

**Text of e-mail from Will Senning, Director of Elections and Campaign Finance to  
Town Clerks – 04.27.2020**

Good Morning Clerks,

We hope you all are staying safe and healthy, and in good spirits.

We are writing this morning to inform you that, on Friday afternoon, we received the Governor's agreement with our second directive related to the administration of upcoming local elections. A copy of the directive is attached, and it can be found on our website at [this link](#), or on the [Elections Division COVID-19 Response page](#).

Our first directive allowed for local elections that were mandated to be held on a certain date to be cancelled and postponed. Many municipalities across the state followed our guidance and many local elections, including some annual meetings and budget revotes, were cancelled and postponed. As the rescheduled date for many of these elections approaches, most in late May or early June, we have issued this directive to provide options to these municipalities to conduct their elections as safely as possible. This directive is in addition to, not in replacement of, the first directive, meaning that municipalities may still choose to cancel and postpone upcoming local elections to be held at a later date in 2020.

As with the first directive, this one is permissive – municipalities are not mandated to use any of these procedures but the legislative body may vote to adopt any one or more of them if they choose. It is our advice that as many of these procedures be used as necessary, along with adhering to all standing Orders from the Governor's office and current Department of Health and CDC guidelines regarding social distancing a building capacity, in order to conduct the elections as safely as possible.

The directive contains more detail, but a summary list of the permitted procedures is as follows. A municipality may:

- Mail a ballot proactively to every active or registered voter
- Implement a "drive-up" voting procedure
- Hold their polling location outside

- Forgo the review of write-in votes in certain instances
- Adjust the deadline for nominating paperwork for candidates

We attempted to draft the directive in such a way as to let municipalities have appropriate flexibility in implementing these procedures. Circumstances vary so greatly between the election processes in different municipalities that it was important to not prescribe too many details regarding the implementation of these procedures. If you have questions or need guidance on how to best implement these processes in your municipality, please contact us.

Please remember that our federal funding may not be used to cover costs for local elections. If you choose to mail a ballot to every voter, the postage costs will be paid by the municipality. However, please note that it is our intention to use our federal funding to cover the cost of postage for your absentee balloting materials in the August Primary and General Elections, as we expect a dramatic increase in the number of voters casting their ballots by mail.

We hope that by taking advantage of some or all of these permitted processes, municipalities are able to conduct their elections as safely as possible. However, we acknowledge that conducting any election under the current circumstances does still present significant risks. That is why it remains our guidance to only conduct an election if absolutely necessary. If an election must be held, we hope the risks of doing so can be reduced by taking advantage of some or all of these procedures. More information and guidance can be found on the [Elections Division COVID-19 Response](#) page of our website, which we will continue to update.

We will be in touch soon,

The Elections Division

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**PLEASE NOTE THAT MY EMAIL ADDRESS HAS CHANGED. My new address is [will.senning@vermont.gov](mailto:will.senning@vermont.gov)**