



Declaration of Continuance of the Andover Annual Town Meeting 2020

June 1, 2020

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 39, S10A, I declare on this day, June 1, 2020, that the Andover Annual Town Meeting originally posted for June 22, 2020 will be recessed and continued to July 22, 2020 at 5:pm at the Andover High School, Shawsheen Rd, Andover, MA. I make this declaration on the basis of my determination, following consultation with the Select Board, Town Manager, Town Clerk, Director of Public Health, Police Chief, and Fire Chief, that due to the public health and safety posed by the novel Coronavirus Covid-19, voters may be unable to attend the Town of Andover's Annual Town Meeting.

In making the Declaration, I note that Governor Charles D. Baker's Declaration of a State of Emergency in the Commonwealth made on March 10, 2020 and amended on March 15, 2020 to reduce the maximum number of people permitted in a gathering to 25 people, remains in effect. More recently, the Governor's "Safer at Home" advisory of May 18, 2020 cautioned that "People over the age of 65 and people with underlying health conditions – who are at high risk of COVID-19 – should continue to stay home except for essential errands such as going to the grocery store and to attend to health care needs." Even though municipal legislative bodies (which include Town Meetings) are exempt from this order, and the "Safer at Home" advisory is not mandatory, the public health determinations underlying the Governor's orders and advisory support, if not compel, a determination that there would be a health risk to Andover voters, particularly those over 65 years old and those with underlying health conditions, in attending Town Meeting on June 22, 2020. Equally as important, the March 23rd Declaration of Emergency of the Town of Andover, by which the Town of Andover Select Board and the Director of Public Health recognized the public health threat posed directly to the residents of the Town of Andover by the outbreak of COVID-19, also remains in effect.

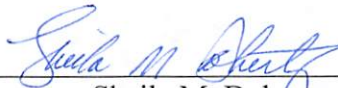
In addition to the significant number of residents who have reached out to me with their concerns about their health and the spread of the virus in Andover if the Town Meeting were held, I have reviewed guidance from the Mass Dept of Public Health, the Mass Attorney General's Office regarding the ability to require masks for all participants, US Center for Disease Control and Prevention as well as the Massachusetts Moderators Association directives. Given the ability of a rapid spread of the virus, the difficulty of containment, and the risk to vulnerable populations inherent in public gatherings, I have come to the conclusion that delaying the Annual Town Meeting is in the best interest of the Town of Andover and its citizens.

With this Declaration, the Annual Town Meeting is recessed to July 22, 2020 at 5pm, two hours earlier than the original posted time in order to take advantage of daylight hours, should it be advisable to conduct the meeting outdoors. Mass General Laws Chapter 39, Section 10A, does not give me the authority to continue the Annual Town Meeting for longer than 30 days from the posted date of June 22, 2020, but I do have the authority to issue further continuances, if appropriate. It is uncertain whether the COVID-19 emergency will have abated sufficiently by July 22, 2020 to render the public health risk to voters low enough to hold the meeting. I intend to declare additional recesses and continuances, of up to 30 days each, if necessary, until the meeting can be held safely.

This determination shall be effective as of 5:00pm June 22, 2020.

Signed and Issued in Andover, Massachusetts
At 10:00 AM on June 1, 2020

BY: _____



Sheila M. Doherty
Moderator
Town of Andover