

Town Manager's Report
October 14, 2020

Over the past couple of days the Town has received requests for expanded in-person absentee voting. In response to those requests we have added an additional hour and a half per day, with the new hours being Monday through Friday, 8 am to 11:30 am, then 1:15 to 3:30 pm. This is a change from the original hours of 9 to 11:30 am and 1:15 to 3 pm. The desire is that this will meet the demand for those who prefer to vote absentee in person instead of via the mail, in-person drop off, or our newly installed vote drop box.

This schedule allows a half hour in the morning for elections staff to set up for voters, and continue processing submitted ballots from the prior day. With the 11:30 end to the morning session, this allows staff to assist those in line at that time to also vote prior to noon. The one hour break at noon allows elections staff to have an opportunity to have lunch, return by 1, set up for the afternoon, and then assist voters until 3:30. This also gives those still in line the opportunity to vote similar to the morning, prior to the building closing at 4 pm for the day.

Finally, on October 30, the last day for absentee voting in person, the Town Hall will be able to assist voters from 8 to 11:30 am, and then from 1:15 to 5:00 pm.

As of close of business today, the Town has sent out close to 5,000 absentee ballots. Of those 5,000, in excess of 2,000 of those absentee ballots have been returned to the Town in the first week. Of those returned, over 1,900 were returned by the newly installed drop box in front of Town Hall. 130 have voted in person (an average of 33 per day), with the remainder choosing to hand them to an elections worker at the front door. Voters have apparently embraced the drop box option as safe, secure, and socially distant option. And this option is one we encourage as the safest way to vote in this age of COVID-19. It has been encouraging to watch voters taking "selfies" with the drop box over the past few days.

With an estimated number of 6,500 to 7,000 voters, it is estimated that when voting is complete, 80 plus percent of voters will have voted by the absentee process, with the majority employing the drop box option, and if the current trend continues we anticipate roughly 400 voters will choose the in person option, or roughly 7 to 8 percent of registered voters.

It is the steadfast desire to provide all who wish to vote every opportunity to exercise their right to vote, and based on Cape Elizabeth's strong tradition of high percentage of voter turnout, it is our desire that adding the additional time daily will increase the voter's options.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Sturgis
Town Manager