Committee members present: Leslie Church, Ed Bronson, Terry Button, Carlie Chilson, absent, Dick Harper, Bonnie Percy.

Others present: Rick Willson, Connie Hayes, Dan Banach, Tim Cutler, Doug Paddock, Nonie Flynn, and Annmarie Flanagan.

Leslie Church explained Director of Public Health, Annmarie Flanagan will be doing a presentation on COVID-19 and after her presentation the floor will be open for public Comment.

Annmarie gave the following presentation:

**Masking in the Yates County Office Buildings**

August 27, 2021

**COVID-19**

- COVID-19 is a virus that had never been seen in a laboratory before December 1, 2019
- Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that can cause illnesses such as the common cold, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).
- COVID-19 shares both similarities and differences with other coronaviruses, but it is a novel virus
Why is this virus considered NOVEL

- The virus is called ‘novel’ because it is a new strain that has not previously been seen in humans
- Our immune systems have never seen this particular strain of virus before, so we haven’t developed immunity.
- COVID 19 is similar to many of the other novel viruses, it has potential for worldwide distribution.
- What we know is true because we have seen COVID 19 in every area of the world

Why is COVID 19 more contagious?

- COVID 19 is more contagious than viruses that cause influenza and the common cold because it is new to humans.
- Humans have no way to prepare for it, and their immune systems are not ready to fight it.
- This results in the virus causing more cellular damage and producing more inflammatory cells.
- For people with decreased immunity, due to medications, a specific condition, or due to aging, the outcome may be serious illness and potentially death

How is it spread?

- Your close to someone who has COVID and you are exposed to the air they are exhaling, if they have COVID, they expel the droplets, you breathe them directly into your lungs or they may land on your face, nose, mouth or eyes.
- If you then touch the droplet and put your hand to your eye, nose or mouth you have what is called the portal of entry.
Three Main Ways to Spread the Disease

- Breathing in air when close to an infected person who is exhaling small droplets and particles that contain the virus.
- Touching of the eyes, nose, or mouth with hands that have the virus on them.
- Having these small droplets and particles that contain the virus and they land on the eyes, nose, or mouth, especially through splashes and sprays like a cough or sneeze.

How do we protect ourselves and others from COVID-19?

- VACCINATION/VACCINATION/
- VACCINATION
- Socially distancing
- Masking
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Healthy Diet
- Exercise
- Enough Sleep

Masking and COVID-19

- Masking allows for protection from COVID 19 and the potential variants that have been arising.
- COVID 19 is spread through an infected persons breathing.
- The droplet affect
Mandatory Masking in the County Office Building

- Yates County Public Health is here today to ask for masks to be worn in all county office buildings by visitors.
- Yates County Public Health is asking that all county employees wear masks in the public areas.
- Fully vaccinated employees would be able to remove the masks when they get to their respective offices, if allowed by their department.

Protecting the County Employee

- County employees come into contact with many residents of our county and beyond in our day to day work.
- In order to maintain our workforce, keep employees safe, and stop the spread of the disease here in our county buildings, masking is the safest way to manage this.

Vaccination Rates

- The problem if we just wait the disease out and don't vaccinate or try to stop the spread of the disease then more and more people will become ill and more and more people will die.
- If masking is not part of planning now then we will see more illness, more variants and more deaths and COVID-19 will be interrupting our lives even longer.

Vaccination Rates in Yates County

- Population: 24,841
- People with One Dose: 12,165
- 49% with one vaccine
  - People Fully Vaccinated: 11,308
Myths

- Facemasks in the COVID-19 era: A health hypothesis:
- This research paper is a hypothesis an educated guess.
- Fact: this is a hypothesis, an educated guess, no real research was done. This is not based in science, it is not based in fact, it is based on a Cardiology Division of a Stanford University Professor, looking to test a hypothesis
- Professors will write these papers so they will be published so they will be tenured and get grant funding

Myth

Research Article: Experimental Assessment of Carbon Dioxide Content in Inhaled Air with or without facemasks in Health Children: A Randomized Control Trial

Reported: wearing a mask elevates carbon dioxide

Fact: this research article was retracted within two weeks of being published. Papers of research are retracted due to: falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, misconduct

The research was done in Germany which has the strictest Internal Review Board specifications of any country due to Hitler’s unethical testing in concentration camps.
Dick stated that one of the questions is regarding hospitals and the level of care they can provide if they are full. Dick questioned if Annmarie knew what the levels were in the surrounding major hospitals. Annmarie explained that it is really hard to extrapolate that information and it is something the state needs to work on that going forward. Annmarie stated that Strong Memorial Hospital and Rochester General Hospital are almost at capacity.

