe, nothing you could spend money on, that the city probably does not even have, will change that.

PLEASE realize your 4 step campaign is NOT needed. As a tax paying citizen, budgets are tight after reading minutes, or watching live meeting discussions.

Thank you. Mandate or no mandate, throwing money at it is NOT the answer.

Sincerley,

J Larson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Larson', with a stylized, looping flourish at the end.

12-4-2020

to All

I am writing this in hopes you will see several things. I am saddened that there is so much being tried to get everyone to wear a mask this is all being pushed to keep everyone to busy while the socialists are stealing America. They don't want us to talk, get together or share ~~inform~~ information. Plus masks don't work. If they did then ~~no one~~ ^{no one} would have gotten the Virus when I work. I work in long term care have been so for 31 years. We have locked the residents up since March. They had no contact from their loved ones. They were locked in then could not go to the dining room together had to eat

in shifts. Then the number ~~what~~ went up in
the county so then we had to feed them all
meals in their rooms. We have some that need
all help to eat. not enough staff and time to
get this all done, but have to ~~just~~ go by the guide-
lines sent to us by the CDC. All ~~employ~~ workers
wearing masks. ~~we~~ We all followed the rules
because if we don't they will close us down.
So we are all wearing our mask & at times
we shields too. Yet even doing it all. The
virus still showed up. You tell me what
would all the rules did. The mask did
not work.

If you were to check I am sure
that you would find this out for yourself
2 years we lost 7 residents from the flu.
Some wore a mask no one even said how did
this happen. When this all began the CDC
said any mask will do the job. So people were
so kind and made 100's of masks for our
nursing home. Then the CDC said these do not
protect you from the virus you have to
have this kind so then the Nursing home
had to get rid of the ones that were
donated and get what the CDC recommend
to it our way or we will shut you down.

I hope you will see that masks don't work.
So I don't have to come to Espanola to do
business I can go to Menno & I reman
and shop without a mask.

The Virus is a problem, but it is only a small part of what is really going on here is much more to this Picture.

It is about Control and keeping us busy so we won't look and see the big picture here. Look beyond the mask, and the Virus. Why did it all of sudden get worse right at the time of election.

We need to look hard at the election road. Demand answers, justice for a true election out come I pray the Lord will open your eyes so you can see the evil that is going on here. Trump is trying hard to keep American free. Get behind him and support him. All what is happening with this virus is happening because the evil people that want control are using it to get control of us.

Please take time to look this up and Watch **OUT OF THE SHADOWS** on youtube.com hour half long but it shows how this all began. Our government has been infiltrated with evil people that want to control us. This is the most important election of Trump Loses we will become slaves in a socialist America.

I hope you will all take
time to watch the video and
open your eyes, leave the virus
and begin to look how you can
help President Trump protect our
freedom and our way of life.
Look past the mask.

step up and
"Stand for Freedom"
watch

Thank you
A concerned American
Karen Schaffner

out of the shadows

youtube.com



MATT MICHELS
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
SOUTH DAKOTA 2011-2019

December 7, 2020

Commissioners
City of Yankton
Yankton, South Dakota

RE: Ordinance #1044

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for your dedicated and selfless service to our City. I am grateful to know you all and know you have the best interests of our citizens at heart. I am also heartened, but not surprised by your individual and collective immersion in the best ways to keep people safe during this pandemic.

Many of you have heard me say over the years that our government is us. And as such THE primary responsibility government must undertake is to keep us safe. If we don't have safety nothing else may be accomplished. I have experienced events and lived in other places in our nation and world where safety was not enjoyed and truly nothing else matters in those environments. Thankfully you all analyze City actions through that public safety lens. Much as you and your predecessors dedicated much time, effort and financial focus on ensuring we have safe drinking water, the issue of pandemic protections is the same charge: public safety.

I respectfully encourage you to adopt this Ordinance as recommended by the City Health Board. The science is supportive, the medical and epidemiology experts are supportive, the evidence in other communities where such an ordinance has been in effect is supportive and I know even though people may not express their opinions directly to you, the citizens are supportive.

