

Rowe Board of Selectmen
Covid Group Meeting
May 25, 2021
4:00 P.M. via Remote Participation

Board of

Selectmen: Chair Charles Sokol, Vice-Chair Joanne Semanie

Absent: Selectman Edward Silva

Other

Attendees: Administrative Assistant Paul McLatchy III, Board of Health Chair Margaret Rice, Rowe Camp and Conference Center Executive Director Benjamin Werner

Audience of

Citizens: None

Note: Due to the national COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held via remote participation as authorized by executive order of the governor. All votes are taken via roll-call vote.

Call to Order: Chair Sokol called the Board of Selectmen to order at 4:00 P.M., a quorum of the board present.

Covid Updates: The following items were discussed in relation to the Covid-19 Pandemic:

- Chair Rice noted that all the regulations and CDC recommendations were changing very quickly. Numbers in the state are down this week, though there are still hot spots, such as Deerfield. Approximately 50% of adults in the country have been vaccinated, with Massachusetts among the highest states.
- As the Massachusetts state of emergency is ending on June 15th, the executive order allowing for fully remote meetings will also be ending. This will require public bodies to meet in person. As the original plan was to reopen on July 1st, this causes a problem. After brief discussion, it was agreed that Town Hall would reopen on June 15th, though the nurse will be by appointment and the fitness center will remain closed until an action plan can be implemented. The Park Commission will be responsible for crafting this plan.
- Mask requirements in Town Hall were considered. Chair Sokol felt that due to the high number of vaccinated workers in town hall there wasn't a high risk to the continuity of operations. Mr. McLatchy agreed, saying he didn't want to have to police people who came in without masks. Masks during meetings will be encouraged, but not required. As people have a legal right to observe their government, Mr. McLatchy (also town clerk) opined that they couldn't be turned away from a public meeting *unless* there was also a broadcast/streaming option available to the public. A streaming system will be explored, but no decision to require masks was made at this time. Perhaps funds from the CARES Act could be used to purchase. Administrative staff will explore.

Entrance: Mr. Werner joined the meeting at 4:17.

Covid Updates, Continued: The following items were discussed:

- The Rowe School has changed their mask rules. Last week the principal and nurse sent out a letter to parents which indicated masks would no longer be required outdoors where students could maintain six feet of distance. Chair Rice expressed her frustration and anger that the school did not consult or even inform either the Board of Health or the Covid Group. However, she feels reverting to the old requirements could cause a lot of turmoil. Chair Sokol noted there were four options:
 - Do nothing.
 - Express frustration and anger with the school, but ultimately do nothing else.
 - Require the school to develop a new plan and submit for approval.
 - Return to the old requirements of wearing masks.Chair Rice felt that the best step would be to meet with the principal, accompanied by the health agent. She felt that this would be a more neighborly approach than to resort to consulting town counsel. As this is a matter under the Board of Health's purview, the Board of Selectmen declined to take any action.
- There will be a clinic at the Charlemont Fairgrounds on June 13th. This may be the last chance for a local vaccine clinic. It is hoped that the clinic will be able to provide the one-dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine, but it is unknown at this time. Chair Sokol will include this in his robocall.

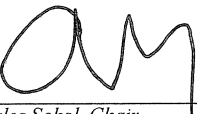
Next Meeting: The group discussed how much longer it would be appropriate to meet. Given the major changes occurring in the next few weeks, it was agreed that one final meeting would take place at 4:00 on Tuesday, June 8th. Assuming no major changes take place before then, this will be the last meeting of the Covid Group after more than a year of regular meetings.

Adjourn: A motion was made by Chair Sokol and seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie to adjourn the meeting at 4:44. The roll-call vote was unanimous in favor:

Charles Sokol Aye Joanne Semanie Aye

*Respectfully Submitted,
Paul McLatchy III, Administrative Assistant to the Boards*

Approved: May 27, 2021



Charles Sokol, Chair



Joanne Semanie, Vice-Chair

Attachments:

- Agenda