

TOWN OF AMHERST BOARD OF HEALTH

Virtual Meeting using Zoom

September 27, 2021

Board of Health members participating: Steve George, Nancy Gilbert (Chair), Maureen Millea, and Timothy Randhir.

Staff member: Jennifer Brown, Acting Health Director

The meeting opened at 6:03 PM.

As required by State Open Meeting rules for boards that meet online during the pandemic, the meeting began with a roll call which confirmed that all four Board members listed above were present.

Old Business

1. Public comments, Board discussion and vote regarding adding vaccination against COVID-19 to the list of required vaccines for students to attend public schools in Amherst.

At its September 9 meeting the board discussed and approved a request from the Amherst School Committee and School Department to require students in public schools in Amherst to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The requirement would apply only to those ages for which a vaccine has received full FDA approval, and exceptions would be made for religious and medical reasons, as is the case for the other vaccinations that are required for school attendance in Amherst. The request had been made shortly before the September 9 meeting, and was introduced under "Topics Not Anticipated by the Chair 48 hours before the meeting." Since mandating vaccinations is an important issue, the Board felt that timely notice should be given to allow for public comment, after which the Board would discuss the question and vote again.

Chair Nancy Gilbert introduced the topic, reviewed the Board's role, and set guidelines for public comment. The meeting was opened for comment. Amherst resident Kevin McCaffery asked about the current rate of vaccination among school students, and about the timeframe for implementation of the requirement. Jennifer Brown said she would need to look up the vaccination rate, and would send it by e-mail to Mr. McCaffery upon request. Nancy Gilbert said that the schedule for implementation of the requirement is up to the School Committee and School Department. No other members of the public asked to comment.

Members briefly confirmed their belief in the safety and efficacy of the vaccines. Steve George moved that the Board of Health adds vaccination against COVID-19, using vaccines that have received full FDA approval, to the list of vaccinations that are required (except for medical or religious exemptions) for students to attend public schools in Amherst. Maureen Millea seconded the motion, and it was **VOTED 4 – 0** in a roll call vote with all members voting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve George