

Town of Belmont, MA
Friday, December 11, 2015

Chapter 30. Town Meetings

§ 30-115. Procedural rules.

[Amended 6-16-1986 STM, approved 10-8-1986; 4-28-1997 ATM, approved 8-11-1997; 11-8-2010 ATM, approved 12-16-2010; 5-29-2013 STM, approved 10-8-2013]

The Moderator shall determine the procedural rules to be followed at all Town Meetings, subject to the following provisions of this section:

- A. At any Town Meeting, if the Moderator or a vote of the Meeting so orders, no person who is not a Town Meeting Member, other than a press reporter or the official stenographer, shall be admitted to that portion of the meeting place which is reserved for Town Meeting Members. The Moderator shall determine the limits of the reserved area.
- B. Articles in the warrant shall be acted upon in their order, unless the Meeting votes otherwise.
- C. All motions that involve the expenditure of money shall be submitted in writing. Any report, motion or resolution shall be reduced to writing if the Moderator so directs.
- D. Every person desiring to speak shall first be recognized by the Moderator and shall stand while speaking unless the Moderator shall otherwise direct. A Town Meeting Member who speaks upon any matter in which the speaker or his or her immediate family has a direct financial interest shall first disclose such interest to the Meeting. The words "direct financial interest" shall include, but not be limited to, employment as attorney or consultant with respect to the matter.
- E. Unless the Meeting consents, no person shall speak more than twice upon any question, except to correct an error or to make an explanation. No person shall speak for more than five minutes when speaking for the second time and then only after others who have not spoken upon the question shall have had the opportunity to speak.
- F. All votes, unless otherwise provided by law, shall be taken in the first instance by a "YES" and "NO" voice vote. If the Moderator is in doubt as to the vote or if any Town Meeting Member immediately doubts the vote, the Moderator shall call for a standing vote; provided, however, that any Town Meeting Member may request a roll call vote when doubting the vote or immediately after the result of a standing vote has been announced. Such a request shall be valid only if 35 or more Town Meeting Members concur in the request and it is requested in connection with final action upon any article in the warrant. If a valid request for a roll call vote is made, the Town Clerk shall record the "YES" and "NO" votes forthwith so as to indicate the individual vote of each Town Meeting Member who shall have voted, and such record shall be made available to the public at the office of the Town Clerk and shall be printed in the Town Report.
 - (1) Whenever a two-thirds vote is required on any matter, the Moderator may declare a motion passed by a voice vote of at least $\frac{2}{3}$ in favor and a count need not be taken unless otherwise required by law or these bylaws. The Town Clerk shall record the Moderator's declaration that the motion passed by two-thirds vote in favor.

- (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of the foregoing Subsection **F** and Subsection **F(1)**, subject to the availability of a system to enable electronic voting by Town Meeting Members using wireless handheld mobile devices, the Moderator may count the vote, or conduct a roll call vote, on any matter before the Town Meeting by the use of such system.
[Added 6-3-2013 ATM, approved 10-9-2013]

G. Motions.

- (1) When a question is before the Meeting, the following motions shall be received and shall have precedence in the following order:
 - (a) To adjourn.
 - (b) To lay on the table.
 - (c) For the previous question.
 - (d) To postpone to a time certain.
 - (e) To commit, recommit or refer.
 - (f) To amend.
 - (g) To postpone indefinitely.
- (2) Motions to adjourn, to lay on the table or for the previous question shall be decided without debate.

H. A motion to reconsider any vote must be made before the dissolution of the Meeting at which the vote was passed, but such motion to reconsider shall not be made at an adjourned Meeting unless the mover has given notice of his intention to make such a motion, either at the session of the Meeting at which the vote was passed or by written notice delivered to the Town Clerk by 12:00 noon on the first business day following the commencement of such session. There can be no reconsideration of a vote once reconsidered or after a vote not to reconsider it. No article in the warrant shall be reconsidered after it has been disposed of, unless 2/3 of the Town Meeting Members present shall so vote.

I. In matters not specifically provided for by law or by the General Bylaws, the Moderator shall be guided by the principles and rules of practice contained in Town Meeting Time, A Handbook of Parliamentary Practice, by Johnson, Trustman and Wadsworth.