



# TOWN OF BLACKSTONE, MASSACHUSETTS

## Office of the Town Clerk

### MEMORANDUM

To: All Departments, Boards, and Committees

From: Tara Sullivan, Town Clerk

Date: April 21, 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. On March 31, 2020, the Board of Selectmen voted to postpone the Election until May 4, 2020. At a meeting duly posted for April 21, 2020, the Board of Registrars and the Board of Selectmen voted to further postpone the election until June 15, 2020 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

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 10<sup>th</sup> day before the rescheduled election. The rescheduled election date is June 15, 2020, therefore, the 10<sup>th</sup> day before the rescheduled election is Friday, June 5, 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](http://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 Friday, June 12, 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

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be received before noon on Friday, June 12, 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 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. Absentee and Early Voting Ballot applications are available online, or can be requested by calling the Town Clerk's Office.

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 June 8, 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 June 8, 2020. Campaign Finance Reports (30 days after) are now due on July 15, 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