

Pandemic Related Legal Updates

March 30, 2023

Governor signs supplemental budget, extending certain pandemic-related relief provisions.

Yesterday, the Governor signed Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, supplemental state budget provisions for Fiscal Year 2023. Within that legislation ([found here](#)), several pandemic-related relief provisions were further extended, as noted below:

1. **Open Meeting Law.** Public bodies are authorized to continue to hold entirely remote meetings, or so-called “hybrid” meetings, upon the provision of “adequate, alternative means” of public access, until **March 31, 2025**. As a friendly reminder, if your meeting agendas refer to prior legislative enactments authorizing remote/hybrid meetings, you will want to update those references to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.
2. **Quorum Reduction.** The Select Board, in consultation with and approval of the Town Moderator, can still reduce the quorum for Town Meetings to not less than 10% of the regularly required number. This requires at least a seven-day notification requirement before any Select Board vote. Also in effect until **March 31, 2025**.
3. **Remote Representative Town Meeting.** A representative town meeting can continue to be held remotely, until **March 31, 2025**.
4. **Outdoor Dining/Alcohol to Go** – Extended through **April 1, 2024**; note that the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC) has scheduled a meeting on this for April 7, 2023 (<https://www.mass.gov/news/notice-of-public-meeting-april-7-2022>) to discuss “Extension and Allowance of Outdoor Table Service / Patio Guidelines.”

As Chapter 2 contains an emergency preamble, these provisions are effective immediately.

Also, the Legislature permanently amended state law to allow for **Virtual Notarization**. We have not summarized those statutory changes here, as the extensions listed above are the most critical to municipal governance and operations.

If you have any questions about any of these areas, please do not hesitate to contact your KP Law attorney.

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