

SELECTMEN'S MEETING AGENDA*

Wednesday, April 1, 6:30 P.M.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION ONLY

Public can access meeting at Channel 18 (Broadcasting Live)

OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

For those members of the public wishing to make comment you may do so by a combination of email and phone by;

1. First, send an email to comment@town.harwich.ma.us
(Send emails at any time after the meeting agenda has been officially posted)
 - a. In the subject line enter "request to speak Jane Doe"
 - b. (Replace Jane Doe with your name) No need to add any more detail to email
2. Please wait until the Chairman has opened this agenda item for Open Public Forum
3. Dial: 872-240-3311
4. Enter Access code: 338-612-525
5. Please be patient and eliminate any background noise
6. Callers will be taken in the order the emails are received
7. When your name is called use *6 to unmute yourself

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. OLD BUSINESS

- A. COVID-19 Updates: Presenters: Joe Powers, Interim Town Administrator; Meggan Eldredge, Health Director
- B. Discussion and possible vote regarding rescheduling of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting and the 2020 Annual Town Election
Presenters: Anita, Doucette, Town Clerk; Michael Ford, Esq.; Town Moderator, John Giorgio, Esq. KP-Law

III. OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

- A. See dial in instructions above

IV. NEW BUSINESS

V. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORTS

VI. SELECTMEN'S REPORT

VII. ADJOURNMENT

**Per the Attorney General's Office: The Board of Selectmen may hold an open session for topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting following "New Business." If you are deaf or hard of hearing or a person with a disability who requires an accommodation contact the Selectmen's Office at 508-430-7513.*

Authorized Posting Officer:

Posted by: _____
Town Clerk

Patricia A. Macura, Admin. Secretary

Date: _____
March 30, 2020

Town of

*Anita N. Doucette, MMC/CMMC
Town Clerk*



Harwich

*732 Main Street
Harwich, Massachusetts 02645
Tel. 508-430-7516*

March 30, 2020

Larry Ballantine, Chairperson
And Members
Board of Selectmen
732 Main Street
Town hall
Harwich, MA 02645

Re: Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election

Dear Chairman & Members:

As you may be aware, the State Legislature enacted legislation this week to allow towns to move Annual Town Meeting and any Town Election during the current coronavirus state of emergency.

As you know, Town Meeting is currently scheduled to begin May 4th. As we know, Governor Baker has ordered schools closed until that day, but there is no guarantee that the date won't be postponed further. As such, it appears that the Town may be operating with its current minimum staffing levels until at least May 4th.

Additionally, Annual Town election is currently scheduled for May 19th. The new legislation would allow for liberal use of early voting and absentee voting by mail for the protection of the public health and safety of voters and workers.

Some considerations for Annual Town Meeting:

- Town Moderator's availability. (Please see Michael Ford's email regarding the same.)
- The Town must be in a position to re-open the Community Center to the general public.
- Quorum would be needed for ATM to take any action
- We rely on a number of third parties
 - The sound system Company that works with Channel 18 - Community Center
 - Cart reporter for real time transcription service
 - Highway Department to set up the gymnasium for the multiple night town meeting.

- Election workers to staff ATM
- If the Selectmen choose to move Town Meeting, you could look to the Week of June 2nd or June 9th, keeping in mind the Town Moderator's availability.

Annual Town Election

If keeping the election on May 19th:

- The Board of Selectmen would need to sign the election warrant, as soon as possible, so that we can get ballots printed
 - Ballot printing is handled by a third party, LHS Associates. They have assured us that they will be available to print the ballots.
- Under the new legislation we are permitted to allow early voting by mail and absentee voting by mail, however, we do need to consider the lead time necessary for both.
- Additionally, this year's ballot has questions relative to charter changes. By law, we are required to mail a letter to every registered voter at least two weeks prior to the election.
 - If a third party vendor, such as LHS is unable to provide this print and mail service to us in time for the May 19th election, we will need to handle this mailing of 11,000+-letters in house.
- We will need to again consider whether the Community Center will be open to the public by May 19th
- We will need some election staff for the election
- Board of Selectmen could consider reducing the hours of the election to 12:00PM – 4:00PM, considering the anticipated increase in absentee and early voting by mail

If the Board of Selectmen choose to postpone Annual Town Election:

The Board of Selectmen could choose to postpone the Annual Town Election to late June, possibly June 16th or June 23rd.

- The new legislation provides that the Town take certain actions to notify the public if an annual town election is postponed. These include:
 - A reverse 911 call notifying residents of the change in date
 - Publication on the Town's website
 - Advertisement in the newspaper and local cable television
 - Use of any list serve notifications.
- We would work with Town Counsel to ensure these requirements are met.
- The Board of Selectmen would still need to sign the election warrant, as soon as practicable, to ensure we can get the ballots printed.
 - Again, ballot printing is handled by a third party, LHS Associates. We anticipate a longer lead time may be helpful, and LHS has assured us that they will be able to print ballots.

- We would still be permitted to allow early voting by mail and absentee voting by mail, however.
 - Hopefully, by late June the voters will be more comfortable voting at the polls, but we would still have the ability for absentee and early voting by mail.
 - A later election date would allow for a longer lead time to accomplish voting by mail where possible.
- We will still be required to mail a letter to every registered voter at least two weeks prior to the election.
 - If a third party vendor, such as LHS is unable to provide this print and mail service to us, a later election date will give us more time to accomplish this mailing of 11,000+-letters in house, if necessary.
- We will need again to consider whether the Community Center will be open on time for the election, but it is more likely with a later date.
- We will need some election staff for the election.
 - Hopefully, by mid to late June more workers would be willing to staff the election.
- Finally, the Board of Selectmen could consider reducing the hours of the election to 12:00PM – 4:00PM, considering the anticipated increase in absentee and early voting by mail

Other Considerations:

- Regardless of the date of the election, the dates for any nominations papers will remain the same, as originally posted.
- All candidates that have returned in their papers will be set for this election and no other candidates will be placed in the ballot.
- The only date that will change will be the last date to register to vote for the election. This will depend upon the actual date set by the Selectmen for the election.

Best Regards,



Anita N. Doucette, MMC CMMC
Town Clerk