

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT - TOWN MEETING & COVID-19

At this time, Brentwood's Town Meeting remains scheduled to continue at the Swasey Central School, Saturday, March 14, 2020 at 9:00 am.

We all share the goal of having residents attend the meeting, participate in the deliberative process, and cast their vote. We also want everyone to be safe and healthy. Unfortunately, because the incidence of COVID-19 is anticipated to increase in the general population over the next several months, it would not seem prudent to simply postpone Brentwood's Town Meeting to a later date. Additionally, there are a number of articles on the warrant that require timely action so that municipal operations are not interrupted.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to date, Local and State officials, the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and others have basically advised everyone to follow your mother's advice for cold and flu season. This includes the following:

- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow;
- Wash your hands thoroughly throughout the day;
- Keep your fingers away from your mouth;
- If you're sick or not feeling well, please consider others before coming to the meeting

If you add social distancing (maintain 6 feet separation, no handshakes or high fives) to this list, it remains the best advice as we approach Town Meeting and any other group gatherings, or contacts you have in the near future.

In addition, we wish to share the following from the CDC:

"Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. People who are at higher risk are encouraged to avoid crowds as much as possible." -Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Get your mass gatherings or large community events ready for coronavirus disease 2019." March 3, 2020.

What are we doing to prepare for town meeting?

- We will have hand sanitizer available.
- Hand sanitizer should not replace hand washing, and you are encouraged to do so frequently, especially after a ballot vote.
- Attendees are encouraged to spread-out in the gym, place at least a seat between you and someone else.
- In the event of a ballot vote:
 - The tops of ballot receptacles will be left open so as to reduce the possibility someone will come into contact with potentially contaminated surfaces.
 - Pens will be provided for you. You may bring your own pen from home if you choose.
- Note on surgical masks:

These are a good practice if you are sick and need to go into a doctor's appointment or some other essential function where you will contact others. They do not, however, provide the appropriate filtration if you are trying to prevent the spread of what you have or are trying to avoid exposure to COVID-19. The bottom line is that if you are sick and decide to attend but wear a surgical mask, you are

possibly still going to spread whatever you have. If you are not sick and wear a surgical mask, you are still at risk of getting COVID-19 if you are exposed to it.

It is our intent to do everything practicable to help streamline the Town Meeting program (including the possibility of deferring action on some articles that are not essential to act on at this time) and minimize interpersonal contact/exposure. The Town is making preparations to configure and prepare the Town Meeting space to promote best practices in social distancing and sanitation.

We hope to see you at Saturday's Town Meeting (if you are feeling well!).

For more information on Covid 19 New Hampshire Public Health has published a Frequently Asked Questions document, which is available here: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/documents/covid-19-faq.pdf>. The information contained in the document provides preventative actions town and election officials can take to operate their meetings with reduced risk of exposure.