

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

NOTICE OF MEETING TO CONSIDER REDUCING QUORUM FOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

JUNE 11, 2020

***The Selectboard of the Town of Montague hereby provides notice that on June 23rd at 6:30pm, the Selectboard will meet on a virtual platform for the purpose of considering an adjustment of the quorum requirements for the Annual Town Meeting. Please be advised that this discussion will not be held if the Annual Town Meeting achieves a quorum and conducts its business on June 13, 2020, as currently planned. If the Annual Town Meeting is adjourned due to lack of quorum, it is expected that it will be continued to June 27.***

On June 5, 2020, the Governor signed into law Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2020, which authorizes a Select Board to reduce the quorum for an Annual or Special Town Meeting held during the COVID-19 State of Emergency, regardless of whether such quorum is set by bylaw, charter or special Act. In Montague, Section 26 of Chapter 398 of the Acts of 1962 provides for a quorum of the majority of elected Town Meeting Members, which is 64 members.

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, significant planning was undertaken to hold Town Meeting outdoors. The intent of such plan was to provide voters with a way to attend Town Meeting without having to choose between protecting their health and participating as a member of the legislative body of the Town.

A significant consideration in the Selectboard's decision to recess and continue Annual Town Meeting from its scheduled date in May to June 13, 2020 was its obligation 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. Notwithstanding the significant planning that has been undertaken with respect to holding Town Meeting on June 13, 2020, the Selectboard is planning for the possibility that the meeting will not be held due to lack of quorum and that the meeting will be rescheduled to June 27.

One of the most essential jobs of the Town Meeting is to set the budget for the upcoming fiscal year, and the Selectboard and Finance Committee have determined that it is in the Town's best interests to approve a budget for the upcoming fiscal year (rather than administratively approving a 1/12<sup>th</sup> budget on a monthly basis). Working with the Moderator, Town Administrator and other key staff, the Town has prepared a back-up Town Meeting plan consistent with the advice and guidance of the Governor and the Department of Public Health, in the event that the meeting does not go forward on June 13, 2020 due to a lack of quorum.

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 at 6:30pm, to discuss whether, with the Moderator's input and approval, it should lower the quorum and to what number to ensure that Town Meeting can undertake its responsibilities on June 27, 2020.***

***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 <https://www.montague-ma.gov/> for information about how to join the meeting.***

The Selectboard looks forward to seeing you at the Annual Town Meeting on June 13, 2020.