One additional idea is to consider a guide as to continuation of the masking and other efforts in controlling the pandemic being the positivity rate for our county. The positivity rate here is currently 19% (by the way Brookings is half that rate). The positivity rate of infection measurement may be a good public rallying guide to celebrate how great we can be in controlling the spread. The public relations campaign could highlight that as our goal should be at least less than 3%.

Too many are or have become ill. Too many have died. Too many are heartbroken. Your approval of this Ordinance will establish a tone and the leadership we need to break this cycle.

So grateful for your service to us.

Matt

Thank you for the opportunity
to send in comments + concerns.
Please reconsider + do not spend
unnecessary \$ on a
"marketing campaign" to educate
the public.

Someone would have to be
living in a caue to not know
how to handle this COVID thing

Not a day goes by that the
Media, papers, facebook, isn't
giving out HZLPFUL information
Spending \$38,000 could not

possibly do more than



December 4th, 2020

Dear Commissioners:

We are writing this letter as business owners, social workers, mental health providers, parents, and proud members of the Yankton community. We would like to thank you for your service to our community during these unprecedented times. There is no doubt in our minds that each of you chose to run and serve as elected officials because you want what is best for the community of Yankton. We would like to share with you why we believe the commission should immediately approve a mask-mandate indoors where social distancing is not possible.

As business owners, we have been managing this pandemic since the spring months. We worked exclusively as telehealth providers for two months. When we returned to in-person sessions, we recognized that as cases continued to rise in the community, we needed to ensure that our office was a safe place both mentally and physically. We implemented a mask policy, asking our clients to wear masks to promote social responsibility and prevent further spread. This has not been popular with all our clients, yet we felt as business owners and social workers our civic responsibilities warranted the policy. We realize that a mask mandate does not ensure there will not be spread but do believe it reduces risk of transmission. We managed one of our staff members having a positive COVID-19 case with no known transmission at our office (with over 40 individuals in and out during the days preceding onset of symptoms). We believe requiring masks and having our space socially distanced reduced the impact to our clients and our community.

We have been so incredibly proud of our children (those we raise, and those we serve therapeutically) as they have navigated this pandemic. They wear masks daily at school with little complaint. If they can manage this, we believe adults in our community could do the same when indoors and unable to socially distance. We believe that mandating this practice in our community would model responsibility for our youth, and reduce the tension amongst individuals, families, and businesses regarding the issue of mask-wearing.

We often hear about the mental fatigue that many are experiencing during this pandemic. As mental health therapists we understand this first-hand as we process this with our clients the stress they are experiencing as medical professionals, educators, essential workers, and people directly impacted by COVID-19. We know that avoidance of the problem does not lead to resolution of the problem. If we want our neighbors to experience less fear and anxiety, and to reduce the risk of trauma in our community, we need to have leadership that can make decisions to protect the whole.

While we understand the concerns about enforceability, by not having a mask mandate the city is communicating that it is acceptable to NOT take reasonable precautions to reduce the risk of transmission. Let us follow the lead of our medical experts who have asked for a mask mandate. We need to follow the expertise of professionals whose life work has been studying infectious diseases and follow their recommended protocols to help reduce the adverse outcomes of this pandemic. While the awareness campaign sounds nice, without a mandate it is old news with no teeth to impact change in our community. We know what the CDC recommends, and it is irresponsible to disregard the wellness of our at-risk neighbors. While we know that a mask-mandate may not change opinions, and may not be popular with many people, we hope that we can count on you to do what is right. Facing uncomfortable conversations is important and admirable, and we thank you for your work.

Sincerely,

Meridian Counseling & Family Services, LLC

Dana Larson, LCSW-PIP, JD

Alexa Gauer, LCSW-PIP, RPT

December 4, 2020

To: Yankton City Commission

I had contacted Nancy last week. We exchanged letters and she was going to pass them on to all. The Thursday paper covered the Wednesday meeting. I also now have the email address for the entire commission and I will update my previous notes.