Annmarie explained that Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hospital is a hospital that stabilizes and transfers out to one of the bigger hospitals. At this point S&S Memorial does not have the capacity to hold and care for COVID patients. With the exception of S&S Memorial, every hospital has the ability to manage COVID-19 patients but it really depends on their respirator status and their ICU beds.

Annmarie stated that the hospitals only have so many staff to look over patients and the nurses are tired. Annmarie’s staff is tired and they are amazing. They are the most amazing group you could ever work with and they are tired with the work they have been doing.

Ed stated that at Thompson Hospital from earlier this week, there were 5 COVID patients there.
Terry questioned a reported he read on the use of ivermectin for COVID. Doug stated that there have been articles and news reports that ivermectin not be used as a treatment for COVID. Apparently it has been used for a period of time, but the current recommendation is to not use it. It is unusual for it to be prescribed for humans.

Leslie questioned what the rate of spread was in the community. Nonie reported there are 15 active cases, there are 4 new cases and there are 22 in isolation or quarantine. Annmarie stated that yesterday Yates County was in the yellow zone but we are now in the orange zone.

Annmarie explained the CDC puts out a tracker and puts us at a level of how infectious we are, how many cases we are seeing. So there is low, moderate, high and then substantial. We have been listed as substantial for quite a while and then it goes back down again so Annmarie is seeing a lot of peaks and valleys.

Terry questioned how the legislature could assist Public Health in promoting vaccinations and what are some of the other options that could be done to make Yates County safe? Annmarie stated, wear a mask.

Terry stated that in the past we have always said that other Counties are doing this or that. Terry called all the counties to see if they have a mask mandate and do they have security at the door. There were 3 counties that Terry could not get someone on the phone.

Bonnie questioned why individuals are contacting COVID-19 after they have been vaccinated. Annmarie explained that no medication is fool proof. We are seeing some of the immunities waning as time goes on. We also know that no vaccine is perfect, including tetanus, measles, etc. It could be the variant, it could not be the variant, and it may just mean that their immune system wasn’t able to build the antibodies that were needed.

Ed questioned if Annmarie has seen an increase in people coming to be vaccinated since the CDC approved the Pfizer vaccine? Annmarie stated that yes it has increased significantly.

Terry questioned if the pop up clinics will continue? Terry also thanked the staff and volunteers for all their hard work. Annmarie stated that that is the plan and they continue to reach out to entities.

Leslie questioned what the status was on the booster shots. Annmarie explained that the boosters start 8 months after you have received your second dose. Third doses are actually being done now, they are not being turned away.

Nonie reported that the period has not been shortened to 6 months.

Bonnie questioned if all the nursing home workers have been given their shots. Annmarie explained that some are choosing not to take the vaccine.

Doug explained that he took Terry’s information, and if you look at the traditional thirteen Finger Lakes counties, 8 are requiring masking in their buildings and 5 are not. But, they are constantly reviewing it. If you want to compare the adjoining counties the majority are requiring masks.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
Joy Schank urged the Committee to not put a mask, vaccine or passport vaccine card mandate in place. Ms. Schank stated that the masks do not work and believes it should be a person’s choice.

John Prendergast stated that masks should be worn by those that feel they need protection. There should not be a mandate for masks.
Marsha Devine stated that whatever the decision the Committee makes today will be perceived by the community that is mandated for the community as a whole. People need to be able to make their own choices. People do what makes them feel safe and urges the Committee to not mandate the masks.

Jim Smith stated that he would like to see a complete study regarding the wearing of masks. He believes in free choice and does not feel a mandate needs to be put in place and it is not the direction we should be going in.

Arlene Wilson stated she feels staff feel mask wearing makes the staff feel safe. She also feels that if it is not mandated in county buildings that we may lose staff because of it.

Jim Willson stated the Committee needs to consider employees concerns. As far as the public maybe another option for them to do business with in the County needs to be considered if they are uncomfortable coming into the building.

The consensus of the Committee was to take the issue to the full Legislature at a special meeting on September 7, 2021 at 10:30 a.m. in the Legislative Chambers.

Meeting adjourned at 2:39 p.m.