

**Council on Aging Minutes of January 10, 2022  
Online Remote Board Meeting**

*This meeting will be aired live on Comcast 8 and Verizon 40, and will be available on demand the following morning. When two meetings are being held simultaneously, the second meeting will be live on Channel 9 or Verizon 39. Also, meeting agendas are posted on [wellesley.ma.gov](http://wellesley.ma.gov) at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, and protocol for participating in Citizen's Speak is at the bottom of that agenda.*

**Members Present:** Marlene Allen, Chair; Tony Parker, Vice Chair; Susan Rosefsky, Secretary; Tory DeFazio; Lori Ferrante (left the meeting at 12:20pm); Dianne Sullivan; Kathy Trumbull; Kathleen Vogel; and Tina Wang

**Absent:** Bob Ferrell

**Also Present:** Gregory Wilson, Assistant Director of Social Services; Beth Sullivan Woods, Select Board Liaison; Corrine Monahan, Advisory Committee Liaison; Donna Brewer, Town Counsel; Lenny Izzo, Director of Community and Public Health; and Shephard Cohen, Board of Health Chair.

**Meeting Documents:**

Agenda  
Sample Draft of Policy Regarding Vaccine mandate for Patrons and Volunteers  
Subcommittee Potential Goals

**I. Call to Order:**

Ms. Allen, Chair called the meeting to order at 11:03am. There was a Roll Call for attendance.

**II. Citizen Speak: None**

**III. COA Vaccination Mandate Discussion:**

Opening comment from Ms. Allen: We want maximal protection for patrons, and we were able to start this process with a successful mandate for masks in the building. Our goal is to protect as many people we can, as well as we can. Let's first discuss the facts involved before we get into Board wishes and possible ways to implement.

Donna Brewer:

Confirmed that the Board does have the authority to bring a policy of a mandate for non-employees of the Town entering the building to access programming, participation, and services of the COA. A mandate would not apply to the employees or non-COA use of the building. The draft policy includes no religious or medical exemption, which is something the COA might want to discuss.

Lenny Izzo:

Wants our Board comments, is concerned about enforcing a mandate, staff training, and an ending time period. This matter will be raised at the January 13, 2022 Board of Health Board meeting. Other towns and senior centers can differ in this topic. Vaccination of seniors in Wellesley is

extremely high at above 95 percent. Vaccine boosters and good masks, distribution with outreach and educational material are being instigated by the BoH.

Shephard Cohen:

BoH is here to listen. Three aspects; Public Health, Legal, and policy. Policy is important, but how to implement it is up to the COA.

There was a clarification of “Public Health Emergency” and whether or not the building being under the auspices of the Select Board makes a difference to the legality of a mandate.

Donna Brewer:

This would not be a requirement for polling place visitors, for example, but vendors and visitors must be vaccinated under this policy. Volunteers are not employees under the wage employment act. Instructors are not employees.

Tory DeFazio:

This mandate seems like a very harsh approach, and patrons may object and resist. He asked if other town departments had this policy.

Lenny Izzo:

Senior centers have proposed mandates for the building, but there is nothing reported of implementation of a vaccine mandate.

Tony Parker:

The goal is to protect as many people as possible, and the wording of “mandate” needs revision. Something does need to be done and a strongly worded requirement would be an option.

Beth Sullivan Woods:

The Select Board has not discussed a vaccine mandate in any Town buildings. Is it an assumption that everyone in the building is vaccinated?

Marlene Allen:

Are there further questions of legality? Discuss our reasons for wanting a mandate. What are they?

Discussion was over the fact that we want “best practice” and whether or not that means mandate or requirement policy, or recommendation. We need to know the impact on the staff, the situation with street vendors, instructors and how to implement.

Kathy Trumbull:

There may be difficulty dealing with the implementation. She suggested “recommendation,” but does not know whether or not the Town can provide vaccines. What about patrons’ reactions?

Lori Ferrante:

The difference between a mandate for volunteers and instructors is that these can be easily controlled and they should be vaccinated. For patrons, it is more difficult, but supports a mandate. We should be looking to cater to the patrons’ safety.

Tina Wang:

Agrees with the ideology of requiring vaccines and boosters.

Marlene Allen:

Patrons are more comfortable knowing that those around them are vaccinated. Isolation is the enemy of the elderly. We should do what we can to provide as safe a place as we can for people to come to and participate. She read a very supportive letter from a patron to the COA read. Patrons feel safer if they know that the person beside them in the building is vaccinated and boosted. The BoH already advocates for vaccinations. Is there more we can do?

Lenny Izzo:

Data on Wellesley seniors' vaccination rates is extremely high. Information on boosters is just starting to come in. The BoH is getting back into vaccinating and providing boosters, and more messaging on good masks.

Tony Parker:

"Policy" is a better word than "mandate," so develop policy, and we should be doing that. A strongly worded policy is the best way to go.

Dianne Sullivan:

Questioned the situation about people from other towns. Agrees with the use of remote connection for services. If folks are looking around the building, they should be vaccinated and be informed of the policy (Donna).

Kathleen Vogel:

Using the example of a service needed such as Shine appointments, will there be exceptions for any service situation? Does this include caretakers? Is there anything that could not be handled remotely? It seems all services could be handled remotely (Marlene and Dianne).

Gregory Wilson:

Implementation is important; tax season appointments are coming. This could be handled remotely for those not vaccinated.