We cannot kick the can down the street anymore. The current spike is getting higher. Dr. Mary Milroy pointed out we are down to three beds depending on recent admissions. That could be one day of new patients to be overloaded. Nationally we are in the 2,500 to 2,800 deaths per day. A death now almost every thirty seconds. Look at it this way. If the national deaths were confined to the Yankton community from the last two weeks, we would all be dead. Everyone in town and a good portion of the surrounding community.

Covid is a monster eating our friends, our neighbors, and jobs. Our personal security has been gravely affected, yet we argue about wearing a mask. A single act that all experts tout as a life saving action. Yes, we all have rights but those rights include responsibility. You can't drive 50 MPH down Broadway. You cannot smoke in public places and city parks. No shirt, no shoes, no entrance to retail stores. Individual rights do not override the public needs and safety. In the question of public health, welfare, to avoid hazards the need of the many has to be addressed before the needs of the few or the one.

I have gone through Covid, I had a very light infection. We traced the exposure to one incident. It affected four people. I was one of the four and I exposed twelve more in the five days before I had symptoms. The others exposed wives and friends. We can trace 20-30 infections, starting at the contact point in under two weeks. We have been lucky, many had mild reactions. I know four ended up in the hospital but have been released. At least three still have problems after more than three weeks. We did not lose any friends through some were very sick.

Biden will ask for or mandate masks at his inauguration. We have about 50-days before that event. Let's have a mask mandate for 50-days. If Biden can add another 100-days, the vaccine will be in distribution. Once that all comes together, we will have truly turned the corner. We are facing another possible spike at Christmas because of the Thanksgiving travel. The experts say we have not topped out yet. Every day we delay is more lives lost.

We are also lucky in South Dakota. Our sparse population built in social distancing with out any state or local mandates. The metropolitan hot spots bore the brunt of the first spikes. Our local medical staff has learned from others experience. Methods and medicines that work quickly have been identified. Intubating is now a last resort. Mistakes by those original care givers have been identified to our local staff. Prevention is still preferred to any care no matter how slight the infection.

I do not believe there should be a penalty. Educate by leadership and participation. A business can have mandatory masks and refuse entry to a non-compliant individual. The solution to Covid is in our grasp but we need 100% cooperation now. Not more discussion. We have already an over whelming volume of facts. We have expert advice and a clear path to the vaccine. We have fought the virus and each other now for eight months. If we cooperate and everyone addresses the virus as the enemy, we can start the recovery. Mask up now!

Harry T. Lane

City Mask Measure And Common Sense

Dec 7, 2020

Wednesday night, the Yankton City Commission has called a special meeting to consider a mask measure as a means of curbing the spread of COVID-19 in this community.

The commissioners are doing this despite the fact that they decided on Nov. 23 not to pursue a mask mandate and instead consider an education effort to spell out the importance of wearing face masks in public places and stressing other measures.

The fact that the City Commission is circling back around to this issue so quickly was a little surprising. However, there are some differences with the new, temporary measure being considered, a chief one being that there would be no penalty for violating the proposed “mandate.” That might seem rather mild, but at least it’s a step in a better direction.

At Wednesday’s special meeting, set for 5:30 p.m. at the Yankton High School theatre, commissioners are expected to hear a second reading on the proposal — the first reading was held at a special meeting last week — and take public input before making their decision. If no changes are made to the measure and it’s approved, it will go into effect quickly.

Here are some things we hope the commissioners and the public consider during Wednesday’s discussion. Since the City Commission’s decision to not pursue a mask mandate on Nov. 23:

- the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has come out advocating that masks be worn at all indoor public events, perhaps even at home under certain circumstances. “Consistent and correct use of face masks is a public health strategy critical to reducing respiratory transmission of SARS-CoV-2, particularly in light of estimates that approximately one half of new infections are transmitted by persons who have no symptoms,” the CDC added.
- President-elect Joe Biden has said he will ask Americans to wear masks for the first 100 days after he is inaugurated as a means of getting the runaway pandemic under control. On Sunday, Dr. Moncef Slaoui, the chief scientific adviser for President Donald Trump’s Operation Warp Speed vaccine project, called Biden’s plan a “good idea”;

To the city commissioners who do not believe in asking us to wear a mask but want to educate us: How dumb do you think we are?

