

Friday May 20

Dear Shutesbury Residents,

As you know, Town Meeting is tomorrow, Saturday the 21st. Polls and registration open at 8, the meeting starts at 9.

It is going to be as hot as blazes! Your impedimenta should include a hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses; plenty of water; and insect repellent. If you prefer to broil out in the open rather than bake under the tent, an umbrella makes a good sunshade. There will be a cooling station inside Town Hall.

COVID is still out there, apparently making a comeback. Here are the COVID safety measures in place for Town Meeting:

- Masks are not required outdoors; use your own judgment. There will be a “masks-required” tent reserved for those who prefer that they and everyone around them be masked. Please respect this area.
- Our front-line election workers inside Town Hall will be masked, and for their protection we request that you wear a mask while inside the building.
- Speakers from the floor will use wipes to sanitize the microphone after they speak. If you kept that little “shower cap” microphone cover from last year, by all means bring it with you!

We have decided to replace the COVID statistics table on the town website, which some of you have asked us to reinstate, with weekly messages on the current situation; these will also be available on the website. Many cases are identified through home testing and some of these are not reported, so the table gives a very incomplete picture, which we hope to be able to fill out with additional information. By the way, if you test positive for COVID, you should inform your health care provider AND the Board of Health at publichealth@shutesbury.org, both for our information and so you can be given the latest guidance on isolation and quarantine. This guidance has changed, so now an infected person is in strict isolation for five days, not ten, and then under a regime of mandatory mask-wearing for another five days. See <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-isolation-and-quarantine-guidance-for-the-general-public> for more information on this.

This week one person was known to be in strict isolation and four were in the period of mandatory masking. We know of ten cases in the two weeks between May 5 and May 18. At this time the community level in Franklin County is high; in Hampshire County the level is medium. You can get this community data and learn how to use it at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>

One last thing: a new round of free rapid tests is now available from the federal government at <https://special.usps.com/testkits>

See you at Town Meeting!

The Shutesbury Board of Health