Board of Health Meeting Minutes October 12, 2021 9:30 am via Zoom

**Call to Order:** Chair, Ron Kelter called the meeting to order at 9:34 am. Others in attendance: Jody Stetson, FRCOG Health Agent, Randy Crochier, and Town Administrator, Terry Narkewicz. Fred Vohr was absent.

Tim Bohonowicz requested permission to record the meeting. Ron Kelter approved the request.

**Acceptance of Minutes**: Ron presented a motion to accept the meeting minutes of September 21, 2021 as presented. Jody seconded the motion. Motion passed 2 to 0.

**Health Agent Update**: Randy reported that his office has been busy conducting Title V inspections. To date, flu clinics have been hosted in the towns of Deerfield and Erving. Three additional clinics will be held at the following locations:

October 14 Gill Elementary School

October 16 Mohawk Trail Regional High School

October 30 Pioneer Valley Regional High School

 \*\* Residents can pre-register on the FRCOG’s website

Housing Inspection: Randy continues to work on a housing case in Shelburne. Since his initial inspection, he reports marked improvement.

**Covid-19 Update**: The case count amongst the 16 Franklin County towns that participate in the FRCOG’s Cooperative Health Program has doubled since last week; a total of 26 cases were reported (up from 12 in the prior week). Shelburne currently has 1 new case. When viewing the CDC’s website, Franklin County is identified as one of “substantial risk”. Randy suggested that the Board of Health continue to monitor the number of cases and reevaluate in two weeks. Once Franklin County is deemed as “low risk”, the Board of Health would consider rescinding the mask mandate.

**Correspondence**:

John R. Harrington, 264 Bardwell’s Ferry Road RE: Mask Mandate – each member of the Board of Health received a copy of Mr. Harrington’s letter at their home address. Mr. Harrington is asking what evidence led the Board of Health to determine that “ordinary mask-wearing reduces or eliminates the spread of Covid-19 and whether they considered the detriments, including health impairment associated with psychosocial deprivations, of mask mandates and weigh them against the benefits. After receiving some initial feedback from Board members Fred Vohr and Jody Stetson, Ron will work with Randy Crochier to draft a response on Town letterhead. Jody suggested including each Board members medical credentials (doctor, physician’s assistant, and registered nurse) when signing the letter. Mr. Harrington implied that Shelburne’s Board of Health was comprised of “three unelected people with no particular scientific expertise”.

**Public Comment**:

Attorney Marcie Smith, Buckland – Ms. Smith indicated that she was attending the meeting on behalf of colleagues, friends, and local merchants. She asked questions relative to the validity of Covid-related statistics presented, whether the Board knew what the rate of hospitalization and/or death was resulting from Covid and, whether the Town will enforce the mandate by instituting some form of “punishment, fine, or intimidation”.

Responses to Ms. Smith’s inquiry included:

* Covid statistics are derived from the Massachusetts Epidemiology Network
* If a business owner and his/her employees choose not to wear a mask; it is on them. Randy Crochier noted that last year when the mask mandate was enforceable with a $300 fine, the Town choose not to enforce.
* Please ask colleagues, friends, and local merchants to submit their questions directly to the Board of Heath rather than via a third party. Members would like to think that they are advocates of public health.
* The Board will meet again in two weeks. It was suggested that Shelburne Board of Health choose a meeting time that allows for more citizen participation.

**Adjournment**: Ron presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 am. Jody seconded the motion. Motion passed 2 to 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Narkewicz

Town Administrator