

## DECLARATION OF RECESS AND CONTINUANCE

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 39, §10A, I declare the Ashland Annual Town Meeting scheduled for June 16, 2020 recessed and continued, this 1<sup>st</sup> day of June 2020. In consultation with the Select Board and the Board of Health, I have determined that a public health emergency exists which may prevent voters from safely attending the meeting on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

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 (subsequently reduced to fewer than 10 people, which order is still in effect through Phase I of reopening). Although the Governor’s orders explicitly exempt municipal legislative bodies (in other words, town meetings) the exemption does not diminish the health risk to voters in attending the meeting on June 16<sup>th</sup>. In addition to consulting with the Select Board and the Board of Health, I have reviewed guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. DPH’s guidance for Phase I of reopening is that people over the age of 65 and people who have underlying health conditions – who are at high risk for COVID-19 – should continue to stay home except for essential errands such as going to the grocery store and to attend to healthcare needs, and that all residents are advised to leave home only for healthcare, worship and permitted work, shopping, and outdoor activities. Given this guidance, 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 the moderator’s original announcement of the declaration of recess and continuance.” Thus, under the statute, I do not have the authority to continue the Annual Town Meeting for longer than 30 days from the date of this Declaration, but I do have the authority to issue further continuances. I therefore declare that the continued date of the Annual Town Meeting shall be June 30, 2020, to convene at 7:00 p.m. at the Ashland High School. In considering further deferrals, I will continue to consult with the Select Board and the Board of Health.

Given at Ashland at  
7:17 a.m. this 1<sup>st</sup> day of June, 2020.



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Adam B. Shuster  
Town Moderator  
Ashland