

# **A GUIDE TO REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING:**

## **How Can I Become a Town Meeting Member?:**

There are thirty three (33) elected members per precinct, one third of which are elected every year in the local election, for a three-year term. You can become a T.M.M. (granted there is an opening in your precinct), by obtaining nomination papers and a street listing by precinct at the beginning of the year for the local election, and obtaining 30+ signatures of registered voters within your own precinct; **OR** by obtaining nomination papers before the Annual or Special Town Meetings in enough time to have 30+ signatures of registered voters within your own precinct verified by the Board of Registrars at least five days before any such “special” election. You will be elected by your fellow precinct members at Town Meeting and sworn in before the Town Meeting begins.

## **What Issues are Voted?:**

You vote on the motions as presented on the floor. The general content of these motions are outlined in the Warrant. The basic purpose of the Warrant Articles is to advise you of the subject matter to be considered at the meeting. The motion may not be exactly as worded in the warrant article. All action must be taken as result of a motion presented to the body. An amendment is an addition to, deletion from or substitution of wording in the original motion. An amendment to a motion requires a majority vote and is debatable. If an amendment is successful, it is included in the main motion. There can be only two amendments to a motion on the floor at one time and each must be voted on separately.

## **How Do You Vote?:**

A VOICE vote is *usually* taken. A voice vote can be doubted by at least (7) members standing after the moderator announces the vote. Each precinct is polled by a STANDING vote. Other methods include Roll Call Vote, which requires a majority vote; and a Secret Ballot Vote, which requires a two-thirds vote.

## **How Are Motions Made?:**

Main motions and amendments must be in writing. After being recognized by the moderator, the member reads the motion or amendment and presents it to the moderator. (examples:)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Debatable</i>	<i>Vote Required</i>
<i>Main~</i>	Defines action to be taken	Yes	Zoning-2/3 Bond-4/5 Unpaid Bill-4/5(Annual) 9/10(Annual) By-Law-Majority Appropriation-Majority
<i>Amendment</i>	~ Addition or Deletion	Yes	Majority

<b><i>Move the Question~</i></b>	Stops debate	No	2/3
<b><i>Table~</i></b>	Delays debate	Yes	Majority
<b><i>Passover~</i></b>	No action	Yes	Majority
<b><i>Reconsider~</i></b>	Action on previous article	Yes	1 <sup>st</sup> time-Majority 2 <sup>nd</sup> time-2/3

**Rules on Debate:**

Recognition of speakers by the Moderator is based on the principle that everyone should be allowed to speak once an article is presented for discussion. All questions must be addressed to the Moderator.

**Points of Order:**

Members can interrupt a speaker by asking for a “Point of Order”, any time they’re uncertain whether or not the speaker is entitled to the floor, whether the speaker is being indecorous, frivolous, or irrelevant. Obtain the attention of the moderator and say, “I rise to a point of order:” then wait to be recognized.

**Anything Else?:**

Literature distribution is allowed at the discretion of the moderator.

Members may call for debate on specific budget line items by calling out the line item number when the moderator indicates.

Please review the warrant articles prior to the meeting to ensure accurate debate and prompt action.

This guide is not intended as a comprehensive outline of Parliamentary rules. It is intended as a reference document for use during Town Meeting.