

OFFICE OF THE SELECTMAN



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May 2, 2020

Voluntown Residents,

Last night, in Executive Order No. 7HH, Governor Lamont announced the mandatory suspension of in person voting requirements by members of the public on municipal budgets.

The Board of Selectmen has tried to make every effort possible to hold the Annual Town Meeting so that the public can vote on the proposed budget and appropriations. We were originally going to schedule the Annual Meeting in September or October, hoping that there would be less restriction on public gatherings then. We were advised by the state that if that happened, our residents would not be able to participate in the Tax Deferment Program. Participation required tax bills to be out by July 1st. At the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Tuesday, April 28, the Board decided to schedule the Annual Town Meeting for June 9th, with plans in place to comply with the 6 foot distancing rules and mask wearing. Since the current State restrictions are only in place until May 20th, we thought this was a possibility. Other towns were planning this too.

The suspension of the Annual Town Meeting does not mean that residents will not have a say in the proposed government and BOE budgets. There will still be public hearings, held remotely, and residents will be able to submit comments. Details will be forthcoming on Monday after a new timeline and plan is reviewed with the town attorney.

I want residents to know that I do not agree with the Governor's order. I believe that a resident's vote on how their tax money is spent should be a right not so easily taken away. However, I am learning that what we think we have guaranteed under our state and local constitutions, is a perception.

Sincerely,

Tracey Hanson
First Selectman