

March 13, 2020

ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

TOWN OF CHESTER REGISTERED VOTERS
CHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Re: **Postponement of March 14, 2020 Town Meeting**

Dear Town of Chester Voters,

Ever-changing circumstances surrounding the corona virus, and recent postponements/cancellations of events, meetings and conferences throughout the country, have caused me to confer with the New Hampshire Municipal Association and other Town Moderators. I have also reviewed recent CDC guidelines to determine whether to postpone the March 14, 2020 Chester Town Meeting.

Obviously, I am concerned with the potential health risks to you and your families of meeting in close quarters at the Town of Chester multi-purpose room for several hours. In my opinion there does not yet appear to be sufficient information/testing to determine adequate protective measures when holding a large meeting in close quarters. In addition, I am concerned that the Town Meeting will not be well-attended through caution on your part. There are bond issues and other important warrant articles that deserve consideration from a representative number of voters at the Town Meeting.

As you know, this is the first time the Town of Chester has held its Town Meeting in March, as in past years it was held during the second week of May. Thus, I do not feel a postponement to Saturday, May 16, 2020 would create any significant impact on the Town Meeting process and its efficacy. Such a postponement will likely mean that health officials will have a better understanding of the corona virus, and the means to conduct close quarter meetings safely. It is also possible that by May 2020, the illness may be more contained.

I recognize that last year you voted to have the Town Meeting in March, but New Hampshire Statutory Law (RSA 40 II-a) authorizes me as Town Moderator to postpone the Town Meeting under certain circumstances (i.e. if it is determined that the meeting location is unsafe due to "accident, natural disaster, or other emergency"). I believe the advent of the corona virus is one of those "certain circumstances" and falls within the intent of the statute, which is to ensure that the Town Meeting is conducted in a location which is safe for the voters and participants.

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Based on the foregoing, I have decided to postpone the Chester Town Meeting until May 16, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Scott", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael J. Scott
Chester Town Moderator

cc. Chester Board of Selectmen
Elizabeth Lufkin, Town Clerk
Debra Doda, Town Administrator