For months we have been educated, if you have not heard the three things you need to do they are: 1) Wear a mask; 2) Social distance; and 3) Wash your hands! So you are going to spend thousands of dollars to teach us that?

The ones that are not wearing them now think you are taking away their liberties but I would like to ask them: Do you wear a seat belt when you drive 80 miles an hour down the highway? Do you smoke in the bars? Do you put a life jacket on your child when he is in a boat? Do you put your child in a car seat? Do you stop at stop signs? These are just a few of the things we do because science has proven wearing a seat belt saves lives, not smoking saves lives, protecting our children with car seats and life jackets saves lives.

Science has proven wearing a mask saves lives! Our children can do it in the schools, why as adults do we find it so difficult to do this simple thing as wear a mask?

And yes, the virus is real and is personal to us. Our son-in-law is on a ventilator here in Yankton and his father's funeral was recently — the results of COVID.

Roger and Marilyn Huntley, Yankton

USA Today is proclaiming that for South Dakota, COVID-19 "... is as bad as it get anywhere in the world." But the authors failed to actually look at the numbers.

As of Sept. 20, 2020, the CDC has their best estimates of the infection fatality ratio, that is, the percentage of people who die that actually have the virus, and it is divided into age groups:

- 0-19 — 0.003%;
- 20-49 — 0.02%;
- 50-69 — 0.5%;
- and 70+ — 5.4%.

Presuming that in South Dakota there are twice as many people with the virus as the number who have been tested, since many have no symptoms, the percentages for South Dakota are 0.00%, 0.04%, 0.18%, and 3.5%, respectively. Notice that the state's percentages are the same or lower than the best estimates from the CDC. Also notice that over half of the deaths occur in those over 70. This does not in any way minimize the tragedy of contracting the virus and how South Dakota hospitals are currently struggling. It says that things are not as apocalyptic as the mainstream media would like you to believe.

Dennis Topczewski, Yankton

- more than 2.2 million new cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in this country;
- almost 23,000 Americans have died from complications of COVID-19;
- more than 10,500 South Dakotans have tested positive for COVID-19;
- South Dakota has registered 289 deaths from COVID-19;
- Yankton County has added 517 new COVID-19 cases;
- Yankton County has recorded seven new deaths, nearly doubling the county's death toll.

It's grimly evident that continuing to do what we're doing now — as a city and county, as a state, as a nation — is NOT a sensible option. Frankly, that should be lesson No. 1 in any educational effort that's pursued anywhere.

Certainly, education is still needed, not only as we slip into what could be a dark, uncertain pandemic winter but also as we move toward the promising light of the new vaccines on the horizon. We all need to be kept up to speed and in the know.

For this moment, the Yankton City Commission should approve the proposed mask measure and enact it as soon as possible. While it does not empower the city or law enforcement to penalize anyone for any violations, it does give business owners more muscle to deal with it on their own. And it sends a message that everyone needs to heed.

As we've said before, masks are not a 100% guarantee in providing a defense against the coronavirus, but they can help increase the odds of protection for the wearer and the people around him or her.

It's not about infringing on freedom or shackling human rights. It's about the public well-being and the greater good. It's about doing what we can to protect ourselves, our family and our friends.

It's about common sense, which is currently our best weapon in this crisis.

kmh

Letter: 'Listen To Scientists'

Mary Pat Bierle, Yankton

Dec 7, 2020

Our son, Robbie Beard, a Yankton School District product (thank you, teachers!), is a research & development specialist with Regeneron, a New York pharmaceutical company that has developed a promising COVID-19 treatment — used by Donald Trump recently.

Throughout this epidemic, Robbie has repeatedly said, "Mom, listen to the scientists, not the politicians."

