

A Resolution to Establish a Vaccination or Testing Choice Option Policy for Public Officers and Employees of the Town of Enfield

RESOLUTION #2021-_____

Whereas, the Enfield Town Board recognizes its legal duty and its moral and ethical obligation to keep its community's residents safe, to protect the health and well-being of its workforce, and to ensure peace of mind among those who interact with the Town's public-facing employees; and

Whereas, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) constitutes an ongoing public health threat, the pandemic having claimed more than 700,000 lives nationally since the pandemic began, including the lives of several persons within this Town; and

Whereas, Federal, State, and local health authorities have advised that widespread vaccination of the eligible population serves as the most effective tool to combat the coronavirus, to prevent its spread, and to limit its mutating to even more lethal forms of the disease; and

Whereas, on September 9, 2021, one day after the Enfield Town Board last visited this issue, President Joseph R. Biden, through his executive orders and administrative directives, ordered all federal employees, health care workers, and those working for larger employers to vaccinate against COVID-19, or in some instances, to exercise the right to either vaccinate or undergo periodic testing; and

Whereas, the Town of Enfield recognizes that vaccination of its officers and employees is, ultimately, a matter of personal choice and should not be compelled; yet also recognizes that one's failure to vaccinate carries with it the responsibility to ensure one is not carrying or transmitting the COVID-19 virus, a risk that would endanger one's co-workers and members of the public with whom an employee interacts; and

Whereas, on September 20, 2021, the Tompkins County Legislature, by Resolution No. 10366, extended the County's contract with Cayuga Health Systems to provide COVID-19 testing services, the Legislature explicitly enlarging the scope of its County-subsidized free surveillance testing program to include "all Tompkins County municipal employees," said program's expansion significantly reducing, and perhaps eliminating any cost of municipal employee testing to Enfield Town taxpayers; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Enfield Town Board hereby establishes a Vaccination or Testing Choice Option Policy, said Policy applicable to and enforceable upon all Public Officers, elected Office Holders, and employees of the Town of Enfield, with said Policy's purpose that of promoting public health and safety for both its employees and the general public by encouraging the vaccination of any and all Officers and employees in the Town of Enfield to the fullest extent permissible under Federal and New York State law and administrative directives, while also assuring Town Officers and employees by its Policy their right to opt-out of COVID-19 vaccination should they so choose; and be it further

Resolved, that within sixty (60) days of this Policy's adoption, every Town Officer, elected Office Holder, and employee of the Town of Enfield shall be required to comply with this policy, either by becoming fully vaccinated against COVID-19, or, for those who choose to opt-out of vaccination due to religious or medical exception or any other reason, to so notify his or her immediate supervisor of that decision and then undergo testing on a weekly basis for COVID-19, with policy compliance to be based on the good faith attestation of the Town Officer, elected Office Holder, or employee; and be it further

Resolved, that since Federal and New York State authorities have yet to define with complete and reliable certainty the eligibility standards of already-vaccinated populations for so-called “booster shots” against COVID-19, this Town Board, by its Resolution, makes no policy determination regarding any booster shot requirement, and this Board delays until such later time as it determines appropriate any potential further requirement that its Officers and employees obtain said “booster” vaccinations to remain in compliance with this Policy; and be it further

Resolved, that except where superseded by this policy or otherwise deemed inapplicable, details of this vaccination and testing program shall be implemented in accordance with “Tompkins County COVID-19 Directive #6,” as promulgated by the Tompkins County Administration and dated September 2, 2021, as Tompkins County may subsequently revise; and be it further

Resolved, that the Town of Enfield will seek collaboration with Tompkins County Administration and other County Departments and their associated medical partners to avail itself of testing and reimbursement opportunities that may exist to help defray the cost of this program to the Town of Enfield and its taxpayers; and be it further

Resolved, that this Policy shall take full effect sixty (60) days following its adoption by this Town Board.

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