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# TOWN OF TEWKSBURY

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## **Annual Town Meeting & Special Town Meeting COVID-19 Contingency Plan**

**JUNE 19, 2020**  
DENISE GRAFFEO, TOWN CLERK

# **Town of Tewksbury Annual Town Meeting & Special Town Meeting COVID-19 Contingency Plan**

*Please note: The novel Corona virus COVID-19 is a rapidly evolving situation. The plan below reflects the information available on May 19, 2020, the date The Plan was written.*

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Town of Tewksbury Annual Town Meeting & Special Town Meeting COVID-19 Contingency Plan (The Plan) is to perform a state mandated Annual Town Meeting in the time of a declared State of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **SCOPE**

The Plan establishes:

- Identifying the current state of emergency due to COVID-19
- Identifying essential functions of a town meeting
- Incorporating directives of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 executive order 591, Declaration of a State of Emergency to Respond to COVID-19 pursuant to Section 2 of House, No. 4598 signed by the Governor on April 3, 2020
- Procedures to limit the risk of exposure to election workers and voters
- Measures to curtail the further spread of the virus

## **BACKGROUND**

Due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor pursuant to executive order 591, Declaration of a State of Emergency to Respond to COVID-19 pursuant Section 2 of House, No. 4598, the Board of Selectmen voted to postpone and change the dates of the 2020 Annual and Special Town Meeting to June 22, 2020 and June 24, 2020. A Special Town Meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 7:00 PM. The town meeting will be held at Tewksbury Memorial High School, 320 Pleasant Street, Tewksbury, MA

## **DATES AND SCHEDULE OF TOWN MEETING**

The Annual Town Meeting for consideration of warrant articles shall begin on Monday, June 22, 2020 at 7:30 PM and conclude at 11:00 PM, except as provided below. Subsequent meetings shall begin at 7:30 PM on Wednesday and Thursday of the same week and conclude at 11:00 PM, except as provided below. The same schedule shall be observed in following weeks, if necessary. No business shall be conducted after 11:00 PM, at any session except to complete action on the article or departmental budget then under discussion.

The Annual Town Meeting shall be divided into three sections.

Section One:

Article 1. Annual Town Election – Accomplished on June 16, 2020.

Section Two shall begin on Monday, June 22, 2020 at 7:30 PM and shall include the following articles:

Section Two:

Article 2. Elected official salaries

Article 3. Consent calendar

Article 4. Budget article

Article(s). Budget related articles

Article(s). Amend Personnel bylaws

Article(s). Amend Town bylaws

General articles

If Section Two is completed before 11:00 PM the Annual Town Meeting shall adjourn to Wednesday at 7:30 PM to act on Section Three articles.

Section Three:

Amend zoning by-laws

### **POSTING REQUIREMENTS**

The Warrant shall be posted by a Constable of the Town and shall be posted in a public place in each Precinct and in the Town Hall. At least three hundred copies shall be left at the Town Hall or at such convenient places as the Selectmen shall think proper. In addition, the Selectmen shall order that one Warrant be mailed to each dwelling in the Town two weeks before any town meeting. In addition and at the time of the posting the Warrant shall be placed on the Town's website. Warrants shall be available at the check-in tables before each town meeting provided, however, in regard to the mailing requirement, if a Town Meeting Warrant article amends a General or Zoning By-Law and the content of the article exceeds three (3) pages of the standard format of a Town Meeting Warrant page, a summary of that article shall be inserted into the Town Meeting Warrant in place of the entire article to be mailed. Such summary shall be prepared by Town Counsel. The summary shall also indicate the locations where the complete article may be located for review. The complete article shall be posted on the Town's website, two copies shall be made available for viewing at the Tewksbury Public Library, Senior Center, and Town Hall at the Town Clerk's Office, and shall comply with the requirements of M.G.L. c. 39, § 10.

