

1 **TOWN OF CHESTER**
2 **SELECTBOARD**

3 **December 17, 2021 Minutes**

4 **Board Members Present:** Arne Jonynas, Jeff Holden, Heather Chase, and Leigh Dakin at Town
5 Hall; and Lee Gustafson via Zoom (first part of meeting Lee Gustafson was via Zoom but later
6 arrived at Town Hall).

7 **Staff Present:** Julie Hance, Town Manager at Town Hall; and Susan Bailey, Secretary via Zoom.

8 **Visitors Present:** Chester Telegraph, Robert Nied, Krissie Pelletier, Linda Diak, James C.
9 Goodfellow, Samantha Ward, Cynthia Prairie, Tim Roper, and SAPA TV via Zoom; and at Town
10 Hall.

11 **Call to Order**

12 Chair Arne Jonynas called the meeting to order a little after 6:02 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance.
13 He welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for making the time to attend out of their
14 busy holiday schedules. The main item was discussion of the language for the mask
15 recommendation and the resolution they would put forward.

16 **Agenda Item 1, Citizen Comments/Answers from Previous Meeting**

17 Arne asked for citizens comments on an item that was not on the agenda. There were no comments.

18 **Agenda Item 2, Discussion re: language for mask recommendation**

19 Arne said they decided at the last meeting not have a mandate for the businesses in town but rather
20 a strong recommendation. The sign would be optional for businesses to post, if they so desired,
21 giving them the backing of town and the recommendation of the town. Arne had looked at
22 Springfield Selectboard's resolution and was using it as a guide to craft Chester's resolution. They
23 would go through it and look at how it applied and how it didn't apply to Chester. Even though
24 Chester didn't have a mandate, he thought they should lead by strong example. What they have
25 control over is town hall which is basically a small business. He thought it important if they were
26 going to recommend a mask mandate that they lead by example. A lot of the items that the
27 Springfield Selectboard had covered were worthy items to consider and include in a resolution.

28 Heather asked if Arne was suggesting having a resolution and a sign on the town website available
29 for printing. She suggested including on the website recommendations for businesses on how to
30 handle this. Today she had heard the Legislature had put into effect an immunization and mask
31 mandate. Arne thought they were not mandates but recommendations.

32 Julie said there was stuff for state employees.

33 Arne said it also included recommendations for businesses and Julie agreed.

34 Heather said if you go into the House, you must wear a mask. Julie said it was for the State House
35 and they were doing things for state employees that were not required of Vermont residents.

36 Heather said it was a dynamic situation and people are responding all the time. If a resolution was
37 done, Heather thought it would be something they would need to update on old business because
38 it was a dynamic situation.

39 Arne said nothing would change for the businesses and they weren't going to be mandating

1 anything for them. There would be recommendations, thoughts, and ideas, but businesses could
2 do as they felt appropriate for their business.

3 Arne said the resolution could affect what happens as a town in Town Hall, offices, and places like
4 that. He wanted to go through them quickly and tweak as they went forward.

5 Lee said it was sounding like they were doing more than suggesting people wear masks when they
6 entered public spaces.

7 Arne said the original carryover was the recommendation for businesses which was still
8 appropriate for the businesses, but this was the town as a business and what they were in control
9 of. The Town Manager has the authority to enforce any of the laws they feel appropriate as far as
10 mitigation for COVID-19, barring anything the Selectboard does.

11 Lee was not super comfortable with a resolution like Springfield's. He was all for a sign people
12 could post that asked to be careful. He was okay with a recommendation but not a resolution.

13 Arne said it appeared disingenuous that they were going to recommend behavior but not follow it.
14 He thought if they were going to recommend or mandate something, that they should follow it as
15 well.

16 Arne read Springfield's resolution and applied it to Chester:

17 WHEREAS, the Selectboard of the Town of Chester acting in their capacity as the local board of
18 health are highly concerned about the safety of their residents and municipal employees; and

19 WHEREAS, Windsor County and the Town of Chester are experiencing a high rate of COVID-19
20 community transmission; and

21 WHEREAS, all of Vermont and neighboring counties in New Hampshire are experiencing higher
22 rates of community transmission due to the Delta variant of the disease and have been since
23 November 1, 2021.

