



**Declaration and Continuance
Town of Wareham
Annual and Special Town Meeting
Monday, April 27, 2020**

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 39, § 10A, I Claire L. Smith, do hereby declare this day of **April 7, 2020** that the Town of Wareham Annual Town Meeting scheduled for Monday, April 27, 2020 be recessed and continued. In consultation with the Board of Selectmen, Public Safety Officials, and the Board of Health, I have determined that a public safety emergency may prevent voters from attending the meeting on Monday, April 27, 2020.

The nature of the emergency is the outbreak of the 2019 novel Coronavirus ("COVID- 19"). In making this Declaration, I note that on March 10, 2020, Governor Charles D. Baker declared a state of emergency in the Commonwealth and prohibited gatherings of more than 250 people throughout Massachusetts. On March 15, 2020, the Governor reduced the number constituting a prohibited gathering to no more than 10 people. Although the Governor's orders explicitly exempt municipal legislative bodies (in other words, town meetings), turnout for town meetings regularly exceeds 10 individuals and the exemption does not diminish the health risk to anyone attending the meeting.

In addition to consulting with the Selectmen, Public Safety Officials, and Board of Health, I have reviewed guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Given the rapid spread of the disease, the limited testing conducted to date, the present lack of containment, and the risk to vulnerable populations inherent in public gatherings; I conclude that delaying the Annual Town Meeting is in the best interest of the Town and its citizens.

M.G.L. Ch. 39, §10A mandates that the moderator "shall announce the declaration of recess and continuance as far in advance of the town meeting being continued as possible." It also requires that a town meeting recessed pursuant to this statute "shall be convened by the moderator not later than 30 days following the date and time of a town meeting previously called pursuant to a warrant.

Thus, under the statute, I do not have the authority to continue the Annual Town Meeting for longer than 30 days from April 27, 2020, but I do have the authority to issue further continuances. I therefore declare that the continued date of the Annual and Special Town Meeting shall be Monday, May 18, 2020, **but a further continuance be so declared, to convene on Monday, June 15, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.** at the **Wareham High School Auditorium, Viking Drive, Wareham, MA.**

If It is highly unlikely that the COVID-19 emergency will have abated by June 15, 2020 I intend to declare additional continuances of up to 30 days each as necessary to defer the meeting until it can be held safely. In considering further deferrals, I will continue to consult with the Board of Selectmen, Public Safety officials and the Board of Health.

Town Moderator

Posted by: _____
Wareham Town Clerk

Date: **04-07-2020 11:58 AM**