

Select Board 2021

1 for 3 years

League Question

Moving forward, how will the Select Board work with the Town Manager and the Board of Health on addressing Covid-19 issues for the Town?

Incumbent

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First, it is important to understand how public health is managed in the state. Massachusetts has a decentralized structure for public health, and each city, town or region's public health department is organized independently and acts autonomously. There is no dedicated state funding to support local public health operations, so the funding must come from the Town budget, proposed by the Town Manager, approved by the Select Board and voted on by Town Meeting. In Lexington, the Board of Health is appointed by the Town Manager and acts as an advisory board to the Lexington Public Health Department. During this pandemic, the work to manage town operations and resident and business safety is on-going, and responsive to changing facts and situations. In addition to the Select Board, Town Manager, Board of Health and Health Department, many other functions and departments of the Town are responding to the issues presented, including human services, public safety, finance, public works and many others.

We have deployed some of our CARES Act funding to increase the staffing of the Public Health Department, to work on contact tracing, state database integration and management, add a second part-time public health nurse and a public health professional to help write our emergency dispensing plan and assist with COVID-19 vaccine planning. A COVID-19 update is a standing topic on the Select Board's regular meeting agendas and we receive weekly reports from the Town Manager and Health Department.

In addition, Lexington has entered an alliance with Belmont and Arlington to maximize use of our limited vaccine allocations, each community is currently receiving 100 doses per week. By pooling our resources and efforts, we have successfully vaccinated almost all Phase 1 eligible persons in all three communities. Further, Lexington is putting into place plans to implement large scale vaccination clinics in town as soon as we receive vaccines. In order to streamline accessibility to future clinics and have the ability to alert eligible residents, the Town has begun gathering information and registrations from residents eligible under Phase 2. To stay up to date on COVID-19 information in town, please visit <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/home/news/covid-19-vaccine-distribution-plan-what-we-know>. If you are eligible under Phase 2, please fill out the registration form linked there.

The Select Board and Town Manager will continue to take advantage of all opportunities to provide information and resources to our residents, and to work with our Public Health, Public Safety and Human Services staff, to ensure that residents have access to that information and that the Town is in the best possible position to roll out whatever allocation of vaccines we receive and continue to manage the impacts to our community.