

**BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY
July 7, 2020
Minutes**

Present:	Bill Cleary Allison Hope Julia Andrews Nanette Rogers	Lynn Bursell Carol Howrigan Bob Bancroft
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Guests: Joseph and Diane Finnigan

The Board of Civil Authority met on Tuesday, July 7, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Bob Bancroft nominated Allison Hope as Chair, seconded by Julia Andrews. Motion passed: 7-0.

PRIMARY ELECTION POLL OPENING TIME

Nanette explained that voter turnout for the State Primary Election is usually quite low. The State is mailing postcards to all registered voters advising them of how to request an absentee ballot for the election. Voters simply need to return the postcard to their town clerk to request a ballot. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the State chose to send the postcard in hopes that voters will take advantage of voting absentee to reduce the number of people that will go to the polls on election day. Nanette asked the Board to consider opening the polls at 10 am rather than the traditional 7am because she anticipates lower in-person voter turnout. She added that opening the polls later will also help to protect the health and safety of the poll workers and community due to less exposure. The Board felt this was very reasonable given the low voter turnout in past years.

Carol Howrigan made a motion to open the polls at 10:00 a.m. for the State Primary Election being held on August 11, seconded by Lynn Bursell. Motion passed: 7-0.

NOVEMBER PRIMARY ELECTION – PROCESSING ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Nanette explained that Secretary Jim Condos issued a directive to allow all towns to process absentee ballots 30 days preceding the General Election. Under normal circumstances, this process is reserved for towns that have at least 5,000 voters on their checklist. This directive was issued due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is likely the State will decide to mail a ballot to all active registered voters. If this happens, there will be a significant increase in ballots returned for processing. Nanette stated that General Elections generally have high voter turnout and that the participation is even higher when there is a presidential race, which is the case this year. Processing would include opening the outside mailing envelope, checking the certificate to make sure it was filled out properly, checking the voter off the checklist and then placing the certificate envelope with the ballot into a secure container until election day. The ballot would not be removed from the certificate envelope until it is time to feed it into the machine. Since the checklist will need to be printed to go through this process, Nanette feels that the processing should be done closer to the election, maybe the Saturday before, to minimize the changes that need to be made to the checklist after it is printed. She is requesting that the Board approve the processing so that those present on voting day can focus their attention on the voters coming in to vote.

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Bob Bancroft made a motion to allow the early processing of General Election absentee ballots as laid out in the Secretary of State's directive, seconded by Julia Andrews. Motion passed: 7-0.

Nanette advised that the directive also allows for towns to feed the ballots into the voting machine the day before the election. At this time, she is unsure if this is something that will be done but would like the option if it seems necessary.

Bob Bancroft made a motion to allow General Election ballots to be processed through the voting machine the day before the election, seconded by Julia Andrews. Motion passed: 7-0.

MINUTES

Carol Howrigan made a motion to approve the February 27, 2020 minutes as written, seconded by Julia Andrews. Motion passed: 7-0.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison Hope, Chair
Board of Civil Authority

Nanette Rogers
Town Clerk