

Berlin VOTER GUIDANCE for

2020 Annual Town *Meeting* &

2020 Annual Town *Election*

## 2020 BERLIN ANNUAL *TOWN MEETING*

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Berlin Annual Town Meeting is being held *outdoors* on the basketball court\* located immediately adjacent to Berlin Memorial School at 34 South Street.

\*NOTE: This is NOT the basketball/tennis court area immediately fronting on South Street, but the smaller basketball court aside the BMS school gymnasium.

LOCATION: Berlin Memorial School, 34 South Street, Berlin, MA 01503

DATE: Monday, June 22, 2020\*\*

START TIME: 7:30 PM

VOTER CHECK IN STARTS AT: 7:00 PM

RAIN DATE IF NEEDED\*\*: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 (same start time & location)

\*\*The Rain Date, if needed, will be declared by the Town Moderator by 5 PM on Monday, June 22nd. If Town Meeting is delayed until Wednesday, June 24th, the decision to use the rain date will be announced Town wide as soon as possible after 5PM via these processes:

* Code Red Alert system (if you haven’t enrolled, please do so now at <http://www.townofberlin.com/public-safety/pages/sign-codered-notifications>)
* The Town of Berlin website News & Announcements at [www.townofberlin.com](http://www.townofberlin.com)
* The Town of Berlin Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/BerlinMASS>.

**ARRIVAL**

Motorists should enter Berlin Memorial School’s driveway at 34 South Street and park aside the school before walking to the basketball court.

The meeting will start at 7:30 p.m. with check in beginning at 7:00 p.m. Please plan to arrive early.

**PLEASE BRING**

* Your 2019 Annual Town Report book shipped by U.S. Mail earlier this month (one per voter household). The book is also online at <http://www.townofberlin.com/sites/berlinma/files/news/2019_town_reports_online.pdf> Within the book please see:
  + Page 97 - *Warrant* or a listing of the 21 action items up for a vote
  + Page 90 - Proposed Fiscal Year 2021 Town budget
  + Page 87 - Finance Committees Fiscal Year 2021 budget recommendations
  + Annual reports from Town departments, boards and committees
* **PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN MASK, AS MASKS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR ENTRY** (per the Berlin Board of Health).  Masks shall remain on faces, covering nose and mouth for the duration of any one’s participation within the Town Meeting designated area. There will be some supplies on hand for those who forget to bring their own mask.  For those who cannot or will not mask, alternative seating arrangements will be provided within the voting area.
* Bug spray and/or sun screen if desired
* Bottled water (there will be no food or beverages available on site)

**WE WILL PROVIDE**

*Registered Voters* will receive a baggie at check-in. Inside will be:

* Copy of the motions to be made at Town Meeting so you can follow along
* FinCom's *revised* revenues sheets (updated from the Annual Town Report printed copy)
* Town Administrator's (first-ever) town report (was unintentionally omitted from the printed 2019 Annual Town Report book.
* pen for note taking
* hand sanitizer
* special voting card (color to be determined) for voters to raise overhead in the event a hand count is needed
* Fiscal Year 2021 Berlin Transfer Station *renew-by-mail* form

*Non-Voters* will also sign-in, but will be *seated in the designated “non-voter” seating area, way from registered voters*, and will receive a similar baggie but without *pen or voting card*.

**SEATING**

After check in, registered voters will be seated six (6) feet from one another, except for those who opt to sit immediately next to one another. Once opting to sit together, voters shall then remain seated together throughout Town Meeting. Voters may not roam or congregate with others within the designated Town Meeting confines.

If individuals wish to bring their own chair to Town Meeting, please note that some of the seating will be on pavement, and some will be on grass.  Seating is on a first-come, first-seated basis in terms of location within the voter-only seating area.

**SPEAKING**

The Moderator will direct voters where the line forms to speak to the Town Meeting assembly. There will be two microphones (sanitized between speakers by gloved/masked Cable TV studio representatives, as required by the MA Department of Public Health Guidelines on conducting Town Meeting during COVID-19.).

Those who wish to speak on an article will be asked to line up in a cue line (those waiting in this line for an opportunity to speak should maintain social distancing spaces of six feet between one another. Six-foot spacing lines will be marked on the ground).

One at a time, the Moderator will call voters to the microphone to speak only after a disinfected microphone is put back in place on its stand. Speakers are asked to not touch the microphone when they speak. Masks must remain on speakers’ faces as they speak, and it is suggested that you speak slowly and enunciate as you address the audience.

