

WENHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
NOTICE OF MEETING TO CONSIDER  
REDUCING QUORUM FOR OCTOBER 17, 2020 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

September 18, 2020

***The Board of Selectmen hereby provides notice of its intention to considering an adjustment of the quorum requirements for the October 17, 2020 Special Town Meeting.*** House Bill 4777, signed by the Governor on June 5, 2020, and codified as Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2020, attached hereto, authorizes a Board of Selectmen to reduce the quorum for an Annual or Special Town Meeting, regardless of whether such quorum is set by bylaw or charter. In Wenham, Section 1-1 of the Town Bylaws establishes a quorum of 120 registered voters.

As background, based upon the orders and guidance issued by the Governor and the Commonwealth Department of Public Health, among others, restricting large gatherings and various public functions, and the declaration of a State of Emergency in the Commonwealth, the Town Meeting has been delayed while additional information about the transmission of COVID-19 became available, and monitoring and some of the restrictions imposed by the Governor have been relaxed. The goal, of course, was to ensure that all who wish to participate are able, particularly vulnerable members of our community. The phased reopening of the Commonwealth is ongoing; however, holding a large meeting during this time must nevertheless account for appropriate safety planning. Significant planning has been, and will continue to be, undertaken with respect to holding the Special Town Meeting on October 17, 2020.

One of the most essential jobs of a special or annual Town Meeting is to finally approve a budget for the fiscal year, and the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator and Finance Committee determined it was in the Town's best interests to act swiftly to approve a budget once a reasonable safety plan could be developed for holding the meeting. In light of the uncertainty with respect to state budget issues, however, it was anticipated at that time that a special town meeting may well be needed before the Town could request the Department of Revenue to set the Town's tax rate. Working with the Town Administrator, Police Chief, Health Agent and other key staff, the Town is preparing a Special Town Meeting plan consistent with its prior experience, and the advice and guidance of the Governor and the Department of Public Health. There may nevertheless be voters who are worried about participating or who may choose to continue to stay at home during this crisis. For that reason, the Board of Selectmen will meet on September 29, 2020 to discuss whether to reduce the quorum as a way to ensure that the Town Meeting can accomplish the important business of appropriating a budget and taking other critical actions.

Therefore, to preserve the option for Town Meeting to be held with a lower quorum, ***the Board hereby provides notice of its intent to meet on a virtual platform on September 29, 2020 at 6:30 p.m, to discuss whether it should lower the quorum to ensure that Town Meeting can efficiently and effectively undertake its responsibilities. Such meeting will be conducted via a virtual platform with public access to allow the public to follow the deliberations in real time. Please check the website at [www.wenhamma.gov](http://www.wenhamma.gov) for information about how to join the meeting.***

The Board of Selectmen looks forward to seeing you at the October 17, Special Town Meeting. If there are questions in the meantime, please contact Town Administrator Anthony Ansaldi at 978-468-5520 x2.