

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH

Date of meeting: 9/22/2021

Transcribed by Kayla Bettencourt

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Amy Wiegandt, M.D., Chairman
Catherine Phinney, R.N., Member
Kathleen Waldron, Associate Member
Lawrence Perry, Member

Also present: Patrick MacDonald, Director
Kayla Bettencourt, Department Assistant
Elias Estevez, Health Inspector
Brian Grady, GAF Engineering

Absent

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. MacDonald announced the hiring of the new Health Inspector Elias Estevez.

4. Variance- 26 Fisherman Cove Road- GAF Engineering- Brian Grady

Mr. Grady stated that this is an AI system upgrade to an existing old cottage which would be considered new construction. The new design sill be installed between 32 and 50 inches below finish grade as opposed to the required 36 inches.

Mr. Perry stated that there needs to be a Y and a clean out, also to be noted on the as built.

Motion: Motion made by Mr. Perry to allow requested variance, seconded by Ms. Phinney.

Roll call vote: Dr. Wiegandt- yes, Ms. Phinney- yes, Mr. Perry- yes

5. VACCINE MANDATE DISCUSSION

Dr. Wiegandt stated that the vaccine mandate would include first responders to keep people safe. She wants everyone to be protected and that it is being discussed throughout the US.

Ms. Phinney inquired about how many town residents are vaccinated.

Mr. MacDonald replied that about 50% are vaccinated.

Ms. Waldron asked if the mandate would include all town employees.

Dr. Wiegandt responded that in discussion, it makes sense for town employees and first responders to get the vaccine.

Ms. Waldron asked if there were numbers stating how many first responders in town have been vaccinated.

Dr. Wiegandt responded that we do not have those exact numbers but it seems to be about 50-70%. She also said that out of the 60-80 town residents who have contracted Covid-19 in the past week, 70% are unvaccinated. The Delta variant is killing people and hopefully there isn't another variant that comes out.

Matthew Underhill, Unit 8 President, asked if this mandate would be for all town employees.

Dr. Wiegandt replied that it would be a strong request.

Mr. Underhill asked what would happen if an employee does not comply, would it be possible termination of the employees? He also asked why wouldn't there be a mask mandate before a vaccine mandate. He stated that they will have a hard time losing/hiring employees and that it seems excessive to mandate a vaccine before mandating masks throughout the town.

Dr. Wiegandt stated that from a medical perspective, the vaccine is safe and there are very few reasons not to get vaccinated.

Mr. Underhill asked who would be responsible for the vaccine side effects.

Ms. Phinney replied that all medicines have side effects and that it is everyone's responsibility to be vaccinated. When you have rights, you have responsibility.

Mr. Underhill stated that town employees are a small part of the population and that a mandate might be going a little too far.

Deanna Semple, WEA President, asked what the end goal is for the possible vaccine mandate.

Dr. Wiegandt replied that it is a discussion and that she wanted to hear the thoughts of the town and that her goal is to keep people safe.

Ms. Semple asked Dr. Wiegandt if she had taken natural immunity into consideration in her numbers for vaccinated residents.

Dr. Wiegandt stated that she did not because there are people who have contracted covid twice.

Ms. Semple stated that there are people who are vaccinated who still get covid and that using the word mandate is a problem.

Dr. Wiegandt stated that she wanted to hear peoples' opinions and that the death rate is lower for the vaccinated.

Lieutenant John Gerard of the Wareham Police Department mentioned that even if you are vaccinated, you still have the ability to spread covid-19.

Dr. Wiegandt responded that there is a 90% less of a chance of contracting covid if vaccinated.

Lt. Gerard asked if vaccinated people can still spread covid.

Dr. Wiegandt responded yes, but a less percentage.

Lt. Gerard responded that it is not 100%. He stated that this will have an effect on first responders and will result in bargaining with the unions. He said that the police department cannot afford to lose anyone, that they are already short staffed and they will definitely lose people if the vaccine is mandated.

Dr. Wiegandt stated that the vaccine side effects are very minor and that there haven't been any long term side effects.

Lt. Gerard stated that the vaccine hasn't been out long enough to see if there are long term effects.

Marie Ferreira, Wareham school bus driver and aide representative, asked how many breakthrough covid cases there have been for vaccinated residents.

Dr. Wiegandt responded that with the surge of the Delta variant, 80% of positive cases are unvaccinated.

Ms. Ferreira asked if there have been any deaths from the vaccination.

Dr. Wiegandt replied that there have not been any deaths.

Ms. Ferreira stated that bus drivers are against the mandate. A survey was done and many drivers and aides said no to the vaccine. All of the vaccine companies have had recalls.

Dr. Wiegandt stated that the vaccine is 90% effective. People will still get sick but much less than the unvaccinated.

Tanya Johnson, bus driver stated that she has used masks, sanitizer, and has done extra cleaning. She said that if mandated, she will be leaving the force.

Ms. Phinney stated that she understands that this is strongly voiced, but if you get covid, you should worry more about the hospital bill.

Ms. Johnson asked how it would affect families if there were any long term effects.

Ms. Phinney stated that there are medical exceptions.

Ms. Johnson stated that getting the vaccination should be each individual's choice.

Eric Machado of the Wareham Patrolman's Union stated that the people who are choosing not to get the vaccine are well educated. First responders have weighed out the risks. If the mandate is passed, it will create bargaining and will put a huge financial burden on the town.

6. HEALTH AGENT'S REPORT

Patrick MacDonald read the Agent's report into the record, a copy of which is attached.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from August 18, 2021

Motion: Motion made by Ms. Phinney to approve minutes, seconded by Mr. Perry with corrections.

Roll call vote: Dr. Wiegandt- yes, Ms. Phinney- yes, Mr. Perry- yes

8. Motion: Motion made by Ms. Phinney adjourn., seconded by Mr. Perry.

Roll call vote: Dr. Wiegandt- yes, Ms. Phinney- yes, Mr. Perry- yes

Meeting adjourned at 6:30pm

Attest

Catherine Phinney

Date

11/3/2021

Clerk, Board of Health