24 He said they could change some of the clauses, or leave them out, or whatever they thought was
25 appropriate. He continued with the resolution:

26 WHEREAS, The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends numerous guidelines for
27 disease mitigation, including that face coverings be worn by all people, vaccinated and
28 unvaccinated, in public settings indoors in areas of substantial or high rates of community
29 transmission of the COVID-19 virus; and

30 WHEREAS, the Chester Selectboard recognizes that COVID-19 remains a public health hazard
31 and believes that increased vigilance and mitigation strategies including wearing a face covering
32 indoors are important acts that we all can do to reduce the further spread of COVID-19; and

33 WHEREAS, in a special legislative session called explicitly and solely for this purpose, the
34 Vermont Legislature on November 22, 2021, passed Bill S.1 that empowers Vermont
35 municipalities to enact local rules requiring the wearing of face coverings in indoor public settings
36 and the Governor has signed that bill into law.

37 Arne said those were all the clauses in the resolution. He continued reading:

38 NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that this Selectboard hereby issues the following COVID-19
39 mitigation guidelines. It encourages residents to renew their effort to control the spread of COVID-
40 19 by employing, to the best extent possible, all of the known mitigation strategies included:

1 encouraging vaccination for eligible residents, encouraging vaccination booster shots for all
2 eligible residents, diligence in washing hands and use of hand sanitizers, practice social distancing
3 whenever possible, avoiding large indoor gatherings when at all possible, wearing face masks
4 whenever you are in an indoor congregate setting, encouraging frequent testing, especially after
5 having been with large groups of individuals.

6 Following the encouragements and recommendations was the affirmation. Arne said there was
7 leeway because it would cover the policies regarding how the town hall was run and what was
8 expected of visitors to the town hall.

9 It would read: Affirm that the Chester Town Manager policies to wit: facemasks shall be required
10 for anyone entering any town building, requiring town employees who work in town buildings
11 shall wear masks whenever serving the public; and when working alone in their own workspace,
12 town employees shall be allowed to work without a facemask. However, if several employees are
13 gathered in one physical space for a meeting, masks shall be required.

14 It would go on to read: Encourage all businesses and organizations within the Town of Chester
15 who either serve the public indoors or have 5 or more employees working indoors to adopt a
16 disease mitigation and mask wearing policy suitable for their business or organization. Request
17 that all businesses or organizations within the Town of Chester post the attached notice in a
18 location that is visible to both workers and the public.

19 This resolution shall have immediate effect upon passage and shall remain in effect until the
20 Chester Selectboard amends, rescinds, or suspends it during a properly warned Selectboard
21 meeting or when an action taken by the State of Vermont nullifies these policies or the
22 Selectboard's authority to continue these policies, whichever occurs first.

23 Arne said there was no mandate in any of it.

24 Jeff said there was for town employees. He said they had been there for almost two years and
25 followed all the rules. They took temperatures and worked through the whole thing. They had a
26 couple of employees, because their spouses or whoever had contact with it, that stayed away from
27 work. They had no problems and now you're telling us we have to do our jobs with facemasks.

28 Arne said when there were 5 or more people together or in public, but it didn't say it was necessary
29 when you're working. He said it was more for the town hall.

30 Jeff said they had run the Town Hall for the same period with face shields and screens up and
31 when they come out from behind there, they have their facemasks on. He wasn't going to speak
32 for them but could tell the board what he'd seen. He didn't know that because neighboring towns
33 were putting out resolutions that they needed to. He had seen it for 2 years and everyone knew
34 what they needed to do.

35 Heather wasn't sure that was the case, or they wouldn't be having different variations. She wanted
36 to address and encourage residents to renew their efforts to control the spread. The whole thing is
37 mitigation. She compared it to Swiss cheese. One piece of cheese wouldn't protect you because of
38 the holes in it, but if you put several things together, it would protect you. She was appreciative of
39 reiterating these things to the public. She said they should encourage vaccination and boosters, and
40 wash hands, and use hand sanitizer. She thought it was a positive part. She thought the debate
41 regarding the effectiveness of masks was part of the Swiss cheese piling on that you would block
42 the transmission. She thought it was wonderful and positive it was reiterated.