May I revise that advice for the Yankton City Commission: Politicians, listen to the scientists.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention scientists recommend that "all people 2 years of age and older wear a mask in public settings and when around people who don't live in their household." (CDC website)

I wear a mask to protect you. I don't wear a mask to protect me. I already have my germs. If I don't wear a mask, I'm not endangering me. I'm endangering you.

Personal liberty does not mean I can do whatever I want, whenever I want, however I want, and wherever I want. That's the definition of chaos — anarchy.

Teaching American government at USD, I had my students study the First Amendment — that glorious addition to the Constitution spelling out our personal liberties. Students learned that each liberty has restrictions imposed over the years by laws and court decisions. Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom to assemble and petition the government — our government regulates all these freedoms. Why? Because our government must balance two competing "goods": individual freedom vs. public safety.

I'm old enough to remember when seat belts became mandatory. The government chose public safety over individual freedom. It worked.

I'm old enough to remember when fluoride was first added to our drinking water. Another communist plot? No.

We have speed limits. We have zoning ordinances. We have trash pick-up requirements. We have parking meters. We have elevator inspections.

Our world is filled with government regulations and restrictions to benefit the entire community. A mask mandate is such a regulation. Our local officials must be leaders, choosing public safety over some false notion of individual freedom.

Perhaps it's time for the Yankton City Commission to listen to the scientists.

Point Of View: 'Together We Can' Win Battle Vs. COVID-19

BY NANCY WENANDE Together We Can

Dec 7, 2020

“Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is the progress. Working together is the success.”

This quote from Henry Ford accurately reflects how we build and maintain a strong community.

Such a simple quote in actuality is incredibly difficult to accomplish. Our city, state and country are comprised of individuals who are proud to be able to express and act upon their opinions. That is why we live in the greatest country in the world! We all have individual freedoms that allow us to make the choices we feel are best for us. We are all intelligent enough to know that all of those choices impact the people around us who may be in our families, at work or simply via social interaction.

The premise behind the Together We Can campaign is to encourage each of you as individuals to look at the CDC guidelines and pledge to do what you can so we can work together to keep our kids in school, keep our businesses open, support our healthcare system and work to reduce fear, stress and anxiety. We know the majority of this community has been working hard for months to follow CDC guidelines and the resolution approved by the city commission in April. We've known since the beginning of the pandemic that our community would experience a surge that would push us to our limits, and while it's a few month later than was predicted ... that time is now! Now is when we need to pull together and not pull apart. We have work to do. We have choices and know what needs to be done.

The City of Yankton Resolution 20-26 from April set forth a list of personal responsibility measures. Over the months, peoples commitment waned, but the importance of limiting the size of social gatherings, quarantining after travel, limiting trips to the grocery store or using delivery/pick up options, supporting businesses that promote social distancing and demonstrate CDC compliance, encouraging remote or drive in religious activities, staying home when feeling ill, and encouraging us to be good neighbors has not changed and even more important than when enacted.

Together We Can is a reminder that we have safe choices to make that impact individuals, businesses, friends, the healthcare community and our families. It all comes back to personal responsibility. Many try to turn this into a political issue, but it doesn't need to be. When you are standing in line and socially distancing, no one cares if you are a Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, Independent or something else.

We all want the same thing but choose to combat the virus in a variety of different ways. We love our community. Yankton, we can do this! Together We Can encourages you to continue what you have been doing and consider doing just a bit more. Ask you friends and family to do more as well. The ripple effect of all the individual actions should help decrease the spread. Pledge at yanktonsd.com/pledge to do what you can to follow the CDC guidelines and help our community.

This holiday season focuses on gratitude, giving and grace. Consider how to safely gather or choose to do something different this year. Shopping local online is an option at many local stores if you don't feel comfortable yet going inside. Call ahead and request curbside delivery or ask if they have personalized shopping times. The restaurants have found some success in how they accommodate their customers when we had city-wide closures. Let's all put our differences aside and do what we can so all our businesses can stay open through this very important holiday shopping season.

In closing, I personally thank you for helping families in need this holiday season, checking in on your neighbors, donating to local non-profits, sharing encouraging words and continuing to care about your community. Together We Can!