Shephard Cohen:

Focus on Policy rather than requirement as that would be much more effective, policy as advisory, not requirement. BoH can help with vaccination clinics, and make sure masks are available. Agrees with both Tony and Tory recommendation policy is better than mandate.

The discussion went to whether or not it should be a mandate, a requirement, or a strongly worded recommendation. Patrons should be able to make their own risk assessment. An advisory is the Town's current policy.

The question is, should we continue to work on a potential vaccine requirement (policy) or not.

Kathy Trumbull:

Mandate masks, and urge vaccination with vaccines being available through the Town.

Dianne Sullivan:

I think we should have a mandate.

Marlene Allen:

My concern is we'll be dealing with pandemic issues for a long time. For seniors, isolation is a tragedy. We always measure our own risks. We are trying to provide a place for seniors to go, to enhance their aging experience, and how best can we provide that? Mandating vaccinations and boosters is the best for them and those around them.

The question is, how many of you would like to continue to work on the possibility of a vaccination requirement for non-employees at the COA? We either move forward with continuing to work on a potential mandate, or we drop it.

On a non-binding vote of whether or not to continue to develop a requirement for non-employees to be vaccinated, a roll call vote of those Members Present occurred. The question passed 5 to 4, with Tory DeFazio, Tony Parker, Kathleen Vogel, and Kathy Trumbull voting no.

Tory DeFazio:  
More input from the seniors might be useful.

Kathleen Vogel:  
We do not have enough information and the staff must be able to manage the implementation, including all unexpected events. What about vendors and instructors? We don't know what is possible. I would vote "yes" with more information on the ability of the staff to manage the work entailed.

Dianne Sullivan:  
Asked about a policy clause when a positive COVID person reports being in the building, and other unexpected situations. There is no written policy and procedure.

Gregory Wilson:  
There is co-ordination with the BoH when a situation arises that needs following up. Situations change, and they are handled on an individual basis. There are rules from the BoH, the Town and the State. New information is constant. There is no "one size fits all" and guidance comes from the Town.

Lori Ferrante:  
Balancing concern with not unduly frightening patrons is important if protocol does not warrant notification.

Lenny Izzo:  
Dianne's concerns are valid, but restrictions are built in as "best practice." BoH can help Greg with internal practice. An employee or volunteer comes under Town policies, and the COA already has protocol in place. The BoH will continue to work with Greg in implementation.

Marlene Allen:  
Lori Ferrante and Tina Wang and Marlene Allen will work on developing a potential vaccine mandate as a sub-committee.

#### **IV. Sub Committee Goals:**

The discussion was around acceptance of the sub committee goals summarized from written goals by the three sub committees in the attached document that could be worked on over the next

eighteen months. Added by the officers were that completing the mission statement and expanding programming to evenings/weekends should be added. In summary, the suggested goals are:

1. Mission statement – finalize;
2. Broadening the reach of the COA; and
3. Communication/Outreach.

### Discussion

Tina Wang:

Broadening the reach of the COA would be helped by working towards improvements and licensing of the kitchen. This would open up a lot of programming possibilities.

Beth Sullivan Woods:

The kitchen is a catering kitchen, functioning for events. It is not commercial where anyone could cook and she thinks this was resolved. Greg should be in touch with BoH over the needs, and the Select Board needs to define exactly what the kitchen would be used for. Funds for a study to determine options for changes to be able to use the kitchen is in the Capital budget request. Our goals include expansion of programming hours and functions, including use of the kitchen (Marlene Allen).

Documents from 2018, 2020 and December 2021 outlined requests/reports from past years, but nothing has moved forward. The goal is to be able to use the kitchen. There are no clear instructions about moving forward with this, but it involves the Town since it is a Town building. If the Town rejects our capital request for this study, then we will deal with that. The three memos are very information (Tory DeFazio).

Kathleen Vogel:

All the discussion in the past have not yielded an actual permit or license from the Board of Health. And there has been much discussion over the situation with kitchen restrictions.

Tony Parker:

The town is in control of the building, so they should control this.

Kathleen Vogel:

Board goals are not included here. We should analyze programs annually and this has not yet been done. Is there a place for a more comprehensive discussion incorporating goals already voiced? What are Board goals and was are staff goals? Is program evaluation in this list?

Marlene Allen:

Evaluation of our goals is something we should include in our regular goals annually. The goals we are considering today are longer-termed. Evaluation of our programming is important and should be addressed every year.

Tony Parker:

These goals form a shorter strategic plan period of greater needs rather than a long five year plan. These are operational goals. The mission statement is the root of all the work to be done in the near future, and this should be worked on first of all.

**A motion was made by Tony Parker and seconded by Tina Wang to accept the goals of the subcommittees. In a Roll Call vote by Members Present named above, the motion passed unanimously, 8-0 (Lori Ferrante was not present to vote at this time).**

**V. New Business/Old Business:**

Kathleen asked for a nominating committee be put on the agenda for the next Board meeting. Marlene had the same wish, and this will be on the next Board meeting agenda.

**VI. Next Meeting Dates/Times:**

January 11, 2022 Community Outreach Session at 1:00pm (in-person at the TPC)  
January 20, 2022 Regular Board meeting at 4:00pm

**VII. Adjourn:**

**A motion to adjourn was made by Tony Parker and seconded by Susan Rosefsky. In a Roll Call vote by Members Present named above, the motion passed unanimously, 8-0 (Lori Ferrante was not present to vote at this time). The meeting was adjourned at 12:50pm.**

**Approved at the February 24, 2022 meeting.**