



TOWN OF CARLISLE, MASSACHUSETTS

Town Moderator

Wayne H. Davis

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FORMATION OF CARLISLE TOWN MEETING 2020 ADVISORY COMMITTEE April 29, 2020

I am today announcing the formation of an advisory committee to assist me in my role as Town Moderator to determine how to conduct our Annual Town Meeting safely while allowing for full and as close-to-normal public participation as possible.

Due to public health and safety concerns related to the novel coronavirus, the Board of Selectmen have set Tuesday, June 23, 2020 for the Annual Town Meeting and determined to include on the Warrant only those items deemed essential to the continued operation of town business. Other non-essential items have been deferred to a Special Town Meeting to be called later this year.

The June 23 meeting date presumes that public health officials will have determined by that time that some relaxation of the current "stay-at-home" guidelines is appropriate. If that does not occur and it would not be safe to conduct Town Meeting, then both the Board of Selectmen and the Moderator have statutory authority to reschedule.

Even if public gathering is deemed permissible by June 23, some level of social distancing will be required, and it will not be physically possible to safely seat 150 people or more in Corey Auditorium. Under current Commonwealth of Massachusetts law, a completely virtual Town Meeting is not permissible. We must therefore plan alternative means for conducting the meeting while respecting whatever public health guidelines are advised at the time.

Carlisle works best when it harnesses the energy, creativity, and diversity of perspective and expertise of its residents and Town officials. To do so under these unusual conditions, I am appointing an *ad hoc* Advisory Committee for Town Meeting 2020 whose mission will be two-fold:

- 1) Advise the Town Moderator how to conduct Town Meeting safely while maximizing the opportunity for public participation; and
- 2) Help marshal the resources needed to do so.

The Advisory Committee will be composed of:

Chief of Police John Fisher
Fire Chief Bryan Sorrows

Town Administrator Tim Goddard
Acting Town Clerk Peggy Wang
Board of Selectmen, Vice-Chair Alan Lewis
Finance Committee (TBD)
Council on Aging, Chair Abha Singhal
Board of Health, Chair Todd Thorsen
Health Agent, Linda Fantasia
Carlisle Public Schools Network Manager Scott Heffner
General Public: up to five volunteers who are tech savvy and/or
knowledgeable/thoughtful around Town Meeting procedure
With assistance from Town Counsel, our audio-visual contractor, and Minuteman Media
as needed

I am especially eager to solicit nominations, including self-nominations, of individuals who may be willing to serve on this committee. While we cannot currently conduct a completely at-home virtual Town Meeting, we likely can go "semi-virtual" by dispersing individual citizens among Corey Auditorium and classrooms at the school, connected via video-conference. Such a solution will require technical analysis, planning and testing, and then in-person support to execute well. We will need help to make this happen.

People interested in serving, or suggesting others who might be interested, should contact me at Moderator@CarlisleMA.gov. Non-citizen residents of Carlisle are eligible and welcome.

I expect to schedule the first virtual meeting of the committee the week of May 11. Thereafter most of the work will proceed in sub-committees or small groups.