

Moderator's Guidelines for Ashland Annual Town Meeting - June 30, 2020

Holding a town meeting during a global pandemic is a new experience and definitely not something to be taken lightly. In preparing for Annual Town Meeting I've worked with Town staff and the Board of Health; reviewed guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, the Department of Public Health and Governor Baker; and taken advantage of the experiences of other towns that held their meetings prior to Ashland. My overriding goal has been to accomplish the necessary business of the Town while providing the safest possible environment for those attending ATM.

This effort was greatly aided by the Select Board which early on made what I believe to be the very wise decision to not post a warrant. This was followed by the equally smart decision to limit the warrant to only those articles that were absolutely necessary. I'd like to publicly thank the Select Board and Town Manager for this.

There were a lot of people who provided input into what ATM should look like and how it would function, and I couldn't have done this without all of them. But in the end, the final decisions rested with me and I take full responsibility for all of them.

ATM will take place in the AHS gymnasium. Note that **ONLY REGISTERED VOTERS** will be allowed to enter the gym. Non-voters are welcome to view the televised proceedings from the cafeteria (or the comfort of their own home). Also note that **PROPERLY WORN FACE MASKS ARE REQUIRED AT ALL TIMES INSIDE THE HIGH SCHOOL** (medical exceptions apply).

To minimize the time spent inside, the doors to the high school won't open until 6:30pm. Upon entering, an usher will direct voters to one of two check-in tables. After checking-in, voters will be directed to a designated entrance to the gym where they will be escorted to a seat by an usher. We will have both individual seats and twosomes available. The seating process has been designed to avoid having to walk near those already seated, so please sit where the usher directs you. Once seated, please remain in your seat until the conclusion of the meeting unless you are going to a microphone to speak. To minimize close contact, warrant books will be placed on the seats ahead of time.

We will have the usual two microphones set up for those asking questions and there will be lines on the floor at 6-foot intervals to ensure proper distancing while waiting to ask a question. When approaching the microphones, please do not touch them or their stands. There will be ushers present to adjust the height of the microphones as needed and disinfect the microphones after each speaker.

At the conclusion of the meeting, please wait to leave so that I may dismiss everyone by section and row in an orderly manner and socially distant manner.

It's going to be a warm and humid evening on Tuesday - though likely drier on the inside than it will be outside. While we've got large fans being brought in to keep the air moving, I encourage everyone to dress casually and comfortably. I certainly plan to.

Adam Shuster
Town Moderator