

Crescent City to require masks in City Hall

August 7, 2021



Following the resurgence of COVID-19 in the community, the Crescent City Council moved to mandate masks in city hall, but stopped short of requiring vaccines for city employees.

Last week, Gov. Gavin Newsom implemented a mandate for all state employees to be vaccinated, or they would be subject to once-a-week testing. The mandate was the first of its kind in the nation, and led the council to consider a similar mandate, as well as updated mask rules, during a Monday meeting.

While introducing the topic of a mandatory vaccine, City Manager Eric Wier said the governor's mandate is what prompted city staff to put the subject on the agenda, but a sharp increase in COVID-19 cases in the county has made the issue more pressing.

"Even from the time the governor urged us to put this on to where we are sitting today, we are in a totally different scenario, and this is changing rapidly," said Wier.

Mayor Jason Greenough said he believes the vaccine is effective, and a good thing, but said all people, including city employees, should have the right to choose.

“I believe it belongs between that person and their doctor, not the city and that person,” said Greenough.

Other members of the council were also opposed to a vaccine mandate for employees, but council member Ray Altman said the city should strongly recommend it.

“I’m vaccinated. I think it was the safe thing to do for everybody. I would encourage people to get vaccinated. Nothing happened to me, I actually went to the doctor a couple days later, and they gave me five more shots that I needed at age 55,” said Altman.

Following updated guidance from state public health officials and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wier said the city changed their mask policy on Monday, requiring all employees wear masks indoors, regardless of their vaccination status.

The city had previously allowed vaccinated workers to go without masks, following the CDC’s previous recommendations. During the meeting, Wier asked the council for guidance regarding the public wearing masks in city hall.

Mayor Pro Tem Blake Inscore was initially in favor of strongly encouraging masks, but later changed his mind after Wier read the daily case numbers to the council, which were conveniently posted during the meeting.

“If the virus is really spreading this quickly...then I would be supportive of saying we are going to tell people, ‘you need to wear a mask to come into city hall to do business,’ if that’s what it takes to keep city hall open,” said Inscore.

Ultimately, the council decided to temporarily require masks in city hall until the COVID-19 situation changes. A procedural error prevented the council from making a decision regarding mandated masks in the pool building.