1 Lee appreciated what Heather said. He said it was basically a recommendation. He didn't know
2 that they needed a resolution or needed to go any further than that. He believed people knew what
3 to do and a resolution wasn't necessary. A recommendation or even what Heather had said would
4 be fine to put on the town website or on the door or wherever.

5 Heather said a resolution versus a recommendation containing this content, she wasn't sure of the
6 difference. She appreciated what was in it and thought it was more encompassing than a poster
7 because it really laid it out as far as the town and town employees. She thought it was the board's
8 responsibility to make sure people were protected as much as possible.

9 Lee said they may take on some liability if they resorted to the language that Springfield used. He
10 was comfortable with a recommendation even more than a poster and to have it put on the town
11 website. He understood Heather's point but didn't want to take on liability suggesting if they do
12 the 5 things listed and not the other 3 or 4 not listed, then suddenly, they're liable.

13 Heather thought there was more liability in not doing anything.

14 Lee was losing cell phone service, so his comments were hard to understand. Arne said he thought
15 Lee was saying he wasn't comfortable with the word resolution but was okay with the word
16 recommendation.

17 Julie said a resolution was a legal document, a legal position you're taking. A recommendation
18 would just be this is what we recommend people should do, where a resolution was a very formal
19 way of stating what you want and has an action attached to it.

20 Heather asked if it was between a recommendation and a mandate and Julie said it was.

21 Jeff wanted to say again and thought he was representing most of the town employees and that
22 they thought the same way he did. He said he could be wrong, but he didn't think so. Arne
23 suggested that he speak for himself, and Jeff agreed to do that. He said it was about the town and
24 what was happening. All the town employees have complied with what they were told to do. When
25 they didn't feel good, they didn't come in and they got tested. None of the town employees had
26 passed anything to anyone during the entire time. And now they're telling them they're not smart
27 enough to continue it.

28 Arne disagreed vehemently. He asked Jeff where he came up with, they weren't smart enough.

29 Jeff said he was totally against it. Arne told him that was fine.

30 Leigh wanted to thank those who came forward and spoke to each thing that was important to them
31 at the last meeting. They had many good things to say. That allowed her to go home and consider
32 it. She thought it was fair for others who came to Chester who weren't residents to at least have
33 the town office or whether it was on the website or posted in front of the Town Hall, what our
34 hopes were for the people, and it was an education piece. They didn't know who had what, when,
35 and where. They weren't there to mandate anything. They were ideas that could be put into place
36 with guidelines. She hoped the people in the town were safe whether they lived here or were
37 visiting. She is a nurse so she may look at it from a different angle. She thinks about the health and
38 welfare of the people she works with, whether she's a school nurse, or with the visiting nurses, or
39 all the other issues she was having. She wasn't necessarily in agreement with the Springfield
40 resolution verbatim, but she did think it had good ideas in it. She would love to see something,
41 even if it was at the Visitors' Center near The Green in front of the Academy, posted at Town Hall
42 and on the website telling people what the Town of Chester is doing to hopefully help people

1 understand what we're living through and in right now. She thought it was fair and wasn't pushing
2 the envelope too far.

3 Julie thought they had only had one positive case in two years. The protocols they have had for
4 town employees have been very effective for them. They required leeway for firemen doing certain
5 types of training, as they can't wear masks. When the state asked everyone to wear masks, they
6 gave allowances to emergency services. This would not take that into consideration. They have
7 installed plexiglass so the employees behind the counter don't need to wear masks. Title searchers
8 are in one at a time. All those protocols are still in place. They have the office disinfected twice a
9 week and have done that since the beginning. They haven't changed their protocols which is why
10 they haven't had an outbreak. She thought for them it was working. Town employees have been
11 told if they're not feeling well to stay home even if it's not COVID. She didn't think the suggested
12 protocols would work for town offices and from her perspective, what they've been doing works.

