



TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Town Clerk

MEMORANDUM

To: All Departments, Boards, and Committees

From: Tara Sullivan, Town Clerk

Date: March 31, 2020

RE: Postponing Annual Town Election – April 6, 2020

In response to the State of Emergency and concerns about COVID-19, and its implications on election administration, the Governor signed a law authorizing the Board of Selectmen to vote to postpone the local election which was scheduled for April 6, 2020. A copy of the law is attached. At a meeting duly posted on March 31, 2020, the Board of Selectmen voted to reschedule the election to May 4, 2020.

The law requires the Town to post a public notice of the postponed election and rescheduled election date on its website and to broadly publicize the postponement and rescheduling. The Town of Blackstone will post this notice in the website, and will provide additional notice through a Reverse-911 Call, a notice will be submitted to air on the Local Cable Access Channel, and in a press release sent to the Woonsocket Call, the Milford Daily News, the Valley Breeze and the Blackstone Enlightener.

The law establishes a new voter registration deadline of 8:00pm (in-person, 11:59pm online), on the 10th day before the rescheduled election. The rescheduled election date is May 4, 2020, therefore, the 10th day before the rescheduled election is Friday, April 24, 2020.

The law authorizes the Town to reuse the election materials. The Town of Blackstone will be using the official and absentee ballots used for the April 6, 2020 election. As required by law, a sample of the ballot may be viewed online at www.townofblackstone.org/town-clerk.

In light of widespread practice of social distancing, the law provides for two alternatives to voting in person:

-First, the law allows any person taking precaution related to COVID-19 to vote by absentee ballot. All applications for an absentee ballot must be received by the Town Clerk before noon on Friday, May 1, at 5pm, the last business day before the election. Any person may apply for an absentee ballot by sending a signed request to the Town Clerk's office or filling out the absentee ballot application available online.

-Second, the law provides for early voting by mail. All applications for early voting ballots must be received before noon on Friday, May 1, 2020, the last business day before the election. Any person may obtain an early voting ballot by sending a signed request to the Town Clerk's office

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or by filling out and returning the early voting application available online. Your early voting ballot must be received by the Town Clerk before the polls close 8:00 PM on Election Day.

For candidates, the dates for the Campaign Finance Reports will be adjusted accordingly. The last day to file Finance Reports (8 days prior) is now April 27, 2020. The original date the Finance Reports were due was March 30, 2020. If a candidate has already filed their 8 Days Prior Report, they will need to file a new report by April 27, 2020. Campaign Finance Reports (30 days after) are now due on June 30, 2020.

The law does NOT make any other changes to elections or the election process. It does NOT, for example, change the number of signatures or the submission deadline for candidates for office.

The act specifically provides that an incumbent elected official whose term would have expired at a municipal annual town election if the election was not postponed pursuant to this act shall continue to serve in the official's position until a successor is elected and qualified (which is already set forth in section 107 of chapter 41 of the General Laws).

Sincerely,

Tara C. Sullivan
Town Clerk