

Guidelines for the Conduct of the 2023 Annual Town Meeting

1. The Medfield Town Charter (Sec. 2-1) provides: **“Legislative authority of the town shall be vested in the town meeting open to all registered voters.”**
2. The 2023 Town Meeting requires a quorum of one hundred and fifty (150) voters to commence. The Town Meeting shall begin when the Town Clerk acknowledges the quorum requirement is met and reads the return of service on the Warrant.
3. The subject matter of the meeting is limited to the Articles set forth in the Report on the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting. The Warrant serves as Notice of the subject matter of the Town Meeting.
4. All non-voting visitors invited to the Town Meeting shall be seated in an area designated for visitors and all students who are not yet registered to vote, and are observing the Town Meeting, shall sit in an area reserved for students. At the start of the meeting a Motion shall be made by the Moderator to permit non-voting participants ‘to sit within’ the Town Meeting.
5. The Moderator will ask the Chairperson of the Warrant Committee to offer introductory remarks about the Warrant, the town’s budget, and current financial considerations. The Moderator will then ask our Town Administrator to make introductory remarks about the town’s fiscal condition and other considerations relevant to the meeting.
6. The order of the Articles will be determined by the Moderator using the following general guideline:
 - (1) Articles on the Consent Calendar.
 - (2) Articles pertaining to Personnel issues which by law must be addressed before consideration of the Operating Budget.
 - (3) Articles identified by the Moderator addressing the ‘business aspects’ of town government. These Articles are identified by the Moderator because of their subject, specific nature, and the need to provide expediency and clarity for the meeting.
 - (4) Zoning and related Articles sponsored by the Planning Board.
 - (5) Individual Articles, and groupings of Articles, as determined by the ordering of the articles or by our customary lottery system. Individual Articles, and groupings of Articles, are subject to the Moderator’s determination of order, interdependency, linkage, and general treatment.
7. The Moderator will recognize the Warrant Committee for the purpose of making the Main Motion on each Article, except in instances where the Warrant Committee is recommending dismissal and the sponsor of the Article does not agree. In such a case, the Moderator will recognize the sponsor of the article for the purpose of making a positive Main Motion. Immediately after the Main Motion, the Moderator will recognize a member of the Warrant Committee for the purpose of providing its report (positive or negative, majority or minority, as appropriate). The Moderator will then ask for any report required by law from a Town board or agency. The proponents of the Main Motion will then be recognized. There will be no requirement of a ‘second’ from the floor on Main Motions.
8. As each article of the Warrant is presented, the discussion and the vote are not on the Article as printed in the Warrant, but rather on the Motion that is on the floor for consideration. There will be several Motions at the meeting that will not precisely track the Articles as printed in the Warrant Report.
9. To avoid confusion, the Moderator will allow only one Motion to Amend be pending on the floor at any one time.

10. Any voter wishing to speak to the Town Meeting should go to the designated microphone, and upon being recognized by the Moderator, should identify herself or himself by name, street address and town office (if any).
11. On certain Articles the Moderator may exercise the discretion of asking proponents of an Article and opponents of an Article to go to separate microphones. All speakers shall be recognized by the Moderator before providing their comments or views. It is requested that all participants speak to the community by generally addressing their comments and views 'through' the Moderator. The Moderator will enforce a discretionary time limit on speakers based upon his best judgment. The Moderator asks that speakers not be offended if requested to complete remarks within a limited and defined timeframe.
12. It will be the practice of the Moderator to take voice votes. If the Moderator is in doubt as to the outcome of the voice vote, the Moderator will ask for a show of hands. If the Moderator is still in doubt, a count by standing vote will be taken. Such a standing count shall be administered by the Deputy Moderator. Once the voting procedures commence, no further discussion will be allowed on the Motion until the Moderator declares the outcome of the vote.
13. If members of the Town Meeting doubt the ruling of the Moderator on a voice or hand vote, by state statute, any seven voters may demand that a standing vote be taken.
14. State statutes and Town Bylaws require that Motions of a certain subject matter be enacted by more than a majority vote. Certain Articles will require a supermajority and the Moderator will inform the Town Meeting of the need for a supermajority when the Article is introduced.
15. The Town Charter (Sec. 2-12) provides: "A vote of the town meeting shall be subject to only one motion for reconsideration and such motion shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote. Action on any motion for reconsideration shall be postponed until the next session unless the current session has been declared to be the last. No motion for rescission shall be in order." The Moderator reserves the discretion to rule on the appropriateness of any reconsideration.
16. The Moderator has broad discretion in the administration, operation, and orchestration of the Town Meeting. As a balance to the discretion, the Town Charter (Sec. 2-4) requires that the Moderator shall stand for election each year. State statutes provide: "The moderator shall preside and regulate the proceedings, decide all questions of order, and make public declaration of all votes."
17. The Moderator shall rely on the following foundations for the exercise of his discretion: principles of fairness, pragmatism, and prudence; consideration of the best interests of the community; expedience and the reality of time; past precedent in the administration of the Town Meeting; and such other insights and experiences as the Moderator deems appropriate.
18. Please, all cell phones, portable devices, and pagers should be turned 'off' or 'silent' throughout the Town Meeting.
19. The Moderator hopes all participants recognize their role as a member of Medfield's legislative body and enjoy being vital to the delicate art and science of direct, democratic, participatory self-government.