

TOWN MODERATOR OF THE TOWN OF WALPOLE

**DECLARATION OF RECESS AND CONTINUANCE
OF THE MAY 3, 2021 ANNUAL SPRING TOWN MEETING**

This Declaration is being issued pursuant to the authority vested in the Town Moderator by the provisions of G.L. c. 39, § 10A. I hereby provide notice to the Town of Walpole that I have determined that it is in the public's interest, due to the public health and safety risks posed by the novel coronavirus COVID-19, to recess and continue the May 3, 2021 Annual Town Meeting until 10:00AM May 1, 2021 at the Walpole High School.

I have issued this Declaration after careful and considerable deliberation about the implications of the rapid spread of the disease, present lack of containment, and risk to most vulnerable populations inherent in public gatherings at this time. Various professional sports leagues, universities, school districts, cultural institutions and events, and more, have been cancelled, closed, or temporarily suspended normal operations. Similarly, various public and private entities have closed operations in response to the continued spread of the virus. Based, in part, upon the Executive Order from the Governor dated March 23, 2020, and the order dated March 30, 2020 prohibiting gatherings of ten or more individuals, and the declaration of a State of Emergency in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United States, I consulted with public safety officials, the Board of Health, and the Select Board, and reviewed guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A significant consideration in this decision includes the important role of Town Meeting as the legislative body of the Town, and my obligation to ensure that all who wish to participate are able, particularly, vulnerable members of our community.

Holding the meeting on the evening of May 3, 2021 as scheduled inside at the high school will limit the number of potential attendees, and possibly exclude Town Meeting Representatives. Moreover, holding the meeting outside on the evening of May 3, 2021 creates additional risks.

Being respectful of the health, safety, and wellbeing of all of the voters of the Town of Walpole, therefore, I have determined in accord with G.L. c. 39, §10A that the rapidly evolving situation involving COVID-19 will mean that some voters will be unable to attend the May 3, 2021 Annual Spring Town Meeting scheduled to be held inside and that they will therefore be deprived of the opportunity to participate in such meeting. Without a continuance as declared hereunder to May 1, 2021, I am concerned that the Town will avoid forcing voters to choose between participating in the Town Meeting and managing their health and safety in a manner most appropriate for them.

To provide as much advance notice as possible, in order to allow the Town the greatest period of time to evaluate the situation, this formal Declaration will be deemed to be issued and take effect April 3, 2021.

Please contact the Town Administrator's office with any further questions at (508) 660-7304.



Dan Bruce, Town Moderator

March 20, 2021 at 11:30 a.m.