



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
WORK SESSION  
VIRTUAL MEETING**

**Minutes of Thursday, May 28, 2020  
11:00 AM**

Board Members present were Vice-Chair and Clerk Lynne Bermudez, Selectmen Boyd Jackson and Richard Gandt. Chairman John Spencer was not in attendance. Of the Selectmen's Staff, Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian, Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary Debi Morong, Board of Health Agent Wendy Hansbury, Purchasing Coordinator Donna Rich and Town Clerk Beth Willis were present. Other guests present were Moderator Steve Whelan and residents Marshall Hook and David Larson.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair and Clerk Bermudez called the meeting to order at 11:04AM.

**GOVERNOR'S ORDER**

Vice-Chair & Clerk Bermudez announced that, Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Topsfield Board of Selectmen will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the Topsfield website at [www.topsfield-ma.gov](http://www.topsfield-ma.gov) For this meeting, members of the public who wish to watch or listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner: Video conference (see log-in information below.) No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Topsfield website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

The meeting is being **recorded** by the Recording Clerk for record-keeping; and Selectman Gandt requested and was granted permission to record the meeting.

### **RE-OPENING PLAN FOR TOWN HALL**

Town Administrator (TA) Harutunian explained that Monday, June 8, 2020 is the scheduled date of Town Hall's "soft opening". This marks the beginning of Phase-II in conjunction with Governor Baker's plan to re-open businesses with specific guidelines across the State.

It is a challenge to open Town Hall and have it "resident friendly" while still having all the precautions in place that are there to protect the residents and employees.

The following are guidelines for Phase II Re-Opening:

- Town Hall Doors will remain locked
- Skeleton Crew (Employees work from home when possible)
- Appointment-based entry into Town Hall (15 minutes time slots)
- Clear instructions posted at each entrance
- Masks are mandatory (Gloves are optional)
- Masks, gloves & hand sanitizer available at each entrance
- Free-standing plexiglass for each employee desk and resident window
- Clearly marked social distancing tape on floor at windows
- Continued encouragement of dropping documents in Drop-Box

TA Harutunian thanked everyone for their continued hard work and cooperation during these unprecedented times.

### **2020 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING LOGISTICS**

TA Harutunian gave an update on discussions held regarding logistics for the Annual Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen had previously moved the Annual Town Meeting at Masconomet Regional School District from Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 7PM to Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 7PM.

Two options had been discussed for the location of the meeting – the Masconomet Field House and the Masconomet Football Field. Both can accommodate up to 400 seats and meet social distancing requirements

If the meeting is held outside, the date and time of the meeting would need to be moved as a meeting starting at 7PM would be buggy and eventually held in the dark. The date of Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup> or Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup> with an 8AM start were discussed.

Moderator Whelan's intention is to get through the entire warrant at this meeting and not have to gather again at a later date. His concern is whether enough residents will attend the meeting to have a quorum. The Governor's bill will

allow each town governance to reduce their quorum to 10%; for the Town of Topsfield that would be 10 people. The Board of Selectmen will discuss and possibly vote on this issue at another meeting TBD.

Police Chief Hovey explained that he had spoken to the Boxford Police Chief and Topsfield would be granted jurisdiction at Masconomet for Topsfield's Annual Town Meeting. The Officers will be on hand to meet with residents as they arrive at Masconomet to help them park their cars and direct them to the field (or field house).

Selectman Gandt made a motion that Topsfield's Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting originally scheduled for Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 7:00PM be moved to Saturday, June 20, 2020 at 8:30AM to be held at the Masconomet Regional School facility. Selectman Jackson seconded the motion and the motion carried as follows:

Vice-Chair & Clerk Bermudez	YES
Selectman Jackson	YES
Selectman Gandt	YES

Selectman Gandt made a motion that the Special Town Meeting, to be held at the time of the Annual Town Meeting for the Town of Topsfield, begin at 9:30AM on Saturday, June 20, 2020 at the Masconomet Regional School facility. Selectman Jackson seconded the motion and the motion carried as follows:

Vice-Chair & Clerk Bermudez	YES
Selectman Jackson	YES
Selectman Gandt	YES

### **TOWN ELECTION LOGISTICS**

Town Clerk Willis explained that the Annual Town Election date will not change; it is still scheduled for Thursday, June 25, 2020. Voting will look different with the social distancing protocols in place as follows:

- Check-in / Check-out will only have one person
- Masks are required (gloves optional)
- Masks & gloves will be available
- Anyone refusing to wear a mask cannot be denied to vote; will have to wait until room is cleared of other voters to allow that person to go in
- Each voter will get a new/clean marker to mark their ballot; cannot bring own
- One way in to vote and one way out; this has not changed from years past.

Selectman Gandt made a motion to approve the change in hours for the Town Elections scheduled for Thursday, June 25, 2020 to begin at 11:00 AM and end at 7:00 PM at St. Rose Church Hall. After a brief discussion Selectman Gandt withdrew his motion since Chairman Spencer was not present for the discussion and vote on this issue.

At 12:45PM, Selectman Gandt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Jackson seconded the motion and the motion carried as follows:

Vice-Chair & Clerk Bermudez	YES
Selectman Jackson	YES
Selectman Gandt	YES

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Morong, Executive Assistant &  
Recording Secretary

#### **DOCUMENTS**

- Agenda
- Town Hall Re-Opening Plan (In Phases)