A joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Health was held on Tuesday, September 28, 2021. Michael LaFever, Chairman and Andrea Crete, Health Agent were present. Adrienne DeSantis, Secretary and Kelly Lamas, Member attended the meeting by phone. Minutes are being recorded by LCTV video and are being transcribed from the video.

This meeting is being held to discuss COVID updates and a mask mandate.

The meeting was joined by Angela Kramer, by phone.

Ms. Kramer provided both boards with the updated COVID cases counts. From September 1-28, 2021, there were 274 positive cases. The numbers are still on a downward trend. Ms. Kramer stated that the department is still providing signage to businesses and advising them of a mask advisory.

Ms. Crete informed the Selectboard that the Board of Health voted for a mask mandate for anyone entering a public space effective October 4, 2021. This vote was not unanimous.

Ms. Lamas states that the Town is made up of approximately 22,000 people. The current positivity rate for the Town is 6% and only 61% of the Town are vaccinated.

The mask mandate was put in place to hopefully stop the spread of COVID. It is not meant to penalize, but more for an opportunity to educate. The Board of Health will track complaints as they are received and will go to businesses to educate the staff on compliance.

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Selectman Debarge does not agree with the Board of Health and questioned whether or not the Board of Health has the authority to institute a mandate. Ms. Lamas spoke with Massachusetts Association of Health Boards, and the Board of Health absolutely has that authority.

Selectman Rosenblum asked if the calls are going to be fielded by the Board of Health or the police department. Ms. Lamas stated this is not a place to ask the police to enforce the mandate. Residents are to call the Board of Health. The complaints will be tracked. This mandate is not meant to penalize but to provide outreach and educate businesses.

Selectman Debarge questioned why the Board is going to mandate masks and only going to track complaints and not penalize. He feels this will cause more problems throughout the Town.

Ms. Lamas feels the Board of Health is doing what is right for the residents and their families. There are people who are testing positive not staying home and following the quarantine.

Selectman Silva stated that the signage is very confusing. The bottom says "public spaces", that could mean both indoors and out.

Selectman Rosenblum does not approve of the decision. There was a lot of confrontation when the Governor had a mask mandate in place. There are a lot of 18 year old kids that are managers in these establishments. It would be unsafe to ask them to approach someone not wearing a mask.

Respectfully submitted,

Adrienne DeSantis
Secretary

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