13 Heather said they think it works and hope it works and was thankful for that, but there is a lot they
14 don't know about. Heather thought having something like this, and she didn't think it was a bad
15 idea to wear a mask if you were in close proximity of five people. She thought there may be
16 judgment calls and encouraging employees to wear masks when applicable. Julie said they do.
17 Heather said it could be put in the recommendation/resolution. She added she had no problem with
18 a resolution. Then the attorney could review it, they could put the poster on the website and a link
19 on the website for information that was recently released about workplaces and small businesses.
20 The reasons she thought they should continue to re-educate people, even though she didn't believe
21 people were stupid, was because we were all fatigued. Gently reminding people of the protocols
22 was a positive thing to do. We don't know what is coming down the freeway, nor how long it will
23 last, whether it is 1 years, 2 years, 5 years. She heard on the radio today that they were predicting
24 a tough winter. She thought it was fine to review what they were doing and to continue to review
25 it.

26 Julie said they knew what they've been doing for two years was working.

27 Heather said she knew what she was doing was perfectly fine until she was informed by the health
28 department that she was near someone who had COVID. She was immunized, she had a mask on,
29 and she got COVID. She was saying they don't know what works until they look in the review
30 mirror. Her N95 mask must not have worked. From a perspective of she was close to someone,
31 it's a real virulent strain, she got it and was very sick. She was thankful they hadn't gotten anything,
32 but if 15 people were in and out of the office spreading it, that was her concern. She didn't think
33 the town employees weren't doing a good job.

34 Julie said they had worked hard at it. They have a protocol in place that has worked, and she would
35 like to see them continue it. She will review with department heads to see if there have been areas
36 where they have gotten lax and could tighten the reins a little bit. She didn't want to see the
37 public works department workers wearing masks in their own truck, because that was the rule the
38 first time around and it was a stupid rule. She was also concerned if she could only have two guys
39 working on a project.

40 Heather said if they were outside working on a project, the risk went down, and if you're inside,
41 the risk went up. It would be nice if virus behaved in a way that we all knew we were sick, but the
42 fact was a huge number were asymptomatic. That was the other thing to reinforce. You could be
43 the most contagious before you have symptoms, so it is a tricky virus, and we are still learning.

1 Julie offered to write out their current protocols as they've been working. She will talk to
2 department heads about areas they can fine tune where they have been lax and could step it up.

3 Arne said the protocols that Springfield had were not much different than what Julie was saying
4 the town has.

5 Julie said the Springfield town office has been shut down for almost two years. What is written in
6 their resolution is not what they've been doing. What they've been doing is not that relaxed. People
7 come to Chester from Springfield to buy their dump tickets because it was a nightmare to get them
8 from Springfield Town Hall.

9 Arne said that was unusual because what reads there didn't sound like a nightmare: facemasks
10 shall be required for anyone entering our town building.

11 Heather said it was protecting the town employees too. She said businesses, including hers, were
12 looking at contingency plans and people were doing assessments of how many are unvaccinated
13 and how many have the disease to make sure there is enough staff to carry on the functioning of
14 the town.

15 Julie said that is why they put in place the protocols that they have which have worked well for
16 two years.

17 (Brief interruption as the video was lost.)

18 Arne told James Goodfellow, who had his hand up, that he was going to hold off until later in the
19 meeting for public comment.

20 Lee said he had just gotten to town and would be at Town Hall soon.

21 Arne was reviewing the resolution and asked what part didn't make sense for the town and was
22 too much for them to do. He was concerned they were going to recommend masks for businesses
23 in town and turn around and not do anything.

24 Julie said they do a lot.

25 Heather said an education wasn't a bad thing and they could be proud of trying to keep their
26 employees and citizens safe when doing business with the town.

27 Arne was fine with either resolution or recommendation. It wasn't going to end up in court or carry
28 any weight. If they were better off with the word recommendation, he was fine with that.

29 Heather said they could call it a policy or a resolution, and it wasn't a mandate. She asked what
30 their attorney would think. Julie didn't think they needed to involve him, but it was up to the board.

