



Declaration of Continuance of the Andover Annual Town Meeting 2020

June 25, 2020

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 39, S10A, I declare on this day, June 25, 2020, that the Andover Annual Town Meeting originally posted for July 22, 2020 will be recessed and continued to August 22, 2020 at 5:pm at the Andover High School Campus, 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.

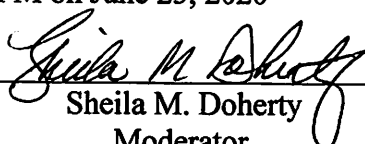
In making the Declaration, I note that Governor Charles D. Baker's Declaration of a State of Emergency in the Commonwealth made on March 10, 2020 remains in effect. Even though municipal legislative bodies (which include Town Meetings) are exempt from maximum numbers for gatherings, and the "Safer at 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 increasing number of residents who have reached out to me with their concerns about their health safety 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, at this time, to August 22, 2020 at 5pm. 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 July 22, 2020, but I do have the authority to issue further continuances, if appropriate. Further, after consultation with the Select Board, the Public Safety Officials, the Director of Public Health, the Town Manager Town Clerk, and other public officials, I hereby notice all of the likelihood of extending this declaration again on August 22, 2020 to a date on or about September 12, 2020. It is uncertain whether the COVID-19 emergency will have abated sufficiently by August 22, 2020 to render the public health risk to voters low enough to hold the meeting at that time. 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 July 22, 2020.

Signed and Issued in Andover, Massachusetts
At 4:00 PM on June 25, 2020

BY: 

Sheila M. Doherty
Moderator
Town of Andover