STATEMENT REGARDING THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET VOTE AND TRUSTEE ELECTION

As you may know, the Bethpage School District, like all other NYS public school districts, was scheduled to conduct a vote on May 19, 2020 regarding the District's 2020-2021 budget and candidates for the Board of Education. However, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor of NY has declared that all school district elections must be held remotely on June 9, 2020, by absentee ballot only. As such, there will not be a vote on May 19, 2020 and the Bethpage Union Free School District will instead conduct its Annual Meeting, Budget Vote, and Election, as well as the Board Election for the Bethpage Public Library, remotely, on June 9, 2020.

There will be no in-person voting for these elections. Rather, the District will be sending absentee ballots (together with a prepaid return envelope) to all eligible voters in the District. If you would like to vote you will need to complete and return the absentee ballot to the District Clerk’s office at Administration Building, Bethpage UFSD, 10 Cherry Ave., Bethpage, NY 11714. The ballot must be received by 5:00 p.m. on June 9, 2020 in order for your vote to be counted. Please note that District residents must be properly registered in order to cast a vote. Additional information regarding how you can register to vote, instructions for completing and returning the absentee ballot, details regarding the proposed budget, and other information pertaining to this year's budget vote and election is posted on the District’s website at www.bethpagecommunity.com, and will continue to be updated as it becomes available. Residents may also email the District Clerk at ebecker@bethpage.ws if they have any additional questions.
1. Why is there no in-person voting this year?

Due to the public health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor issued Executive Order 202.26, which requires all school district elections to take place remotely, by absentee ballot only. As a result, there will be no in-person voting for this year’s election.

2. Will the vote be for both the budget and candidates for the board?

Yes, the vote will encompass the 2020-2021 School District budget vote and the election of candidates to the Board of Education. In addition, this year the vote on board candidates for the Bethpage Library will be conducted at the same time as the School District’s vote. There will not be a vote on the Library’s budget.

3. How will the ballot look when it comes in the mail?

Pictures of the documents you will be receiving may be accessed via https://bit.ly/2yhxc1h, ¹ There will be a large white outer envelope addressed to you (picture #1) https://bit.ly/2yhxc1h, which contains an inner self-addressed stamped white envelope (picture #2) https://bit.ly/3g4AE7x. The self-addressed stamped envelope will contain two additional white envelopes with writing on them (picture #3), https://bit.ly/2Xak5r0 https://bit.ly/3e4FZ60 as well as the official ballot (picture #4) https://bit.ly/2LJLmLF.

The official absentee ballot will have separate boxes, which describe each proposition to be voted on. Each proposition box will also have a separate oval next to the words “Yes” and “No”. There will also be separate boxes that list the School and Library Board vacancies and the names of the candidates running in each Board’s election, with an oval appearing next to each name. In addition, there will be a box below each School and Library Board vacancy for write-in candidates, with an oval next to each write-in space.

¹ These pictures are solely intended to provide a visual depiction of the documents you will be receiving. They may not be used in place of the official materials you will be receiving.
At the bottom of the absentee ballot will be instructions on how to fill it out.

4. I opened the ballot envelope and saw two white envelopes with a lot of writing on them and a ballot inside. One envelope is written in English and one envelope is written in Spanish. The ballot contains both English and Spanish. Why am I receiving two envelopes and a bilingual ballot? Do I need to fill out both envelopes and both the English and Spanish portions of the ballot?

The Federal Voting Rights Act requires that all written election materials be printed and provided in English and Spanish, which includes the affirmation envelopes and ballots. You should only complete the affirmation on the envelope that contains the affirmation in your preferred language. Similarly, you should only fill out either the English or Spanish portion of the ballot, in whichever language you prefer. Then mail the completed ballot back in the envelope you have signed. You may discard the other envelope.

5. Why is there writing on the outside of the inner envelopes? I also did not complete an absentee ballot application. Why does the writing on the inner envelope state "that I will be unable to appear personally on the day of said school district election . . . because of the reason stated on my application"?

The inner envelopes of absentee ballots are regulated by Education Law § 2018-a. This law requires there to be certain verbiage printed on the front and back of the envelope. Because absentee ballots will be sent to every eligible voter, no absentee ballot applications are necessary for this year’s election. In addition, the Executive Order states that "the prevalence and community spread of COVID-19, and the potential contraction of the COVID-19 virus" shall constitute temporary illness. Thus, pursuant to the Executive Order, all eligible voters are deemed "unable to appear personally" at the election as provided in the envelope's affirmation.

6. How do I fill out the ballot?

Candidates will be listed in boxes adjacent to one another, and there will be a small oval in the box for each candidate. To vote for a candidate, use a pen or pencil and fill in the oval in the box of the candidate you wish to vote for. You may also write in the name of an unlisted candidate in the “WRITE-IN”
row below the names of candidates. If voting for a write-in candidate, you must also fill in the oval next to his or her name.