Opinion

The City, The School And A Mask Measure

Nov 24, 2020

Yankton residents got a glimpse of two very distinct views regarding mask mandates Monday.

In chronological order, it played out this way:

- At 5 p.m., the Yankton School Board convened in a short special session to unanimously endorse a letter urging the City Commission to enact a mask mandate to thwart the spread of COVID-19. The board pointed not only to recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding masks, but also to its own experiences. The Yankton School District (YSD) has operated with a mask mandate since the school year started in August, and it has mostly been successful;
- An hour later, the Yankton City Commission met in a work session prior to its regular meeting in order to discuss mask options. A majority of the commissioners were reticent to impose a mandate, especially one with penalties. In the regular meeting, the board voted to end discussions on masking options and instead considered pursuing a \$38,000 effort to educate the public on the importance of mask wearing.

Thus, the city decided it may want to pursue mask education, while the educators, who have three months of experience with mask mandates, called on the city to take that step, too.

Meanwhile, the toll of the coronavirus on Yankton County climbs. There were 46 new infections reported Tuesday, giving the county 625 new cases this month, an increase of 67%.

Franky, the City Commission's decision would be viewed as practical if it was still last March or April, when the COVID-19 pandemic really began to impact our lives. But now, with cases climbing dramatically across the state and especially in Yankton County, the commission wants to educate people on something they already know. And make no mistake, those who oppose a temporary mask mandate aren't unaware of what the CDC is saying or of what the daily Department of Health updates (which are mostly lagging indicators of the problem at hand) are describing. They know the score. Instead, they view the mandate as an infringement on their rights — which, in this case, would be their right to potentially infect others.

This takes us back to the school board's discussion. YSD's mask policy has worked within its walls, but it's also an island in a county with considerable community spread.

"We have found, within the school district, that the masks have been very beneficial and, to date, we have found that almost all infections are coming from outside in," School Board President Sarah Carda said.

According to the letter the board approved, "Over 99% of the COVID-19 cases among students and staff in our school tracing are coming from community spread. We believe this could be significantly mitigated by implementing a community mask requirement."

But the City Commission also looked at the enforceability issues with a mandate, as well as the pushback from opponents. Some of that was fielded Monday night via YouTube, including one person who accused the commissioners of being communists for even considering such a mandate.

So, the commissioners settled on a "middle course," which is to continue what the state and city have done since the pandemic began: to educate and encourage. To date, that hasn't worked well, as more than 800 South Dakotans who have passed away from COVID-related issues might attest.

But, since we're here again, we must pray for the best with this renewed educational push and plead with people to be good students. Do it for others — your family, your friends — if not for yourself. Exercise your freedom to protect those you love. For goodness sake, mask up.

knh

The chief mentioned that Omaha has not issued any citations even though they have enforcement penalties. It might be far better to have a penalty and you on the side tell the Chief not to go out their way to enforce it. I heard NO ENFORCEMENT through the discussion if you pass an ordinance with the focus on no enforcement.

Jim Means

City Commission Meeting YouTube Chat Comments

December 2, 2020

D

Dave Mingo. Chat comments will not be read out loud during tonight's first reading. Comments will be provided to the Commission after the meeting.

D

Dave Mingo. An ordinance can't be adopted at tonight's first reading. Action may occur at the second reading and public hearing.

P

Pauline Akland. It is not just preserving the workforce of healthcare but the entire workforce of Yankton, keeping people working is where your tax \$\$ comes from.

P

Pauline Akland. Clarifying the workforce statement to expand to all workforce.. retail, factories, food service, etc.

P

Pauline Rhoades. Agree with Pauline Akland

P

Pauline Rhoades. Plus if adults start realizing the importance of masking the chances of keeping our children in school and activities increases too.

P

Pauline Rhoades Many organizations have endorsed masks.

P

Pauline Rhoades. Thank you, Dr. Milroy!

P

Pauline Rhoades. Need more be said? Mask up...please!