**Absentee & Early Voting**

**Early Voting by Mail in 2021 Annual Town Election**

**For this year’s Annual Town Election, the Chief Elections Official will be offering “Mail in Early Voting” for all registered voters in Shelburne. Note: There will be no “In Person Early Voting” for Shelburne’s Annual Town Election.**

**Currently, State Law has extended “no-excuse” voting by mail thru June of 2021**. No-excuse voting, or Early Voting, is available for all elections held on or before June 30, 2021. If you wish to apply to Early Vote by mail in the Annual Town Election, which will be held on June 28, 2021, you may contact the Shelburne Town Clerks Office, either by mail, email, or phone, to receive a ballot and to verify that you are a registered voter in the Town of Shelburne. You will be asked to fill out, and sign, **2021 Vote by Mail Application** form when requesting an Early Voting Ballot. Applications can also be obtained on the **Town Clerks web page;** The application will also be available for pick-up in the foyer of the Shelburne Town Hall beginning **June 7, 2021. You can also be obtain the application during the June 12, 2021 Annual Town Meeting at a table provided for this. We encourage you to return the application to an Election Worker before leaving the meeting. We will mail a ballot to you on the next business day.** All application requests must be received either by mail, or in the Ballot Drop Box located outside the Town Hall, at least 4 business days prior to Election Day **(deadline date - June 24, 2021).** The Massachusetts Legislature is currently considering proposals that would make no-excuse voting by mail a permanent option for all elections.

**If you are going to be away on Election Day and are wondering about Absentee Ballot Eligibility**

To qualify for an **Absentee Ballot**, you must:

* Be away from your city/town on Election Day; or
* Have a disability that keeps you from voting at your polling place; or
* Have a religious belief that prevents you from voting at your polling place on Election Day

For elections held through June 30, 2021, State Law clarifies that any person taking precautions relating to COVID-19 qualifies for an Absentee Ballot because of physical disability. If you would rather have an Absentee Ballot, please contact the Town Clerks Office as described above. We will assist you in every way possible in receiving an Absentee Ballot.

**Absentee vs. Early Mail in Voting**

In Massachusetts, Absentee Voting is available in all elections, while Early Voting or Early Voting by Mail is only available in certain elections. The two systems overlap in several ways, but the most important difference is that Absentee Voters **must** have an excuse (listed below), while there is no excuse needed in order to Vote Early.

You should complete an Absentee Ballot application if you are:

* A military voter on active duty;
* A Massachusetts citizen residing outside of the United States;
* A voter who has been admitted to the hospital within 1 week of the election;
* A voter who has been quarantined within 1 week of the election;
* A voter who is incarcerated.

**Applying for an Absentee Ballot**

**Absentee Ballot Applications** can be requested in writing, up until noon on the day before Election Day. **(The Town Clerks Office will be open from 9am - noon on June 27, 2021 to accommodate this deadline).** Applications are available in the Shelburne Town Hall foyer, but any written request is acceptable if it has your signature on it. For Absentee Ballot applications, a member of your family may also make the request on your behalf.

Applications may be returned by mail, email, or fax. If you are emailing your application, you may either scan or take a photo of your signed application and email it to the Town Clerks office, or you may sign your application using a mouse, finger, or stylus and email the completed and signed attachment. **Typed signatures are not acceptable**.

Applications are also available on the **Town Clerks Web Page.** If you are not able to print the application, you may pick one up at the Town Hall (as mentioned above), request one be mailed to you, or you may write a letter addressed to the Town Clerk’s Office, requesting one. Make sure to include your name, your address, the place you would like the ballot mailed, and your signature.

**Returning your Ballot**

**When returning your ballot, we encourage you to** use the Town’s secure ballot drop box attached to the outside of the Town Hall, located on the wall at the top of the Handicap Ramp. Ballots can also be returned by mail to the Shelburne Town Hall.

The Chief Elections Official must receive ballots by the **close of polls on Election Day in order to be counted.**

*Joseph Judd*

**Town Clerk/Chief Elections Official**