Propositions, including whether or not you wish to approve the budget, are listed separately from the list of candidates, and will have ovals next to the words “Yes” and “No”. Use a pen or pencil to fill in the oval next to one of the words, depending on whether you want to vote in favor of the proposition or against it. Please note that the Library is not submitting a budget proposition for the 2020-2021 school year. Thus, the only proposition on the absentee ballot is for the 2020-2021 School District budget.

Please do not make any other mark or writing on the ballot. In addition, do not over-vote. You should only cast a single vote for each vacancy or proposition that you wish to vote on.

7. The instructions say that I have to sign the outside of the inner envelope? Why?

You are required to sign the outside of the inner envelope that has the paragraph written on it. This affirms that you are a qualified voter, in accordance with Education Law § 2018-a(5)(b).

8. What if I did not receive a ballot but I believe I'm eligible to vote?

You are eligible to vote if you are someone who is a United States citizen, at least eighteen (18) years of age, a resident within the district for at least thirty (30) days preceding the election, and have properly registered for this budget vote and election.

If you are not already registered, you may register to vote by mail with the County Board of Elections, or by filing an online application with the Department of Motor Vehicles as https://dmv.ny.gov/more-info/electronic-voter-registration-application.

If you did not receive a ballot but you believe you are eligible to vote, you should contact the District Clerk via email at ebecker@bethpage.ws.

9. Will people know how I voted?
No, the election will be conducted in a manner to ensure that your vote will remain confidential.

10. When do I have to return the absentee ballot by?

Absentee ballots must be returned and delivered by 5:00 p.m. on June 9, 2020 to the Office of the District Clerk, Administration Building, Bethpage UFSD, 10 Cherry Avenue, Bethpage, NY 11714.

11. How do I return the absentee ballot? Do I have to put a stamp on it?

Absentee ballots must be returned to the Office of the District Clerk, located in the Bethpage UFSD Administration Building, at 10 Cherry Ave., Bethpage, New York 11714. Absentee ballots may be physically returned or mailed.

In the event you would like to physically return your ballot, there will be a locked box placed in the foyer of the Administration Building, commencing June 1, 2020 through June 9, 2020. The box will be available to receive ballots between the hours of 9AM to 3PM from June 1 through June 8, 2020, except on Saturday June 6, 2020, and Sunday June 7, 2020 when the box will not be accessible. On June 9, 2020, ballots may be dropped into the box between the hours of 9AM to 5PM. All ballots MUST be received by 5PM on June 9, 2020, in order to be counted. Please DO NOT attempt to slip ballots under the door at any time.

The District will be mailing you a postage paid return envelope with the absentee ballot. If you are mailing back your ballot you do not have to place a stamp on this envelope to return the absentee ballot.

12. If I live with another voter, can we put both ballots in the same envelope?

No. Each ballot should be placed in its separate envelope, and mailed back separately in each postage paid return envelope. Education Law § 2034(3)(a) requires a ballot to be declared void if a voter does any act extrinsic to the ballot, such as enclosing any paper or other article in the folded ballot.
13. How can I obtain more information about the School District’s proposed budget?

Information about the School District’s budget is available on the District’s website at www.bethpagecommunity.com. In addition, the District will be holding its budget hearing on May 28, 2020 at 8PM. Residents may also obtain a copy of the budget documents by emailing a request to the District Clerk at ebecker@bethpage.ws.

14. Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

If you have any additional questions, you may contact the District Clerk via email, at ebecker@bethpage.ws.
[DATE]

SUBJECT: Bethpage UFSD Budget Vote and Trustee Election
         Bethpage Library Trustee Election
         June 9, 2020

Dear Resident:

Enclosed please find the absentee ballot, official oath envelope, and return envelope addressed to the District Clerk for the School District’s Annual budget vote and trustee election (Annual Meeting) and the Bethpage Library’s trustee election. As per the Voting Rights Act, you are receiving all of the documents in Spanish as well as English.

In order for your vote to be counted, please remember to sign the oath envelope. If you are unable to sign your name, please have your mark witnessed and also have the witness sign the oath envelope.

All absentee ballots are due to the District Clerk’s Office, Administration Building, Bethpage UFSD, 10 Cherry Avenue, Bethpage, NY 11714, no later than 5PM on Tuesday, June 9, 2020. Any ballot received after this time shall not be canvassed.

Ballots may be physically returned or mailed. In the event you would like to physically return your ballot, there will be a locked box placed in the foyer of the Administration Building, commencing June 1, 2020 through June 9, 2020. The box will be available to receive ballots between the hours of 9AM to 3PM from June 1 through June 8, 2020, except on Saturday June 6, 2020, and Sunday June 7, 2020 when the box will not be accessible. On June 9, 2020, ballots may be dropped into the box between the hours of 9AM to 5PM. All ballots MUST be received by 5PM on June 9, 2020, in order to be counted. Please DO NOT attempt to slip ballots under the door at any time.

