

2020 Annual Town Meeting: Key Points for Voters Regarding This Year's Meeting

Dear Kingston Voters,

This year, the annual town meeting is coming at a difficult and challenging time, as we address the unique circumstances associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, we think it is important to share detailed information with voters about the plans and logistics for the 2020 annual town meeting, which will be held Saturday, June 13, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. at the Kingston Intermediate School.

First and foremost, we want you to know that special Covid-19-related public safety measures and precautions are being put in place. The overarching goal is to do everything possible to conduct the meeting in a way that protects the health and safety of attendees, while at the same time upholding our high town meeting standards of participatory democracy. The planning and organization for this year's annual meeting is being done in collaboration with the: Town Clerk, Paul Gallagher; Chief of the Fire Department, Mark Douglass; Chief of the Police Department, Maurice Splaine; Town Counsel, Jay Talerman; Health Agent, Arthur Boyle; PACTV staff; and the KIS facilities team.

Below is a summary of the specific steps being taken to help conduct the annual town meeting safely and efficiently.

- **Meeting Venue:** This year's annual town meeting will be held inside at Kingston Intermediate School. The building and bathrooms will be disinfected. Then the Town Clerk will set up the 4 registration tables with plexiglass to protect the workers and citizens. PACTV will set up the audio/visual in the auditorium and a secondary room in the gymnasium with microphones. The building and bathroom will then be disinfected again. If you are hearing impaired please advise the police officer who will ensure you are seated in the auditorium. Nonvoters will be seated in the gymnasium.
- **Social Distancing:** Safe social distancing measures will be followed for voter check-in and in the arrangement of seating. The custodian staff will mark 6' seating. Please ensure that you do not move seats.
- **Face Coverings:** Attendees will be required to wear a mask or other face covering from the time they leave their vehicle until you reenter your vehicle at the conclusion of the meeting. Masks will be available if anyone does not have a mask or face covering. If you chose to not wear a mask you will be seated in the gymnasium. If you are unable to wear a mask for a long-term period do to medical reasons then please advise a police officer and you will be seated in a special section in the gymnasium.
- **Materials:** We will not be recycling materials so please take your Warrants home with you or place them in the trash barrels at the exit. For the safety of our citizens we will not allow additional materials to be disseminated. Please bring your own water and hand sanitizer.
- **Entry:** We ask that anyone who has had any symptoms or a temperature not attend the meeting for the safety of all. One party or a family will enter at a time. Please plan to arrive early so you can get seated before the start of the meeting. Upon your entry to KIS a volunteer will direct you to a table. Please maintain 6' social distancing at all times. There will be four registration tables, one for each precinct. You will need to social distance in the line to enter the area. Lines will be marked by the Town Clerk to designate 6" distancing. Hand sanitizer will be available. After you register there will be a volunteer to direct to seating. The doors will be opened by volunteers to avoid multiple hands touching the door handles. Once you are seated, we are requesting that you remain in your seat. If you chose to speak, please raise your hand, you will be acknowledged and then can proceed to a speaker area. This may require all voters seated in a row to rise and step out of the row keeping 6' social distancing.

- **Microphone Cleaning and Disinfecting:** The major concern is the microphones which cannot practically be disinfected after each use. PACTV has installed boom microphones that will be hanging from the ceiling. Masks will be required of anyone who chooses to address the meeting for the protection of all citizens.
- **EMS:** The Kingston Fire Department will have a paramedic available.
- **Exiting after the Meeting:** To provide for a safe and efficient exiting process, the Kingston Police Department will exit voters by rows to ensure that social distancing can continue upon exiting. Please do not congregate as that is not safe for the citizens.
- **Bundling:** To assist with efficiency, Moderator will be bundling Articles so that multiple Articles can be voted as one. Moderator shall advise what Articles numbers will be bundled prior to the meeting. Seven voters may rise to object to a bundling and a vote of the members will be held to determine if the bundled articles will proceed with voting as one.
- **Meeting Efficiency:** A number of steps will be taken to help facilitate a quick, efficient and orderly meeting.
 - **Time Limits for Speaking:** Under the moderator's powers to regulate the town meeting proceedings, time limits are being put in place for those speaking at town meeting.
 - Anyone presenting an article will be given **up to four minutes** to introduce the article.
 - Comments from voters will be **limited to two minutes**.
 - No one will be recognized to speak a second time.

We recognize that this is a challenging time and understand that people are being careful and cautious about going out in public. Our hope is that the safety measures and precautions will give voters a comfort level about attending the annual town meeting. We are trying to take a common sense approach to maintaining citizen safety with an equal opportunity for all participants at Town Meeting. We thank you for all your compliance to these directives as we not only want the wheels of democracy to continue but also for our citizens to be safe and that Town Meeting be open for all including our elderly and other individuals who are immune compromised. To be sure, we recognize that some of these directives may seem to be overbroad to some but we must think of WE THE PEOPLE not I.

Thank you and stay safe.

Janet M. Wallace, Town Moderator