

Please Join The Belmont Select Board for a Public Forum

Topic: *A Discussion of the January 30, 2023 Special Town Meeting (STM) Warrant Article – Transition from Elected to Appointed (Hired) Treasurer/Collector*

January 19, 2023 at 7:00PM

In-person at Belmont Town Hall, 455 Concord Avenue and
remotely on Zoom

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85181378039>

Meeting ID: 851 8137 8039



Please Use the QR Code below to
Join the Zoom Meeting





MODERATOR'S MESSAGE ON TOWN MEETING PROCEDURES

Belmont's Town Meetings are conducted in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws, our Representative Town Meeting statute, the General Bylaws, and traditional customs and practices that we have followed for many years, with guidance provided by the principles and rules of conduct in *Town Meeting Time, a Handbook of Parliamentary law*. Several matters of procedure are summarized below.

- An **article** in the Warrant provides notice to the Town Meeting of a matter to be considered. The article itself is not a specific proposal for action. A **motion** is a proposal for action by the Town Meeting and must be within the scope of the notice provided by an article in the Warrant. An article may not be amended but a motion may be amended by vote of the Town Meeting.
- Formal seconding will not be required on **main motions** under articles in the warrant. Seconding will be required on all other motions.
- All **main motions and proposed amendments** involving the expenditure of money must be in writing. All other motions and proposed amendments must also be in writing unless they are brief and simple as to be easily understood when stated orally.
- All substantive amendments and motions to be offered under an article in the Warrant must be submitted to the Town Clerk in writing not later than the close of business on the third (3rd) business day before the commencement of the session at which the Article is considered, in order to provide sufficient time for review by Town Counsel and the Moderator and to be made available for distribution to the Town Meeting Members before the commencement of such session. The Moderator may allow exceptions to the advance filing requirement in case of motions that are easy to understand, but such exceptions are within the exclusive discretion of the Moderator.
- Except for motions involving the expenditure of money or Bylaw amendments, the Moderator will first recognize the maker of the motion, if he or she wishes to speak.
- Before commencing discussion on motions involving the expenditure of money or Bylaw amendments, the Moderator will first call for committee reports as follows:
 - **Expenditure of Money** – Warrant Committee,
 - **Capital Improvements** – Warrant Committee, then Capital Budget Committee,
 - **General Bylaw amendments** – Bylaw Review Committee,
 - **Zoning Bylaw amendments** – Planning Board.
- Town Meeting Members wishing to speak should come to a microphone. When recognized by the Moderator, the Member should state his or her name and precinct number before commencing.
- Registered voters of the Town who are not Town Meeting Members may speak at the Town Meeting, but first must either arrange in advance with the Moderator for recognition or arrange to be introduced by a Town Meeting Member.

- Persons who are not Town Meeting Members may be admitted to the floor by invitation **but may not vote.**
- All discussion must be relevant to a motion before the town meeting. All speakers must address the Moderator; questions may be asked only through the Moderator. Speakers are limited to an initial question and one follow-up question. A Town Meeting Member who wishes to make a motion that is debatable must first make the motion and, after it is seconded, if required, the Moderator will recognize the maker of the motion to speak to it. The Moderator will not recognize a motion made at the conclusion of a speech. This, by definition, includes a motion that would terminate debate, such as a motion for the previous question.
- The Moderator will try to recognize Town Meeting Members in the order in which they come to the microphones. While our General Bylaws do not set a time limit for Town Meeting Members when speaking for the first time, the Moderator has established a limit of three minutes. Unless the Town Meeting consents no person may speak more than twice upon any question, except to correct an error or to make an explanation of a previous statement. No person should seek recognition to speak for a second time until others who have not yet spoken have had an opportunity to be recognized. The five-minute limit also applies to those speaking for a second time.
- Section 30-115 (F) of our General Bylaws requires that all votes shall be taken in the first instance by electronic roll call vote, except those motions that are privileged, subsidiary, incidental or non-binding,
- Our Bylaws require that a Town Meeting Member who wishes to speak on an issue in which he or she or a member of his or her family has a direct financial interest, or in which he or she is engaged as an attorney or consultant, must first disclose this interest to the Town Meeting.
- A motion to reconsider a vote adopted at one session of a Town Meeting may not be made at an adjourned session of the same Town Meeting unless the mover has given notice of his or her intention either at the session at which the vote was passed or by written notice delivered to the Town Clerk by 12 o'clock noon on the first business day following the commencement of the session at which the vote sought to be reconsidered was passed. If the vote to be reconsidered was taken by roll call vote, a motion to reconsider will not be in order unless it is made by a Town Meeting Member who had voted with the prevailing side. A two-thirds vote is required for reconsideration; no vote may be reconsidered more than once.
- Action on our general budget article will not be considered final so as to require a two-thirds vote for reconsideration, or any other procedures relating to reconsideration, until all action under that Article has been completed.

Any citizen who has questions about Town Meeting procedures is encouraged to email me at mike.j.widmer@gmail.com.

Michael J. Widmer
Moderator

INDEX OF WARRANT ARTICLES

Article 1: Reports.....	3
Article 2: Transition From Elected To Appointed (Hired) Treasurer/Collector	3



**TOWN OF BELMONT
WARRANT FOR 2023 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
January 30, 2023
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Middlesex, ss.

To any of the Constables of the Town of Belmont in said County:

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are required to notify and warn the Inhabitants of the Town of Belmont, qualified as the law requires to vote in elections and Town Affairs, to convene on **January 30, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.** by means of the audio/video conferencing platform described more particularly below, and to notify and warn the Town Meeting Members to convene by said method and act at said time on the Articles set forth on pages 2 through 4 of this Warrant.

