

In 1942 Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis wrote that states are the “laboratories of democracy”. Indeed I have thought recently that *local* governments are truly the laboratories of democracy.

As 2020 ended we saw holiday cards which essentially said “good riddance”. But as 2021 begins, we find our country once more in turmoil. But I see our local government moving forward in a collaborative, bi-partisan spirit.

At our Organizational Meeting on January 4, 2021 we welcomed Jeffrey Judd as our fifth member. We are working together to refurbish the Town Hall, address the Shepherd’s Run application and deal with the continuing challenge of Covid. It is my intention that we will continue to work towards building consensus to move ahead on issues which concern Copake.

Vaccinations available in Columbia County

The most urgent issue on everyone’s mind is how and when they can receive a vaccine. At a meeting of the Board of Supervisors on Wednesday night we heard from Chair Matt Murrell and Director of the Columbia County Department of Health, Jack Mabb. Both explained that the County is set up to administer vaccines at Columbia Greene College, but the County is hampered by the lack of available vaccine. The County has to request vaccine from New York State and receives generally 300 doses at a time. By January 15, the County will have administered 1200 shots- but unfortunately the County cannot project ahead of time how many doses they will receive, or when.

For the time being Copake residents should follow this procedure to receive a vaccine:

Go to the Columbia County Department of Health website at:

columbiacountynyhealth.com/ Scroll down to the section which says:

“Announcements” - and then click on “Learn More”. This will bring you to the page entitled “Covid 19- Vaccine Information”. Here is the link for that page:

<https://apps3.health.ny.gov/doh2/applinks/cdmspr/2/counties?OpID=50502560>

Once you are on the “Covid 19- Vaccine Information” page you will see upcoming vaccination clinics. The listing will say if there are any appointments available. If you see a clinic at which vaccines are available, click on it, and register.

At this point, individuals in Group 1A and 1B are eligible to receive a vaccine. In order to know if you are eligible, you can go to: <https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>

In the weeks to come, vaccines may be available in drugstores in Columbia County. The situation is fluid and constantly changing, but as of now the only way to get a vaccination is to register through the Columbia County Department of Health- and the only way to register is online.

The CCDOH cannot predict when the vaccination “events” will be scheduled and so there is no way, currently, to register for a vaccination several weeks in the future. Nor is the County able to keep lists of individuals and call them when a vaccination is available.

The only way to get a vaccination at this time is to be pro-active, and go to the website at columbiacountynyhealth.com/ on a frequent basis. When a clinic is posted, you must register in order to guarantee your appointment.

The County is aware that there are seniors who may not have the capability to register on line. At this time there is a temporary call center, staffed by volunteers which can assist residents. The telephone number for that center is 518-697-5560. Residents can speak to a live person by calling the number and can get questions answered but they cannot make appointments. The Office of the Aging will be able to assist senior citizens who are having trouble getting registered for a vaccine, or who do not have transportation to the vaccination site.

The CCDOH is working around the clock to get the vaccinations into the arms of residents. At the Board of Supervisors meeting the final message was: there will be enough vaccinations- it is just a matter of time. It is estimated that the process of vaccinating everyone in 1A and 1B- could take 14 weeks..

Happy New Year.

Jeanne E. Mettler