

TOWN OF WELLESLEY

MASSACHUSETTS



BOARD OF REGISTRARS

525 WASHINGTON ST., WELLESLEY, MA. 02482

JANE KETTENDORF  
GEORGE P. D. PORTER  
MARY (TOBY) SULLIVAN

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TOWN CLERK

**BOARD OF REGISTRARS EMERGENCY MEETING**

**TRANSCRIPT/MINUTES**

Wellesley Town Hall – Great Hall

8:30 AM

Monday March 16, 2020

**Remote participation by Board Members as allowed per the Governor’s Executive Order dated March 12, 2020.**

Jane Kettendorf participated remotely via the conference line. Toby Sullivan, George Porter and KC Kato participated at the Great Hall.

8:33 AM

(KC) Protocols for an Open Meeting is that we allow remote participation. Thank you Jane for being on the phone. This is KC Kato, we are calling to order the Board of Registrars Emergency Meeting. Thank you all for coming. We will go around the room and announce your name.

- George Porter,
- Toby Sullivan,
- Jane Kettendorf (on phone)
- KC Kato.

(KC) Citizens are allowed to call in. Is there any citizen also on this line? (no answer). OK. No citizen speak. Thank you for coming. This is to consider a court order to postpone the election. Just a little background.

- Executive order of yesterday (3/15/2020) Prohibits a gathering of more than 25 people. Until April 5. Although it does not apply to the municipal legislative bodies, the General Court and the judiciary. Although the courts are closed today except for emergency purposes. And the Governor has not said anything about elections.
- Although we could limit the number of people going into the polls to under 25, the challenge is the recommendation is good social distancing which is 6 feet - which is this far away (pointing to a 6 foot measure). Working at the table, you couldn't hand a ballot to somebody and not come within 3. Unless someone had amazingly long arms.
- The concern is that it becomes impractical and not following the safety guidelines that the CDC is putting out there.
- Annual Town Meeting will likely be postponed. Hello. I'm here (Jane). Therefore, making the timing of the election a little bit less urgent because the goal is to have the election before Town Meeting.
- I know there are many who have worked hard on their campaigns and would like to see the results. Personally, I would like to see the results because we've been working hard to make it happen.
- At this point, about 535 ballots have been already cast through absentee voting. Typically for these elections we get about 10% to 20%. Which would be around 1600 to 3000.
- Although it pains me to postpone the election, we really need to consider for the safety of the election workers and the community.
- Every hour we get cancellations on election workers. So right now, as of 8:30 this morning, we are down a few clerks and one warden. It's getting to a point where we need to think about if we can legally hold these.
- To do this would, it would require a court order directed by a vote of the Board of Registrars.
- That is why we are here today. We might not get the court order, but we can go to the court and try. But we might get it.

(Toby) What court does it go to KC?

(KC) That's a good question.

(George) Norfolk Superior Court.

(KC) Town Counsel is ready and available to work on that if we need to do that.

(Jane) Well KC, I think we would be disenfranchising a lot of the seniors who are being told to stay in and they won't go to the polls. My neighbor is not going. I have never missed a vote. And I'm sorry, but I'm not going. I think that's another factor.

(KC) We are no longer making it accessible to people.

(George) May I say something?

(Jane) If you leave it open, they are not able to go to the polls. They are staying in their homes. They are in the high risk area. And all of G, practically, is high risk. And there's nobody going out around here. I'm looking across the street at the senior housing. Nobody's out. And my neighbor is not going out to vote either. So I think that by opening the polls, keeping them open, you're disenfranchising them. Do you follow me?

(KC) Yes, yes absolutely. Thank you for your comments. George?

(George) May I say something. I very concerned about postponing the date of the elections. The date that democracy keeps faith with. We set a date. We are not a banana republic. We set a date and we keep it. Candidates all run for that date. Everybody runs for that date. Risk of snow storm. Risk of bad weather. Anything can happen. Bur we set the date and we keep the date. Setting another date...

(Jane) This is people's lives.

(George) Setting another date, does not solve the problem. Because as soon as we set another date, this could be getting a lot worse. How do we know? When do you end it. So you set the date and you do it. The library is open. The New York Stock Exchange is open. The Town Clerk's Office is open. I see these people over there are working (pointing to the IT office). Across the hall. Everybody's working. Nobody is taking time off here in Town Government. The library is working. The dump.

(Jane) The library is closed.

(KC) The library is closed.

(George) The library is closed, ok. But to me, it's just wrong. To change the date of the election. The candidates are going to have to - The ones that will win will spend more money on the new date. And some will just plain stop. It's sad because it will change the results. And I am very very much opposed to it. We set the date. It is a thing of faith in democracy that we keep the date.

(KC) Postponing is not unprecedented in Wellesley. We did postpone before.

(George) What happened? Candidates who sent mailings out for the second election all won.

(KC) That's a choice for anyone.

(George) That's a choice for anybody. But why should they be subjected to it. Why do you subject a candidate to it. They run for office, it's a voluntary thing. Voting is voluntary. No one has to vote in a

democracy. I believe in voting. But I am opposed to forcing people to vote. And I think it's a time to damn well put your foot down and say we're going forward and don't be cowards.

(KC) Toby?

(Toby) I think everything that we have learned from Dr. Fauci talks about trying to spread out what could be a real spike. And the only way to do that is to follow what his suggestions are. Which are to stay home. So I agree with Jane that this is a matter of people's lives. It's very unusual George.

(George) I agree.

(Toby). I do think that we really should try to follow what they are telling us to do - which is to stay home.

(KC) Ok. Thank you. Any other comments?

(Jane) No.

(KC) I'd like someone to make a motion. The motion would be to direct Town Counsel to file for a court order to postpone the March 17, 2020 Election.

(Toby) So moved.

(Jane) So moved.

(KC) Is there a second?

(Jane) Second.

(KC) Thank you. I am ex officio so I am unable to vote. We have to do a roll call vote so we will go around the room and everyone should say their name and how they are voting. Anybody would like to go first?

(Toby) Toby Sullivan, Yes

(Jane) Jane Kettendorf, I vote to postpone the Election.

(KC) So you vote Yes?

(Jane) Yes.

(KC) George?

(George) George Porter votes No.

(KC) Thank you. So based on this, it is a majority of yesses. I will work with Town Counsel to file for the court order. It is not a done deal. It is dependent on the courts. This allows us to move to the next step.

(Jane) When can we notify the voters? The election is tomorrow.

(KC) I understand. The plan that once we get the court order, we would do a reverse 911 call to all of town so people would get phone calls on that. And then we would also do a press release - to the Swellesley Report and the Townsman. The General News and Announcements goes out to about 5000 people. And in addition, I would contact all the candidates so that they would know and to let their people know.

(Jane) Thank you and stay safe. I was concerned about you 4 in that confined area. So stay safe. Stay away from each other.

(KC) We are all in a big space. Sitting 6 feet away. We are following the protocols. Do I have a motion to Adjourn?

(Toby) Motion to adjourn.

(Jane) So moved.

(KC) Adjourned.

8:45 AM

Transcribed and posted to the website on 3/20/2020 by KC Kato.