31 Arne thought it was important to put into writing where they stood as a town.

32 Leigh agreed and thought people may feel more comfortable asking them questions about it or
33 telling them they don't agree. She was fine with that.

34 Arne found it hard to take advice from someone on doing something when they were not doing it
35 themselves.

36 Julie said they should write out what they're doing because people needed to know they were doing
37 something and not nothing. She thought people may not know that.

38 Arne said he had never said they weren't doing anything.

1 Julie wanted to write out what they were doing.

2 Heather thought they could request that people who come in wear a mask.

3 Julie said that was fine.

4 Heather said what she heard from everyone was they liked the first page but just wanted to insert
5 more about what they were doing. She asked if that was correct.

6 Julie said she was only dealing with the part about what they are going to do in Town Hall.

7 Arne said he agreed that what they had been doing was working as far as cases went and town
8 employees, so maybe the specifics for the town hall didn't even need a resolution, because the
9 Town Manager has full control over the activities of the Town Hall.

10 Julie said it has worked well for them for two years between 80 plus part-time and full-time
11 employees. They have managed to keep a handle on it. She thought they could be a good
12 recommendation for others, and it wasn't just wearing a mask.

13 Arne said he was coming from an area where they were making a recommendation. It was a serious
14 problem and disease in this country and their solution was to come up with a little poster to put in
15 businesses. He understood that businesses should have discretion to choose what they would do,
16 but as a town, they had a responsibility. He was thankful for what Julie had been doing regarding
17 mitigation and the policies that were in place had gotten them where they were with only one case.

18 Heather said reviewing it didn't mean that something had not been done right in the past.
19 Reviewing it was questioning where we are, because it's changing, we're reviewing it, and doing
20 our due diligence. That's how she viewed it.

21 Leigh asked to consider language like what was on page 2 of the resolution from Springfield, to
22 encourage all businesses and organizations within the town who either serve the public indoors or
23 have 5 or more employees working indoors, to adopt a disease mitigation and mask wearing policy
24 for themselves. We're not going to tell them they have to. Julie agreed. Heather reiterated: suitable
25 for their business. Leigh thought it was fair and they would encourage them to do that. Leigh added
26 they could be concise if they had something they wanted to post on the town's website that
27 included a lot of the issues, even the fact of the Center for Disease Control recommendations and
28 some positive learning tools they may not have been aware of.

29 Arne thought it seemed like the point regarding this was their policies they do as a town needed to
30 be clarified a little more, because it didn't seem like they applied to what they had done.

31 Julie said in general they didn't apply and referred to number two regarding town employees shall
32 wear masks whenever serving the public. She said they had intentionally installed the plexiglass,
33 so she questioned wearing a mask while standing behind plexiglass. She said Springfield didn't
34 necessarily have that same option.

35 Arne said maybe it should say to install plexiglass.

36 Heather said if there was a gathering of a lot of people and they were coming out of the plexiglass
37 they should mask. Julie said most of the time they do that.

38 Jeff thought all the town employees respected each other enough and had worked with each other
39 enough and he has seen it many times in the last two years, if they don't feel well, they don't come
40 to work or they leave. He's heard them say many times that they don't think it's COVID related

1 but choose not to come in because they don't feel well.

2 Arne said that was appreciated that people have that sense of compassion for their coworkers to
3 say and do that. Arne said they should be able to get a hold of some rapid tests so when they don't
4 feel well, they could test to confirm it wasn't COVID. Arne just thought they could do more.

5 Jeff didn't think Arne was giving the public and especially the town's employees enough credit
6 for being aware of what's going on.

7 Heather said she thought the reverse. She didn't think they were giving the virus and pandemic
8 enough credit. It is crafty. A lot of viruses don't have, she thought it was 30%, asymptomatic
9 people walking around that feel just as good as they did the day before and are shedding the virus.
10 She doesn't think people weren't kind, smart, or any of that. She thought the virus was crafty as
11 hell.

12 Lee asked how many cases they had had in Chester.

13 Julie asked Shawn Cunningham who had been following it if he had the numbers. Lee and Julie
14 had seen 300 something.

