

SPORTS

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Pinedale Roundup

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One Dollar

Public doesn't mask its face-covering bias for free choice

Negative but civil comments for commissioners, health care

By Joy Ufford

jufford@pinedaleroundup.com

MARBLETON – A dozen extra people showed up at the Nov. 17 Sublette County commissioners' meeting to protest facemask policies – even while many wore them – saying it should be a personal choice.

Commissioners were hearing from Sublette County Public Health Nurse Janna Lee, who asked if she could institute a facemask policy for public coming to her office. Public Health Officer Dr. Brendan Fitzsimmons accompanied her to the meeting at Marbleton Town Hall and offered his input.

Sheriff KC Lehr and Undersheriff Lance Gehlhausen were present, "just in case."

Recently, Dr. Fitzsimmons submitted a separate countywide facemask request to the Wyoming Department of Health, who oversees all 23 county public health offices.

Hours later, the state approved his request and those from other counties, whose public health officers had asked Gov. Mark Gordon for a statewide mandate, which the governor declined to do.



ROBERT GALBREATH PHOTO

Historical moment for health care in Sublette County and a sign of the times. The five newly elected members of the special hospital district board were sworn in on Nov. 18. Pictured, from left, are Dr. Brendan Fitzsimmons, Kenda Tanner, Wendy Boman, Tonia Hoffman and Jamison Ziegler.

"We would really appreciate having a policy in place to protect my staff," Lee said, pointing to the alarming local spike in

active cases. "I want to keep our office doors open."

Chair Dr. Dave Burnett asked, "Are you asking us because the county owns the building?"

Yes, Lee said. Her staff all wear masks and she wants to keep them safe when the public tests for Covid-19.

Everyone is asked to wear masks but her office gets phone calls from "some people not so kind to us and people who have really respected us," she said.

Burnett asked Sublette County Rural Health Care Administrator Dave Doorn if both clinics require people coming inside to wear facemasks.

"Yes," Doorn said. "For eight months already."

"No patients without a facemask," Burnett said.

Doorn said "greeters" make sure incoming patients have one on.

Commissioners clarified the differences between the clinics' policy, Lee's request to the county and Fitzsimmons' request to the state

"As long as it's well understood this is different than a county-instituted mandate," said Commissioner Joel Bousman. "I'm strongly against that. ... If I as an individual feel so strongly about not wearing a mask, I won't go into that business or office."

A man asked Lee about someone not wearing a mask coming to Public Health for a flu shot.

Lee said of 200 people getting flu shots, "every single one of them came through with a mask."

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Sublette County Public Health Order 2020-003

Face coverings are mandated, Nov. 18- Dec. 4, for adults in certain public settings outside the home. Minors are not required but coverings are suggested for 3 years and older.

Face coverings are required when:

- Inside or in line to enter any retail, commercial or any government facility open to the general public, including county and municipal buildings. It excludes state and federal buildings.

- Obtaining services at or visiting health9care operations, including hospitals, clinics and walk-in health facilities, dentists, pharmacies, blood banks, other healthcare facilities, behavioral health providers, and veterinary facilities

- Waiting for or riding public transportation.

- Employees, owners and volunteers of retail, commercial, county and town government facilities open to the general public are interacting with the public or working in a space used by the public such as reception areas, grocery store aisles, service counters, public restrooms, cashier and checkout areas, waiting rooms and service areas.

Face coverings are not required when:

- In a personal office if the public does not regularly visit. Put on a face covering when visited by a client, customer or public.

- Conditions prevent wearing a mask – unconsciousness, mental health, hearing impaired, facial procedures, working out in a gym, eating or drinking, etc.

- Seated to dine if social distance of 6 feet is maintained and groups are smaller than eight. Customers must wear them to enter and exit.

To read the complete approved Sublette County variance, go to sublettewycovid.com.



COURTESY PHOTO

Kate Morris and another child from the Children's Discovery Center greet Faye Hilyard at the Sublette Center as part of Kindness Day activities organized by Tamara Currah, School District No. 1 Early Childhood Liaison, on Nov. 13.