**EXITING**

*Temporarily*

**Please bring** your signed voter**card to the check-in table if you need to temporarily leave the designated voter seating area. You will need to show your card at Check-In when you return.**

*At Meeting End*

**The moderator will control the exiting of the meeting when it is over.** When Town Meeting ends, the Town Moderator will designate which row of voters may leave at a time to control the number of individuals gathering at the exit.  When Town Meeting ends, we ask that you leave in a timely and orderly fashion from the school grounds.

**IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDING THE**

**2020 BERLIN ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

* **If you are sick- stay home. If you are exhibiting a fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell - stay home.**
* **If you have been exposed to someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 or have been told to isolate or quarantine- stay home.**
* **No hugging or hand shaking should occur.**
* **Attendees will not be allowed to congregate before, during, or after the town meeting.**
* **All attendees must wear face covering over both their nose and mouth before, during, and when leaving the designated Town Meeting location.**
* **Persons who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the Centers for Disease Control (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home.**

## 2020 BERLIN ANNUAL *TOWN ELECTION*

LOCATION: Berlin Town Offices, Lower Level, 23 Linden Street, Berlin, MA 01503

DATE: Monday, June 29, 2020

POLLS OPEN: Noon/12:00 PM until 4:00 PM

In light of COVID-19 and with the goal of reducing risk to both the voters and election workers, there will be a slightly revised process for voting at the Annual Town Election.

**EARLY VOTING**

For the safety of all involved, we ask that you PLEASE VOTE EARLY and REMOTELY by requesting a ballot by mail. To vote early, documents you may need are online at <http://www.townofberlin.com/home/news/please-vote-early-2020-annual-town-election> including the:

* Early Ballot **application** <http://www.townofberlin.com/sites/berlinma/files/news/2020_municipal_election_early_ballot_application_-_from_town_clerk_-_rcvd_4-6-2020_to_post_online.pdf>
  + Specimen 2020 Annual Town Election **ballot** <http://www.townofberlin.com/sites/berlinma/files/news/specimen_2020_hires_annual_town_election_specimen_ballot_sent_jwheeler_4-22-2020.pdf>

**PARKING/ENTERING BUILDING**

If opting to vote in person, motorists will see signage directing votes to drive and park *behind* (and not in front of) the Town Office building. There will be designated parking areas behind the Town Office building so as to not impede the police, fire and ambulance response from the Public Safety building.

Voters will have direct ground-level walking/parking access to the Lower Level voting area in the Town Office building. There will be designated handicapped parking spaces available behind the building.

**WITHIN THE TOWN OFFICE BUILDING**

Berlin Police will be on site during the election, as is required by state law. The officers will also ensure that, in light of COVID-19 Massachusetts emergency orders, there shall be strict limits on the number of individuals (election workers and voters alike) allowed into the lower level voting area in order to maintain proper occupancy levels in light of COVID health mandates.

If required to wait before entering the lower level to vote, please be prepared to wait in line outside of the Town Office building until an officer permits your entry.

There shall be no public entry to the upper levels of the Town Offices, which will be reopening to Town employees for the first time since the COVID shut down of regular in-office operations on the same day as the Annual Town Election - Monday, June 29th (Note: the Town Offices are scheduled to reopen to the public by appointment only effective Monday, July 6th).

There shall be no loitering on the premises before, during or after voting in the lower level of the Town Office building. Motorists should load their vehicles and leave the premises immediately as we remain focused on keeping driving paths clear for public safety-first responders.

Vehicles not parked in properly designated voter parking areas are subject to immediate towing.

**IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR IN-PERSON VOTING FOR THE**

**2020 BERLIN ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION:**

* **If you are sick- stay home. If you are exhibiting a fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell - stay home.**
* **If you have been exposed to someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 or have been told to isolate or quarantine- stay home.**
* **No hugging or hand shaking should occur.**
* **Attendees will not be allowed to congregate before, during, or after the town election.**
* **All attendees must wear face covering over both their nose and mouth before, during, and when leaving the confines of the Town Office building.**
* **As with all elections, candidates and those campaigning for candidates shall maintain at least a 150-foot distance from the polling place at all times. That area will be marked outside the Town Office building on 23 Linden Street. There is no location on the Town property that suffices for campaigning. (MGL Chapter 54, Section 65)**
* **Persons who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the Centers for Disease Control (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home and avail themselves of the opportunity to vote early as outlined above.**

Questions about the Town Election? Contact Town Clerk Eloise Salls at [townclerk@townofberlin.com](mailto:townclerk@townofberlin.com) or call 978-838-2931.

See also Massachusetts Department of Public Health “*Guidance for Town Meetings to Address COVID-19 dated June 11, 2020*” online at**:** <https://www.mass.gov/doc/guidance-for-town-meetings-to-address-covid-19/download?_ga=2.202821009.1688026115.1592506503-175248097.1582652606>

\*\*END\*\* released 6/18/2020