### **NOTICE OF ADJOURNMENT**

Notice of adjourned town meetings shall be posted by the Town Clerk on local access cable TV and in the Town Hall as soon as practicable after adjournment, with a list of the articles to come before the town meeting.

## **STAFFING AND PERSONAL PROTECTION PROTOCOLS**

Election Staff are considered essential non-medical staff and are not subject to stay-at-home orders or advisories unless under separate isolation or quarantine orders from the Board of Health.

The Town Clerk will ensure an adequate number of election Staff for check-in and counting, keeping in mind DPH guidelines. All higher risk individuals should avoid close contact with other individuals. Higher risk individuals include older adults, anyone with underlying health conditions, such as heart or lung disease or diabetes, anyone with weakened immune systems, and anyone who is pregnant.

Election Staff will be informed that they are to contact the Town Clerk if they have experienced any COVID-19 symptoms or been exposed to anyone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 within 14 days prior to the election. In those cases, they will be asked not to participate in the town meetings.

A safer staff training email for all Election Staff will be sent prior to town meeting which will include Personal Protection Protocols (PPPs) including proper handwashing techniques, proper mask wearing, use of hand sanitizer, etc.

### **CHECK-IN**

- Voters will be strongly advised to either wear a mask or some kind of facial covering before entering the building. A limited supply of masks and gloves will be available for voters.
- Visitors or members of the media will be advised to wear masks.
- All Election Staff will be required to wear masks while present at the town meeting location. Masks and disposable gloves will be provided to all Election Staff.
- Election Staff will wash their hands often and have hand sanitizer at their tables.
- Hand sanitizer will be placed at the entrance and exit of the building.
- Protective shields will be placed on check-in tables.
- Poll Pads will be used to increase speed of check-in.
- Election Staff will keep a six-foot distance from each other at all times.
- Spatial Distancing guides will be set up at the check-in area marking six foot intervals.

### **DURING TOWN MEETING/SEATING LAY OUT**

- The Tewksbury Memorial High School Gymnasium will be utilized as the primary location. Seating will be spaced six feet apart. According to <https://www.safe-meeting.org/> we need 15,552.00 SF for 300 people and the gym is 16,000. If the Gymnasium fills to capacity, voters will be directed to the Cafeteria followed by the Auditorium.
- All areas will be suited for a one-way traffic flow to avoid face-to-face encounters and maintain a six-foot separation of voters and staff.

- Voters will be allowed to enter and exit the spaces through different and separate doors. Entry/Exit doors will be propped open, so that no one has to touch handles/doorknobs.
- Directional and spatial arrows will be taped to the floor or walls as well as on certain seating areas to indicate six foot intervals.
- Microphones will be sanitized after each speaker.

### **AUDIO/VISUAL SET-UP**

Pursuant to [MGL Chapter 39, § 10](#) The town meeting may be held in one or more places; provided, that if it is held in more than one place, the places are connected by means of a public address system and loud speakers so that the proceedings in all such places may be heard and participated in by all the voters present therein. Telemedia Department Director, Brian Dorrington will be responsible for arrangements relative to the audio/visual components of town meeting.

### **ASSISTANT MODERATORS**

Pursuant to [MGL Chapter 39, § 14](#), if, as provided for in section ten, a town meeting is held in separate places equipped with a public address system and loud speaker facilities, the moderator may appoint an assistant moderator to preside at each place of meeting whereat the moderator is not present. The assistant moderator shall have all the powers vested by law in the moderator to preside at and regulate the proceedings in the meeting at which he presides except that he shall not recognize any citizen desiring to address the meeting except after first obtaining permission of the moderator.

### **AFTER TOWN MEETING**

- Efforts will be made to reduce crowding as meeting adjourns.
- The Moderator will direct staggered exit times by row using multiple exits points.
- Socialization in parking lot post-meeting will be discouraged.
- Trash/recycling bins will be placed at exits to dispose of used PPE, handouts, etc.
- Disinfect/sanitize all chairs/tables/materials/clickers/etc., as well as other high touch areas such as door handles, etc.