15 Shawn said it was 361 cases since the beginning.

16 Lee said that was 180 cases a year. He wasn't disagreeing what they were saying and apologized
17 for not being there for the whole discussion, but the question he had related to what, if anything,
18 would they put into place that would be different from what they were already doing that would
19 require more effort on their part to keep the numbers as low as they were. He asked if anyone had
20 died in Chester. He figured a couple. Nobody answered. He agreed with Jeff that people know
21 what's going on and were aware of the situation and the mitigation practices to take. He wasn't
22 sure that they could take the stance that they would say those things and they would be protecting
23 more people.

24 Heather said it may or may not but the hospitals in New Hampshire were being filled up and staffed
25 by FEMA.

26 Lee asked where because he hadn't heard that. Heather said it was the whole state.

27 Heather's understanding was that when it was ramping up and there were more people in the
28 hospital and even if they're not in Chester and she has an accident or her kid goes skiing and hits
29 her head, she wants the ICU bed available for other people too. The reinforcement may be
30 redundant, and she didn't even know if it should be their responsibility and thought maybe it should
31 be the state's. But it has been put to them and they could do nothing or something and it may or
32 may not work but it could prevent suffering. If they could prevent one person from dying, it would
33 be worth it from her point of view. If the healthcare workers weren't in crisis and someone has a
34 heart attack and doesn't get treatment, that's bad news. The hospital beds in Vermont were
35 currently 60 beds. The UVM created more ICU beds all for COVID patients and their length of
36 stay in the hospital is 3 to 6 weeks versus 3 to 6 days for a heart attack, so the demand on our
37 system is where Heather was coming from. She wanted services available when they needed them
38 for non-COVID issues.

39 Lee said he understood that and agreed with everything Heather was saying but wondered what
40 they could do to change that.

41 Arne said the Selectboard is the local board of health. They could do nothing or say nothing, but

1 he didn't think that was appropriate for the local board of health. He thought they should be
2 involved.

3 Lee asked if they would be having the conversation on their own if someone from community
4 hadn't initiated it. He had been watching the numbers and seeing things of concern but wasn't sure
5 they would have addressed it, at this point. He was aware of what they had been doing and what
6 Julie had been doing as a town and thought they had amazing success with it. He thought the
7 protocols area businesses had in place for their employees and the public had also worked well.
8 The schools have their own systems. He said he wasn't in disagreement with what they were saying
9 nor their goals but wasn't sure of what the impact would be if they adopted a resolution or
10 recommendation. He questioned how it would all play out.

11 Arne thought it was their job as a selectboard, as a board of health, to keep people informed and
12 aware of what was going on and let them know how they stand on issues. The fact they are
13 addressing it because townspeople had brought it up, he thought that was their job. When people
14 bring things up and are concerned about them, it's for a reason. They are supposed to represent
15 people. The board is diverse with different opinions and views and the represent a lot of different
16 factions in town. So, when it's requested that they bring it up and talk about it, that's what they
17 should do and that's why they were here. Now whether they did anything or not, he wasn't sure,
18 but the fact that they just dismiss it and not do anything or not even talk about it, he didn't think
19 that was the answer either.

20 Lee agreed and said that's why they were there and talking about. He was just trying to be practical
21 and wondered what they were going to come up with. He said they had talked about creating
22 posters that businesses could display in their windows and put something on the website. Now
23 they were getting into the weeds of what they would recommend or encourage. He thought they
24 shouldn't mandate anything but also wondered where they should go. He thought they were in the
25 middle between doing nothing and mandating things. He wondered how far to one side or the other
26 would they be. Based on what was discussed Wednesday and what discussed now, he questioned
27 if that was the language they wanted to use or did they want to do something less formal.

28 Arne said he thought they wanted to do something of their own. He said when he read it that it was
29 more of an example and a place to take off to have the discussion because it brought up a lot of
30 points that were appropriate to bring up. Whether they dismissed them, or they didn't apply, or
31 they were doing something different and even better, that was fine. He thought especially since
32 they were suggesting what businesses should do, it raised the question of what the town was doing.
33 He questioned how they could make a recommendation without having a document stating what
34 the town was doing. Arne said that was why he thought it was important to address it.