If you have any other questions, please email the District Clerk at ebecker@bethpage.ws.

Very truly yours,

Elena Becker
District Clerk
MILITARY BALLOT COVER LETTER

[DATE]
SUBJECT: Bethpage UFSD Budget Vote and Trustee Election
         Bethpage Library Trustee Election
         June 9, 2020

Dear Military Voter:

Enclosed please find the military ballot, official oath envelope, and return envelope addressed to the District Clerk for the School District’s Annual budget vote and trustee election (Annual Meeting) and the Bethpage Library’s trustee election. As per the Voting Rights Act, you are receiving all of the documents in Spanish as well as English.

In order for your vote to be counted, please remember to sign the oath envelope. If you are unable to sign your name, please have your mark witnessed and also have the witness sign the oath envelope.

If you are receiving the military ballot by fax or e-mail, you must print out the form which contains the language of the inner envelope, permanently affix the form to the outside of an envelope, and enclose the marked military ballot in the envelope. Thereafter, you must sign the military ballot affirmation, and make sure any blanks on the envelope are filled in (i.e., the date next to your signature).

All military ballots are due to the District Clerk’s Office, Administration Building, Bethpage UFSD, 10 Cherry Avenue, Bethpage, NY 11714, no later than 5PM on Tuesday, June 9, 2020. Any ballot received after this time shall not be canvassed.

Ballots may be physically returned or mailed. In the event you would like to physically return your ballot, there will be a locked box placed in the foyer of the Administration Building, commencing June 1, 2020 through June 9, 2020. The box will be available to receive ballots between the hours of 9AM to 3PM from June 1 through June 8, 2020, except on Saturday June 6, 2020, and Sunday June 7, 2020 when the box will not be accessible. On June 9, 2020, ballots may be dropped into the box between the hours of 9AM to 5PM. All ballots MUST be received by 5PM on June 9, 2020, in order to be counted. Please DO NOT attempt to slip ballots under the door at any time.

Please note that the District is still awaiting information from the State regarding funding, which may affect the proposed budget amount. Thus, the military ballot does not have a dollar figure in the levy proposition. However, the levy figure will be available beginning on May 20, 2020 on the District’s website at www.bethpagecommunity.com. You may also receive a copy of the budget as of this date, by submitting an email request to the District Clerk at ebecker@bethpage.ws. Additionally, a copy of the budget will be made available on the District’s website, located at www.bethpagecommunity.com.

If you have any other questions, please email the District Clerk at ebecker@bethpage.ws.

Very truly yours,
Elena Becker
District Clerk
HOW TO OBTAIN A VIRTUAL NOTARIZATION
PURSUANT TO EXECUTIVE ORDER NY 202.7

1) Video-conference with a valid Notary through live video-conferencing software (i.e., Zoom, Skype, Google Meet);

2) Present valid photo ID to the Notary during the video conference and prior to the notarization by displaying it in the camera for the Notary to see;

3) Affirmatively state to the Notary that you are physically located within the State of New York and disclose which county you are in. If you and the Notary are in different counties, the Notary must indicate each one on the document;

4) Sign the document you wish to be notarized and send it to the Notary by fax or other electronic means such as email or messaging software (as a reminder, the document must be signed on the same date it is being virtually notarized). You may sign the document in ink or with an electronic signature\(^3\), but the Notary must witness any electronic signature being applied to the document. Documents may be sent in any electronic format (e.g., PDF, JPEG) so long as they are legible copies.

5) When the Notary has received the transmitted copy, he/she should notarize it and send it back to you. The Notary must place their notary expiration date and the county in which he/she is commissioned upon the document. The Notary must also print the document and sign it in ink before sending it back to you.

6) Exit video-conference.

\(^2\) And as extended.

\(^3\) Provided the document may be signed via electronic signature under the Electronic Signatures and Records Act (Article 3 of the State Technology Law).
[RESOLUTION]

WHEREAS on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization designated the COVID-19 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (“Pandemic”), on January 31, 2020, the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services declared a nation-wide public health emergency for COVID-19, and on March 13, 2020, President Trump issued a proclamation declaring a national emergency concerning the COVID-19 outbreak; and

WHEREAS, on March 7, 2020, Governor Cuomo declared a state disaster emergency in New York for COVID-19 pursuant to Executive Order 202; and

WHEREAS, on May 1, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order 202.26, governing the annual election and budget vote for all school districts and public libraries in the State of New York for the 2020-2021 school year, and requiring such elections and budget votes to be held remotely, by absentee ballot only, on June 9, 2020; and

WHEREAS, such Executive Order 202.26 affected other election and/or budget vote requirements including, without limitation those related to mailings and publications, report card timeline obligations, absentee ballot procedures, nominating petitions;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby temporarily suspends all relevant District policies to the extent deemed reasonable and necessary to allow the District to effectuate the provisions of Executive Order 202.26 and promote the health and safety of its community and staff, as it conducts the annual election and budget vote during this Pandemic.