A joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Health was held on Tuesday, September 14, 2021. Michael LaFever, Chairman; Adrienne DeSantis, Secretary; Kelly Lamas, Member and Andrea Crete, Health Agent were present. Minutes are being recorded by LCTV video and are being transcribed from the video.

This meeting is being held to discuss policy and strategy around a mask mandate.

Board members introduced themselves to the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Crete informed the Board of Selectmen that the Board of Health did not vote for a mask mandate. The Board voted to approve a strong mask advisory instead. Selectman Goncalves asked if this was an actual vote taken by the Board of Health? Ms. Lamas said yes it was.

Ms. Lamas discussed other mitigation efforts being taken by the department. The Board of Health is trying to work with the schools to create a survey for parents. The Board is also looking into creating a Public Service Announcement with LCTV. There is a possibility of providing masks and sanitizers to local businesses.

The meeting was joined by Angela Kramer, by phone.

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Ms. Kramer provided both boards with the updated COVID cases counts. From September 1-14, 2021, there were 114 positive cases. Out of the 114 cases, 80 were unvaccinated. Most of the cases are in the 20-80 year old range.

Ms. Kramer is seeing a large number of positive cases not following CDC guidance when it comes to quarantining.

Selectman Debarge feels that vaccinated people believe that they are fine to leave the house, even if, they are positive. Selectman Debarge would like to develop other ways to get information out to the public instead of just a robocall.

Selectman Silva mentioned the idea of working with local pediatricians to inform younger people.

Selectman Goncalves mentioned the possibility of using texting alerts.

Ms. Kramer states if a person is vaccinated and comes in contact with someone with COVID, as long as that person remains asymptomatic, they do not have to quarantine.

Selectman Gennette asked why Ludlow is only a mask advisory when other localities are mandates.

Ms. DeSantis explained that neither the Town nor the Board of Health has the infrastructure to enforce a mandate.

Board members discussed the updated travel advisory and the travel request notification form.

Selectman Goncalves asked if the request form is discretionary. Who is going to make the decision to approve or deny travel, if a location is high risk or not?

Selectman Debarge does not like the idea of a person being able to stop someone from going on vacation. He is not in favor of giving any supervisor the right to deny.

Carrie Ribeiro, Human Resources Director, received a lot of pushback from employees when the Town tried to implement the same idea the prior year. Ms. Ribeiro recommends following the CDC guidelines for travel. Ms. Ribeiro also recommends contacting the department heads for input on a travel advisory. Ms. Crete will email the department heads.

Selectman Goncalves suggested providing all employees a copy of the CDC travel guidelines.

Ms. Crete spoke of a revised return to work guideline. The new guidelines follow the current CDC recommendations.

Ms. Crete advised the Selectmen that the Board of Health did not recommend instituting a vaccine mandate for all town employees.

Selectman Goncalves would like to see a better emergency plan in place, if there is another spike in COVID or another type of pandemic.

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Respectfully submitted,

Adrienne DeSantis
Secretary