

District Wide Meeting - August 21, 2019

Moderator's Procedure

The Moderator's job is to see that the business of the meeting is conducted efficiently and in good order, that proper motions are made and votes are counted, and that the rules of procedure and courtesy are observed.

Everyone is expected to be civil in Town Meeting. Rude or insulting remarks, shouting or raising one's voice, false or factually unsupported accusations, and other disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.

We come to order by noting that the warrant has been duly served. We then review housekeeping matters such as location of fire exits, turning off cellphones and electronic devices. We recite the Pledge of Allegiance and we may recognize Special Guests or Events.

As each article is called, the Moderator requests a motion on the article followed by a second. The Moderator then asks the maker of the motion to explain the article. The proponent has no more than 8 minutes to explain the article.

The Moderator then opens the floor to discussion. Here are the rules of order.

- No one shall speak unless recognized by the Moderator. Only one speaker will be recognized at a time.
- Voters wishing to address the article shall approach the microphone and, when recognized, state their name and address each time before speaking and indicate whether they are speaking for themselves or on behalf of a board or group. Speakers shall maintain respect for each other and shall address only the article. The speaker will address their questions or comments only to the Moderator. The Moderator will choose who, if anyone, responds to a question. Speakers who are repeating points previously made in the discussion or are taking excessive time will be asked to end their presentation.
- Voters who experience difficulty moving to the microphone will be provided a portable microphone and may speak from their seat.
- After the initial presentation speakers are limited to 2 minutes. Brevity and new points are encouraged.
- Persons shall be allowed to speak for the first time before hearing speakers for a second time.
- If any person behaves in a disorderly manner or willfully violates the procedural rules and, after notice from the moderator, persists in such behavior, that person shall be removed from the meeting (MGL Ch. 30A § 20g)
- The Moderator will not accept negative motions, which are motions that require a "no" vote to vote in the affirmative, such as "I move not to accept this budget."
- Motions to "Move the Question" limit debate and require a 2/3 vote to pass. A speaker cannot use the motion to conclude their presentation; it must be the only comment they

make. If passed, debate on a motion ends and a vote is taken after all those voters who are standing in line at a microphone, or holding a microphone have an opportunity to speak. Additionally, the moderator shall have the right to refuse to recognize a motion to “move the question”, if, in the Moderator’s opinion, the voters have not yet had an adequate opportunity to discuss an issue.

- When the main motion on the article has been adopted, the Moderator will call for a motion to dissolve the meeting.