35 Heather said it was brought up, but she thought it would have gotten on the agenda anyway because
36 the state has asked them to look at it town by town. Hartland, Weathersfield, Springfield, Ludlow;
37 she thought most of the selectboards were addressing it.

38 Lee said he wasn't arguing about why they were there. He thought they were there because they
39 needed to have this discussion. He just wondered where they were going with it.

40 Arne said that was the question they needed to answer, and what were they going to do at the end
41 of it.

42 Lee thought what Julie had mentioned they already had in place for town employees and was a
43 good starting point. They should post a summary of what was being done on the town website of

1 how they were protecting their employees and recommend others follow these protocols and
2 “boom, done,” Lee said.

3 Heather didn’t agree it was boom, done. Lee asked why she didn’t agree. Heather thought he was
4 talking about what was on the second page, but she thought the first page was fabulous, too. She
5 wanted a page and a half of the Town of Chester Selectboard’s recommendation on COVID
6 mitigation or the Selectboard’s resolution. She said they could always come up with something
7 and someone can vote no, and someone can vote yes. She thought they should look at that in the
8 very near future and go from there.

9 Lee thought they should draft something, pass it around and have that discussion.

10 Julie offered to do it. She knew what she was doing on the second half, and she would itemize
11 those things. She said the top part was more the Selectboard because it was their message to the
12 town. She said if they weren’t going to do a resolution there were no whereas clauses. She asked
13 if there was any wording that anyone had an issue with under the whereas clauses. She asked if
14 they were statements that they were comfortable making.

15 Arne thought it was basically the first statement.

16 Julie was referring to the six whereas clauses and asked if anyone had any issue with those.

17 Leigh thought #5, “We recognize that COVID-19 remains a public health hazard and believe that
18 increased vigilance in mitigation strategies, including wearing a facemask covering, are important
19 acts we can all do to reduce the further reduce spread of COVID-19.” She thought it was
20 straightforward.

21 Lee said unless you don’t believe it’s the case. He thought as a selectboard member he may have
22 an issue with it because maybe he didn’t believe that wearing a face covering was an important act
23 to reduce further spread of COVID-19. That’s why they didn’t get into the science on Wednesday
24 because there were so many variables they can’t consider and so many things they don’t understand
25 that he wasn’t sure he would be comfortable with it. He said it wasn’t like he was agreeing with it
26 or putting his signature on anything he couldn’t backup. He just wanted to make sure they were
27 being careful how they presented medical facts to the townspeople that they haven’t vetted
28 themselves.

29 Heather didn’t think they could vet it. She thought they had to rely on the Centers for Disease
30 Control. They are a government, and they could argue whether masks work, but she looked at it
31 as part of the Swiss cheese they put on there. The CDC recommends it, so she didn’t think they
32 should challenge it and thought it was fine to reiterate that masks may reduce the transmission of
33 COVID-19, as one of the things in their arsenal.

34 Lee agreed and liked Heather’s Swiss cheese analogy because it made a lot of sense. He said she
35 had way more faith in the federal government than he did. He didn’t want to have the discussion
36 because they wouldn’t end up in a good place.

37 Arne said they would agree to disagree.

38 Lee was fine with clauses 1 through 4. He may take issue with #5, but it wasn’t something he
39 couldn’t live with. #6 was a statement of fact and he thought it would be okay, but he didn’t see
40 the necessity for them. He thought they could boil it down into a paragraph that wasn’t so formal
41 and still say roughly the same things. He took issue with a resolution.

1 Arne said they were off the resolution and were going with a recommendation.

2 Heather didn't mind a resolution. She loved encouraging residents to renew their efforts and liked
3 having all the bullet points and would highlight that.

4 Arne said on the first page up to the part where it affirmed things for the town specific, he knew
5 Lee had an issue with #5, but asked if everyone was okay with the rest of them. He asked Lee what
6 the issue was.

7 Lee replied that he wasn't convinced the CDC was telling the whole story, nor that facemasks by
8 themselves reduced the spread of COVID-19. He thought Heather's Swiss cheese analogy was a
9 good one. He wasn't going to say no if it was included, but also thought it could be less formal.

