

December 7, 2021
Town Hall
Gala Meeting Room & Zoom
Televised on Foxborough Cable Access
5:30 PM

Committee Members in attendance:

Gary Whitehouse

Committee Members in attendance via Zoom:

Dennis Keefe, Scott Yankee, Tracey Vasile

Staff in attendance:

Michael Johns (Gala), Katie Lang (Zoom)

Jack Dolan, Town HR Counsel (Zoom)

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 PM

Mike – Three things on agenda, social media policy, federal vaccine mandate, election of officers. At this time the most important topic is to discuss the possible federal vaccine mandate policies which are in draft form from our Labor Attorney. These are currently in court right now but counsel advised that we prepare. These have not been brought to the attention of our employees or unions just yet but we want to make sure we are not caught off guard. Ninety percent of our 177 employees are vaccinated. These individuals either voluntarily told us they were vaccinated or vaccinated by our local fire department. We don't feel the need to go after the others but we wanted to be prepared if the federal government mandates that.

Tracey – If the government does not step in and mandate, does the Town think they will mandate it?

Mike – No, not in my opinion. CDC was suggesting communities come to 70% to be at herd immunity, but if science has updated, we will follow the guidelines. We are 20% higher than that so it wouldn't be my recommendation.

Tracey – Agree that we should not mandate. If not mandated, should we require regular testing or masking?

Mike – We already require that individuals who are not vaccinated, wear masks. Notice is posted on our buildings for both for employees and the public who enter town buildings. In one mandate it does read to regularly test and mask but at this point we are just following CDC guidelines.

Dennis – In terms of mandating, with my public health background and consulting, policies are written very well. Things are changing so rapidly. If these policies go forward in their current form, likely that definition of fully vaccinated might change. Might want to tweak language as definition might change so policy can adapt. i.e. boosters. The definition might move to include the booster to ensure an individual is fully vaccinated. Could possibly see this in the next 6 to 12 months.

Mike – The policies that we adopted very early on in the pandemic, with this board, Selectmen and Town, put forth policies that were applicable and solid at that time, i.e. travel out of state, working remote, however just yesterday faced a situation of an employee who was traveling out of state which turned out to be a challenge because the policy we had did not have vaccine language in there since it was not an option back them. Those policies are pre-vaccination and all adopted policies are something we will need to come back and revisit. Will need to touch base with Labor Counsel and Jack. Most importantly, we need to be fluid and adaptable, so definitely agree with Dennis’ point re: rapid change.

Jack – In response to Dennis and Mike. Working with another client with vaccination mandate with booster language. Most important to follow CDC guidelines. With looking back at prior policies and what might come moving forward, we’ve learned to be adaptable with any and all policies. Need to be fluid. We will have time once it is decided in the courts and good to think ahead and be prepared.

Gary – Can we add to these policies... “As laws may change.” Just to cover us?

Jack – Might have some bargaining strings so would just be wise to wait and see what comes from the courts.

Mike – Proud of the work this board did in taking the policies that we needed during the pandemic and getting those to the union. i.e. remote work and definition of sick time use to be adaptable to being ill with Covid-19 or school/daycare closure. Unions saw this as a two way street. Did need to be bargained. Just want to be prepared and transparent.

Gary – Any further discussion?

Katie – Just a reminder of the Electronic Communications and Computer Use Policy was adopted by this board back in September but then Tracey, who was unable to attend, added some good edits. Edits were reviewed by Jack and Gary as good additions. The policy was updated and sent in September and again today for the boards review.

Dennis made a motion to approved and endorse for the BOS, Tracey so moved, Scott seconded – all in favor – YES. Roll call was done.

Mike – Recommended opening elections.

Tracey – Nominated Gary for Chair.

Gary – Nominating Tracey.

Tracey – Cannot take on the role at this time.

Dennis – Nominated Gary. (Second)

Gary accepts nomination. **Board votes unanimous 4 – 0 – 0**

Gary – Nominates Tracey as Vice Chair.

Scott – Nominated Tracey as Vice Chair. (Second)

Tracey accepts nomination. **Board votes unanimous 4 – 0 – 0**

Dennis made a motion to approve meeting minutes from 9/14/21 meeting, Scott second, all in favor – YES, except for Tracey abstaining. Roll call was done. 3 – 0 – 1

Mike – Next meeting is recommended for January or early February. We will touch on vaccine mandate and social media policy.

Tracey asked to set the meeting so it's on the calendar.

Adjourned meeting at 6:04pm