

WENHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN
NOTICE OF MEETING TO CONSIDER
REDUCING QUORUM FOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

JUNE 15, 2020

The Board of Selectmen hereby provides notice of its intention to considering an adjustment of the quorum requirements for the July 11, 2020 Annual Town Meeting. House Bill 4777, signed by the Governor on June 5, 2020, and enacted 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 has recently begun; however, holding a large meeting during this time must nevertheless account for appropriate safety planning. Significant planning has been undertaken, and is ongoing, with respect to holding Town Meeting on July 11, 2020.

One of the most essential jobs of the Town Meeting is to set the budget for the upcoming fiscal year, and the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator and Finance Committee have determined that it is in the Town's best interests to act swiftly to approve a budget for the upcoming fiscal year (rather than administratively approving a 1/12th budget on a monthly basis for several months). Working with the Town Administrator, Police Chief, Health Agent and other key staff, the Town is preparing a Town Meeting plan consistent with 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 June 23, 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 June 23, 2020 at 6:30p.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 for information about how to join the meeting.***

The Board of Selectmen looks forward to seeing you at the July 11, 2020 Town Meeting.

If there are questions in the meantime, please contact Town Administrator Anthony Ansaldi at ansaldi@wenhamma.gov or 978-468-5520 x.2.