



## WAKEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Monday, April 06, 2020

6:00 P.M. (Via Zoom virtual meeting)

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**COUNCIL  
MEMBERS  
PRESENT:**

Councilor Edward F. Dombroski, Jr., Chair  
Councilor Ann McGonigle Santos, Vice-Chair  
Councilor Mehreen N. Butt  
Councilor Jonathan P. Chines  
Councilor Paul R. DiNocco  
Councilor Peter J. May  
Councilor Julie Smith-Galvin

**ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:**

Town Council Clerk Sherri A. Dalton  
Town Administrator Stephen P. Maio  
Town Counsel Thomas A. Mullen

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**----- TOPICS OF DISCUSSION -----**

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|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Call to Order</b>        | Councilor Dombroski called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.  |
| <b>Pledge of Allegiance</b> | Councilor Dombroski asked everyone to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.  |
| <b>Attendance</b>           | Councilor Dombroski noted that all seven (7) Councilors were present and participating via Zoom. He said they were making history tonight, as this was the first virtual meeting for the Town Council.  |
| <b>Public Engagement</b>    | Madam Clerk Dalton stated that Cathy Juliano submitted a Public Committee Meeting Participation Form via email. Councilor Dombroski noted that Ms. Juliano resides at 14 Richards Road, Reading, MA. He read aloud her written submission asking whether the Town of Wakefield has considered closing or restricting parking and gatherings around the lake. She noted that beaches and parking areas are closed across New England and that the Governor has stated many times that we must all do our part to minimize the spread of COVID-19.  |
| <b>Annual Town Election</b> | The Town Election is currently scheduled to take place on Tuesday, April 28, 2020. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic it is quite apparent that the election will need to be postponed. Town Administrator Maio stated that on March 23, 2020 the Governor of Massachusetts signed legislation, Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020 due to COVID-19, which allows the Town Council the authority to move municipal elections with some caveats. The election could be moved between the scheduled date and a new date through June 30, 2020. In consultation with the Town Clerk and Town Counsel he said the date to move the election is recommended to be Tuesday, June 23, 2020. Town Clerk Sheeran stated that once the Town Council approves this date she will then make all arrangements to proceed accordingly. There will be early voting as well as absentee ballots available. Councilor Butt |

thanked Steve, Tom and Betsy for working on moving the date and stated that she will be abstaining from the vote as she is on the ballot. Town Clerk Sheeran said that everyone that currently holds an elected position will still hold that position through the re-scheduled election date of June 23, 2020 but the Ballot will be dated April 28, 2020. Chairman Dombroski noted that the legislation provides for people to be able to vote early by mail not just absentee because of health circumstances. Town Clerk Sheeran stated that upon the vote of the Town Council to proceed with the re-scheduled date of the election she will proceed with getting information out to the public as soon as possible. Councilor Chines asked Town Clerk Sheeran to remind everyone of some of the other deadlines in terms of when people will need to be registered. She answered the last day to register to vote is usually 20 days before the election but in this instance, it will be 10 days before the election which will be Friday, June 12, 2020 and that people will be able to come to Town Hall until 8:00 p.m. that night. She again stated that she will get all of this information out to residents. Councilor Chines asked to what extent changing the election date has on the Town Council's reorganization. Town Administrator Maio answered that legislation states that everyone remains in office and whatever individual Boards want to do on their own regarding reorganization is up to that Board. Town Counsel Mullen stated that reorganization is entirely a function of a board's wishes and traditions and boards can reorganize at every meeting, if they so choose. Councilor DiNocco moved that pursuant to Section 1 of Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2020 and because of the Governor's Declaration of a State of Emergency to Respond to COVID-19, the Town election scheduled for April 28, 2020 be postponed to Tuesday, June 23, 2020. Councilor Santos seconded. Motion passed 5-0-2 by a roll call vote with Councilor Butt and Councilor Dombroski abstaining, as both indicated they were on this election's ballot.