10 Heather thought they were going to remove the word, whereas, but she also thought they didn't
11 need to dumb it down to 144 characters. She thought they could explain where they were coming
12 from, and it was a good template.

13 Arne was fine with the whole first page up until they start talking about the town specific. He had
14 no issue with the mask part.

15 Lee said he wouldn't be happy with it but wouldn't necessarily disagree.

16 Arne thought Julie would prepare something town specific for the second part. Julie agreed to.

17 Julie and Arne asked if everyone was okay with the list of encouragements.

18 Leigh said there were diligences, like washing your hands for 20 seconds. On March 1, 2020,
19 everyone was washing their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap but thought it had gone away
20 for some people.

21 Jeff chimed in that it hadn't for his people as they work in wastewater.

22 There was discussion whether there were issues with the last 3 paragraphs.

23 Heather thought they could say to adopt disease mitigation and take out the specifics of
24 indoor/outdoor. It would be left up to the businesses to decide.

25 Lee said there could be the expectation that a business adopts a policy.

26 Arne said they wouldn't have to because all it would say is encourages.

27 Lee referred to Scott Blair's comment from Wednesday night's meeting and how others would
28 view him if he chose not to put a sign in his window. Lee thought there was a level of peer pressure.

29 Arne said that didn't stick with him. Heather said there were business folks the other night that
30 didn't want to be told what to do. They weren't telling them what to do but were saying think for
31 yourself. And now they were saying don't think for yourself because it may not be the way I think.

32 Lee said they should think like someone who has 3 employees and doesn't have time to write out
33 a policy and wondered how they will they fit in with the rest of the businesses if they feel like
34 there's an expectation.

35 Arne said maybe there should be expectations sometimes. This freedom thing can only be carried
36 so far. Sometimes you must have responsibilities. If the responsibilities require doing something
37 that you're not that comfortable with to help your neighbor, that's okay sometimes too. You can't
38 have it both ways.

1 Lee agreed. They could either help people to be responsible in the way that's the carrot or help
2 them with the stick. That's where he thought they should be careful with how they come across.

3 Arne said the stick would be the mandate and this was the carrot. He thought most people may
4 ignore it and walk away from it, but he hoped not.

5 Lee asked if they were giving out the biggest carrot.

6 Heather said it had come to their attention and now they were doing a two-page recommendation
7 with a sample poster and some links on their website to help employers understand.

8 Lee asked Heather if she had a policy she had adopted at her business and if she could share it with
9 others. She agreed.

10 Heather said Julie would have their protocols listed. Heather said her business has protocols in
11 place and had just gone through this.

12 Lee asked if other businesses wanted to review hers to adopt them, he was happy with that. It
13 would put less burden on a small business who may not have the wherewithal to do what Heather
14 was able to do.

15 Heather said she would absolutely share hers.

16 Lee was trying to be as helpful as possible to a small business owner who doesn't have the
17 resources or time and appreciated Heather's willingness to share.

18 Heather said if one employee becomes ill in a small business, they must shut down. She thought
19 what the board was doing was pro-business.

20 Lee thought it sounded like they had a plan in place and Julie had more work to do to develop
21 something.

22 Arne opened it up for comments.

23 Tim Roper said they had already moved past it. Businesses have a choice to develop a policy if
24 they want and if not, they don't have to. If they want to post a sign, they can and if they don't want
25 to, they don't have to.

26 Arne thanked the board for coming out on a Friday night. He thought they had accomplished a lot.

27 Heather asked when it was done when it would then be discussed and voted on.

28 Arne said at their next meeting.

29 Heather said next meeting was on December 29th and there were a lot of visitors in Chester. She
30 asked if something could be put on the website before then. Arne suggested drafting something
31 and distributing it by email and after everyone read it and was okay with it, they could put it out
32 there and formalize at the next meeting with signatures if the board was okay with that.

33 **Agenda Item 3, Adjourn**

34 Jeff made a motion to adjourn, and Lee seconded it. The motion carried unanimously, and the
35 meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.