

CHAPTER 2. TOWN MEETINGS

Section 1. Manner in Which Town Meetings are to be Called

a. Warrants. Every town meeting shall be called pursuant to a warrant issued by the Board of Selectmen which shall state the time and place at which the meeting is to convene and the subjects which are to be acted upon.

b. Notification. The Board of Selectmen shall cause copies of the warrant for each town meeting to be posted on the Town bulletin boards and at the two post offices in the Town at least seven (7) days before the Spring Town Meeting and fourteen (14) days before the Fall Town Meeting or any Special Town Meeting. Such posting shall be deemed to be the legal notification of such meeting, and the legal service of such warrant.

c. Ringing of Church Bells. The Board of Selectmen shall ask that the church bells of the Town be rung for fifteen (15) minutes beginning one-half hour before any Town Meeting. The notification provided in this subsection c. shall not be deemed to be part of the legal notification of the Town Meeting and failure to comply with the provisions of this subsection shall not serve to invalidate the proceedings of any Town Meeting.

Section 2. Time of Meetings

a. In General the Town Meeting shall meet in regular meetings twice each calendar year and in special meetings, at such times as the Board of Selectmen may direct or as otherwise provided by law.

b. Meeting Dates. The Spring Town Meeting, which shall be the Annual Town Meeting for purposes of G.L. c. 39 § 9, primarily concerned with the adoption of an annual budget and other warrant articles which have a fiscal effect on the Town, shall meet in April or May. The Fall Town Meeting, which shall be primarily concerned with non-fiscal matters, shall meet in September or October. Both the Spring and Fall Town Meetings shall be scheduled as follows: "By April 1st each year the Moderator shall submit a proposed schedule for the Spring and Fall Town Meetings for the next two succeeding calendar years for approval by the Board of Selectmen. (Changed Sept 11, 2017 FTM)

Section 3. Preparation for Town Meeting

a. Public hearings. Public Hearings on warrant articles are held for the purpose of informing interested citizens as provided by the charter and other sections of the by-laws.

b. Amendments. When practical, anticipated motions to amend the main motion under any warrant article shall be provided to the moderator in writing 48 hours prior to Town Meeting. (Added Sept. 11, 2017 FTM)

Section 4. Rules of Procedure

a. In General. The proceedings of Town Meetings shall be governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure contained in Robert's Rules of Order, as the same may be revised from time to time, so far as they may be adapted to Town Meetings, unless another provision is made by statute or by these by-laws.

b. Quorum. For any session, including any adjourned session, of a meeting convened on a date specified in Section 2.b., the quorum shall be those persons present. For any other Town Meeting 150 voters shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may vote to adjourn.

c. Order or Action.

(i) Other than the first six (6) articles of the Annual Town Meeting, which shall be acted upon in the order of their arrangement in the warrant, the order of action upon articles in the warrant shall be determined by lottery conducted by the Town Clerk in such a manner to insure that, at all times, the meeting knows which article will follow the one on the floor. The Moderator may rule that certain warrant articles are related, in which event all related articles shall come on for action when the first of them is drawn.

(ii) Any person intending to move the adoption of a resolution not under any article shall give notice of any such proposed resolution to the Moderator prior to the opening of the meeting or as soon thereafter as practicable. The Moderator shall then announce to the Town Meeting the substance of the proposed resolution and shall further announce that the proposed resolution shall be considered immediately after all business under the warrant articles has been concluded.

(iii) The meeting may by four-fifths vote exempt any warrant article from the lottery and schedule it for action at any time certain or accelerate the time for consideration of any proposed resolution. The meeting may by majority vote to postpone action under any warrant article to a time certain. (Added 03/21/98)

(iv) Each main motion pursuant to an article in the warrant must be phrased so that an affirmative (yes) vote indicates approval of the subject matter of the article and a negative (no) vote indicates disapproval of such subject matter. The use of "to postpone indefinitely" as a main motion is prohibited.

d. Participation in Debate. With respect to each article in the warrant, the Moderator shall first recognize the sponsor to offer a main motion. No person, except a legal voter of the Town, shall be permitted to take part in a Town Meeting except by permission of the Moderator.

e. Addressing the Meeting: literature. No person shall address the meeting unless recognized by the Moderator, nor speak more than once on the same subject to the exclusion of any other person who desires to speak, nor shall any literature other than copies of the warrant and official reports thereon be distributed in the building within which the meeting is held or within 150 feet thereof except that literature (clearly identified as to its proponent or source) may, with the prior approval of the Moderator, be left on tables near the entrance for the voters to pick up when entering the hall.

f. Limitation of Individual Speakers. Unless granted an extension of time by vote of the meeting; the individual speaking as the principal proponent on a main motion shall not speak for more than ten minutes. Subsequently, any person speaking on any motion shall not speak for more than five minutes unless granted an extension of time by the meeting.

g. Division of Questions. If a motion is susceptible of a division, it shall be divided and the question put separately upon each part thereof if ten voters so request, or the Moderator, in his discretion, so directs. (Amended 03/21/98)

h. Reconsideration. A motion to reconsider a matter previously acted upon shall require an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those present and voting. Any person intending to move for reconsideration

shall give notice of such intent to the Moderator promptly and in no event except by unanimous consent, more than thirty (30) minutes after the vote reconsideration of which is sought, regardless of whether or not the meeting is then in session. The Moderator shall, as soon as is practicable, inform the Town Meeting as to when the motion for reconsideration will be presented. All motions for reconsideration shall be presented before any new warrant article is taken up for action at the beginning of the next succeeding session of Town Meeting unless action on all other warrant articles is completed prior to the end of the session during which such notice is given, in which case motions for reconsideration shall be presented immediately after all other business, except for resolutions not under a warrant article, has been concluded.

i. Motion to Dissolve Meeting. No motion the effect of which would be to dissolve the meeting shall be in order until every article in the warrant has come to the floor and there has been a reasonable opportunity for a motion in accordance with Section 4.c (iv) pursuant to every article. This section shall not preclude the postponement of consideration of any article by adjournment of the meeting to a stated time.