#### **COVID-19 Update**

Councilor Dombroski reported that as of April 06, 2020, there are 60 positive cases of COVID-19 in Wakefield, which is significant in a community of 25,000. One of the best means of mitigation, and it cannot be stressed enough, is social distancing. The Town has pushed out a lot of information about social distancing, in addition to the news media. Councilor Dombroski thanked Health Director Clay, Emergency Management Director Walsh, Chiefs Skory and Sullivan, and Town Administrator Maio for their leadership during this challenging time. He said he is in regular contact with Mr. Maio, often several times a day, and is very appreciative of the work being done. There are a number of instances where people are still not heeding that advise and one of the most problematic of them continues to be walking the Lake. Sidewalks at best are approximately five feet wide and some are closer to four feet wide where you have telephone poles. It is not possible to social distance 6 feet when you have that kind of narrow passageway, regardless of whether you are walking in even one direction. Councilor Dombroski noted that the Food Pantry remains open and you can continue to make contributions to the Food Pantry. For every one dollar contribution that nets out five dollars' worth of food. The Food Pantry has curbside pickup where someone will come out and assist you. The Wakefield

Emergency Fund is another opportunity for those in need and donations are also currently being accepted by mail to the Town Administrator's office or at the drop box located outside Town Hall. "Emergency Fund" should be listed on the memo line of the check made payable to Town of Wakefield. The business community is also being impacted by this pandemic. The Wakefield Lynnfield Chamber of Commerce has been helping out local businesses, including through the Small Business Administration. There is a portal on the bottom left corner of our Town's website homepage, a resources center titled COVID-19, where you can access a lot of different information as well as a separate business resource section that links to the state's page for small businesses referencing various different loans, including payroll protection. The Boys and Girls Club of Stoneham and Wakefield has revenues down about 25% and they are accepting donations as well on their website. The Cards for Our Community Program set-up through the Chamber of Commerce for supporting business is a program that allows you to donate either through a GoFundMe page through the two drive-up tellers that are available at The Savings Bank locations at Lakeside Office and Greenwood. The Chamber will then purchase gift cards to other grocery stores or local business establishments and give them to those most in need.

Town Administrator Maio began his update by thanking the employees and residents for doing their part and noted that almost every employee is working remotely from home. Town Administrator Maio stated that with a vote of support of the Council he would like to temporarily close down all public areas surrounding the Lake effective immediately, including parking lots and restricting parking on side streets to resident parking only. He stated he will contact the private owners of businesses as well. The Councilors supported the Town Administrator's recommendation. Councilor Santos so motioned. Councilor DiNocco seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

Town Administrator Maio stated that at the next Town Council meeting of April 13, 2020 he is seeking support for a recommendation to cancel the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade and festivities for this year. He has been in contact with the Wakefield Independence Day Committee and the West Side Social Club and they understand this issue and agree. Councilor Chines suggested to have some sort of an online presence and some contests 'Your 4<sup>th</sup> of July Moments'. Blossoms at the Beebe has also been cancelled.

Councilor Chines asked for information at the next meeting pertaining to the status of our town employees in terms of who is able to work remotely and the number of employees in each department and who has to come in to physically be working and are there employees who are not coming to work because they are not essential and not able to work from home.

**Matters Not  
Anticipated for  
Agenda**

Councilor Smith-Galvin asked for an update on National Grid and if they are still working. Town Administrator Maio answered that as soon as they finish the

Salem Street section they will suspend work and the Town is not letting them do anything new at this time.

Councilor Butt thanked Steve Maio and his team for everything they are doing including the Board of Health. Melrose Wakefield Health Care had scheduled a briefing for Town officials at the same time as this meeting that they will be rescheduling as well as recording it. Thanked everyone for donating to the Emergency Fund and thought that maybe the Town could work with the Chamber about doing something for the businesses in town.

Councilor Santos talked about the community boards and the public shaming and she is hoping that people will be a little kinder as we move forward.

Councilor DiNocco stated that he has been working with the businesses and trying to get them information about programs that are out there and what particular applications they can fill out. Patronicity had reached out to him with an email of a possible funding opportunity that would work to benefit all businesses in Wakefield.

**Adjournment** At 6:57 p.m. Councilor Santos motioned to adjourn. Councilor DiNocco seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0 by a roll call vote.

**Next Council Meeting** The next regular Town Council meeting is April 13, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom virtual meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Sherri A. Dalton  
Town Council Clerk