



Town of Arlington

John D. Leone, Moderator

Town Moderator's Statement Regarding Coronavirus and Town Meeting

March 24th, 2020

Greetings Arlingtonian:

As many of us know, State law requires that we complete our Annual Town Meeting 10 days before July 1st, and our Bylaw provides that Town Meeting shall begin on the fourth Monday in April, which this year is April 27, 2020. The Warrant for the meeting has been posted.

On March 23rd I met, virtually, with the Select Board, Town Manager, Mr. Chapdelaine and Town Counsel, Attorney Heim. Prior to that I conferenced with the Chair of the Finance Committee, Alan Tosti, and the Director of Health and Human Services, Christine Bongiorno.

Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 39, Sec. 10A) provides that the Moderator may “recess and continue” Town Meeting to a date within 30 days of the Declaration of Recess and Continuation. That is a decision that I intend to make only after further consulting with the Select Board and Director Bongiorno. If I determine that it is warranted, I will post the Declaration of Recess and Continuation at the Town Clerk's office, have the Constable post it as is done with the Warrant, request that the Town Manager post it on the Town's website, various list serves and perhaps through use of the Town's reverse 911 system. But, because I can only postpone the meeting for up to 30 days, although I can postpone more than once, I do not intend to make the formal Declaration of Recess and Continuation until April 27th, 2020.

At this point following the joint March 23rd Select Board/Moderator's Meeting, it seems certain that I, in all likelihood, will Recess and Continue Town Meeting, until May 27, 2020. I am not making the formal declaration now in order to preserve as much time as possible to allow for the Coronavirus pandemic to subside prior to holding Town Meeting and also to maintain our progress with the normal planning and preparation for Town Meeting. If, after the required consultations, in the third week of April, I determine that it is in the best interest of public health and safety I will formally Recess and Continue Town Meeting. Given the level of uncertainty, the best thing for us to do as a community is to continue moving forward to the April 27/May 27 meeting date, monitor the situation, and be prepared to adjust as circumstances and guidance dictate.

I have faith in all of our Town's public officials, institutions, and our Health and Human Services Department as they continue to monitor the spread of the coronavirus and make the best decisions for the safety of all our residents. We all understand that these actions and decisions will have a tremendous impact on all members of our community. By taking all necessary precautions now we can all do our part to slow the spread of the virus, reduce the number of people infected, and avoid overwhelming our health care system.

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