

ARTICLE 3

PROCEDURE AT TOWN MEETINGS

Section 1 Rules of Procedure

The proceedings of Town Meetings shall be governed by such rules of practice as are clearly set out in the most recent edition of *Town Meeting Time* by Johnson, Trustman and Wadsworth, except as modified by law or by the following sections. In the event that *Town Meeting Time* does not clearly indicate a single course of action, the ruling of the Moderator shall prevail.

The Representative Town Meeting may, by a 2/3rds vote, waive any requirement in the bylaws for a public hearing, unless required by statute or the Town Charter on specified or particular matters of business included within the articles of any Town Meeting.

Section 2 Motions in Writing

All motions offered for the consideration of the Town Meeting shall be in writing if required by the Moderator; and all motions involving the expenditure of money shall be in writing when required by any Town Meeting Member.

Section 3 Speaking

No person shall speak upon a question more than once when any other person desires to be heard, nor more than twice on the same question without permission of the Town Meeting; and no person shall speak more than ten (10) minutes at one time without permission of the Town Meeting.

With reference to motions to lay on the table, take from the table, or postpone to a time certain, no person shall speak more than once or for more than two (2) minutes.

Section 4 Voting

Voting by Town Meeting Members shall, at the discretion of the Moderator:

- a. utilize electronic voting technology, when available; or
- b. be by a show of hands; or
- c. be by other means as authorized by the Moderator and approved by vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Town Meeting members present and voting, or
- d. be as hereinafter provided.

On matters requiring a two-thirds vote by statute, as authorized under Section 15 of Chapter 39 of the General Laws, a count need not be taken. If the result of a vote by show of hands or any other means is in doubt, or if the result is questioned by seven (7) Town Meeting Members, the Moderator shall appoint tellers who shall count the vote by a show of hands. Upon motion affirmatively voted by two-thirds (2/3) of the Town Meeting Members present and voting, a vote shall be taken by secret ballot.

Section 5 Reconsideration

The subject matter of any article once voted upon in any manner may be reconsidered only once, but at any time during the same Town Meeting, provided compelling circumstances are stated which indicate that reconsideration is warranted.

Section 6 Precedence of Motions

When a question is before the Town Meeting, motions shall be received and have precedence as listed in the table entitled "Precedence of Motions," which is incorporated into this section by reference.

Section 7 Quantum of Vote

All votes shall be by a majority except where otherwise provided in these by-laws or where otherwise required by law; and all references to the size of the vote required shall mean of those present and voting.

Section 8 Financial Interest

Any person having a monetary or equitable interest in any matter under discussion at a Town Meeting, and any person employed by another having such an interest, shall disclose the fact of his interest or employment before speaking thereon.

Section 9 Providing Specificity Regarding Public Works Projects

Any vote of the Town Meeting appropriating money for the construction, reconstruction, installation or improvement of a public way, or a sewerage or water facility shall:

- be consistent with a multi-year plan, and/or
- specify the location of the work to the extent the location is known.

Section 10 Appointing Committees

All committees authorized by Town Meeting shall be appointed by the Moderator, unless otherwise ordered by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Town Meeting Members present and voting.

All committees shall be appointed within ninety (90) days from the dissolution of a Town Meeting.

Section 11 Motion for the Previous Question

The motion for the previous question shall not be entertained by the Moderator if three or more persons are seeking recognition who have not previously spoken to the question.

Section 12 Resolutions

Resolutions are non-binding expressions of Representative Town Meeting that do not require a warrant article. Resolutions may be in order at the representative town meeting provided that the wording of the resolution consists solely of "Complimentary Resolutions" to express congratulations, appreciation or condolences as provided in *Town Meeting Time*.

All resolutions shall be in writing and shall be provided to the Moderator in advance of consideration by the Representative Town Meeting. The Moderator may consult with Town Counsel before allowing a resolution to be in order.

Resolutions that do not comply with the foregoing provisions of this section shall not be in order at a Representative Town Meeting.

The provisions of this bylaw shall not prevent nonbinding subject matter from being submitted on the warrant for any town meeting.

PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS

Motion	Second Required	Debate	Amend	Vote Required
Adjourn or dissolve	Yes	No	No	Majority
Adjourn to a fixed time or recess ⁺⁺⁺⁺	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Lay on the table	Yes	Yes ⁺	No	2/3 Majority
For the previous question ⁺⁺⁺	Yes	No	No	2/3 Majority
For secret ballot	Yes	No	No	2/3 Majority
Roll call vote	Yes	Yes	No	1/3 Majority
Postpone to a time certain	Yes	Yes ⁺	Yes	Majority
Commit, recommit, or refer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone indefinitely	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Main Motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority ⁺⁺
Take no action	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Waive Mandatory Conditions	Yes	Yes	No	2/3 Majority
Precedent ⁺⁺⁺⁺⁺				
Reconsideration	Yes	Yes	No	2/3 Majority
Take from the table	Yes	Yes ⁺	No	Majority
Take up an article out of order	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 Majority

- + See Section 3.
- ++ Some main motions are required by the general laws to be passed by greater than a majority vote; for example, bond issues, zoning changes, the taking of land require a 2/3 vote. For other examples, refer to the appendix in *Town Meeting Time* entitled "Quantum of Vote."
- +++ See Section 11
- ++++ Finance Committee Public Hearing; See By-Law Article 1, Section 3.