The Town Meeting shall be held remotely by the means requested by the Moderator, as follows:

Interested members of the public may see and hear the proceedings by tuning in to the Belmont Media Center's live broadcast of the proceedings on Belmont cable television (Comcast channel 8, Verizon channel 28) or by live-streaming at www.belmontmedia.org.

Town Meeting Members will attend and vote by logging into a web page portal operated by the Town's electronic voting vendor with unique credentials that will be issued to each Town Meeting Member before the meeting.

Town Meeting Members and other participants approved by the Moderator who wish to address the meeting will participate in the meeting through the "Zoom" videoconferencing service. Login credentials will be provided to all Town Meeting Members. Registered voters who wish to address the meeting as approved by the Moderator may contact the Town Clerk's office for login credentials, 617-993-2603.

For more information, see the January 9, 2023 Moderator's letter to the Select Board appended to this Warrant as Appendix A.

ARTICLE 1:

REPORTS

To hear the report of the Select Board and other Town Officers, any Committee heretofore appointed and to act thereon.

This article allows the Select Board and other Town officers, boards and committees to report orally to Town Meeting on appropriate matters not otherwise appearing on the Warrant. This article stays "on the table" throughout Town Meeting to allow Town officials and committees to report at the call of the Moderator.

Majority vote required for passage.

ARTICLE 2:

**TRANSITION FROM ELECTED TO APPOINTED (HIRED)
TREASURER/COLLECTOR**

To see if the Town will (1) vote to convert the Town's elected Town Treasurer and Collector of Taxes from an elected position to an appointed position pursuant to M.G.L. c. 41 sec. 1B; and (2), request and authorize the Select Board, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 41 sec. 1B, to place the following question on the 2023 Annual Town Election Ballot: "Shall the Town vote to have its elected Town Treasurer and Collector of Taxes become an appointed Town Treasurer and Collector of Taxes of the Town? Yes _____ No _____"; or in any way act thereon.

Massachusetts General Law, chapter 41, section 1B, provides a process to convert elected local positions to appointed (hired) positions. This petition will take the first step in that process, to ask Town Meeting to approve the transition, and authorizes the second step, for a townwide vote in the next annual town election.

Submitted by the Select Board


The Select Board will report on this Article.


Majority vote required for passage.




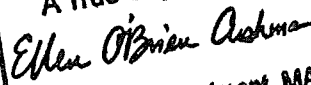
Given under our hands this 9th day of January, 2023

BELMONT SELECT BOARD


Mark Paolillo, Chair


Adam Dash, Vice Chair


Roy Epstein, Member

A True Copy, Attest

Town Clerk of Belmont, MA



TOWN OF BELMONT
455 CONCORD AVENUE
BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
02478

MICHAEL J. WIDMER
TOWN MODERATOR

mike.j.widmer@gmail.com
617-489-1822 (home)

January 9, 2023

By Hand

Mark Paolillo, Chair Belmont Select Board
455 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478

Re: 2023 Special Town Meeting – Request to Call Meeting to be Held by Remote Participation

Dear Mr. Paolillo and Members of the Select Board:

I am hereby requesting, in my capacity as Town Moderator, that the Select Board call for the January 30, 2023 Special Town Meeting to be held through remote participation because of the public health and safety risk presented by holding a physical meeting with 300 people. This letter is intended to conform to the requirements of Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, Section 26 and Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022.

Such a meeting would be conducted using a combination of technologies, described in more detail below, that will allow Town Meeting Members (TMMs) to see and hear the Moderator and all other participants, to be recognized and address the meeting, and to vote securely. This combination of technologies will allow non-TMMs to see and hear the proceedings and, when authorized in advance by the Moderator, to address the meeting in the same manner as is the practice in Belmont. It will allow TMMs to signal the Moderator when they wish to address the pending question and be put in line to speak, as is customary at live Town Meetings, to determine whether a quorum is present, to raise a point of order where appropriate, and to determine whether their votes have been properly recorded. The technologies will allow interested members of the public to watch the meeting remotely for purposes of witnessing the meeting and it allows for the meeting to be recorded so that the proceedings can be heard and viewed at a later time. Lastly, our court reporter would be creating the word-by-word transcript as required by Belmont General Bylaw §20-210.

The combination of technology methods I am proposing includes the following:

- TMMs will attend the meeting and vote using "TurningPoint," a secure online application operated by Turning Technologies, the same company that provides

Belmont Select Board

Request for the 2023 Special Town Meeting by Remote Participation

the electronic voting system acquired by the Town and used at Town Meetings since 2014. Each TMM will be assigned unique login credentials to use the system. TMMs who are logged in through TurningPoint will be deemed present at the meeting and will be able to vote using its features. All votes will be recorded electronically and the vote of each TMM will be displayed on the screen so that each member can verify that his or her vote was correctly recorded, as a roll call vote.

- Active participation in the meeting will be conducted through “Zoom,” a proprietary video conferencing platform (<https://zoom.us/>). The Town currently has a license to conduct a Zoom meeting with up to 500 participants. This number is sufficient to accommodate the 288 TMMs from the Town’s 8 precincts, the at-large members, and town officials and staff, with more than sufficient additional capacity for additional speakers if necessary. All approved speakers and TMMs will be issued an invitation allowing them to log in to the meeting from a desktop or laptop computer, tablet or smartphone, or to call into the meeting with any telephone (audio only). For security and clarity of presentation, the screen and the audio will be controlled by Town staff acting under my direction, as is our custom. All speakers will be muted until recognized by the Moderator. TMMs may use the “raise hand” feature of the software to get in line to speak, and will be recognized in order, unless I choose to recognize a town official to answer a question or address a particular point. Any non –TMM who has made arrangements with me in advance of the meeting to speak can be recognized in a similar manner.
- Town officials and staff will participate by logging in to the Zoom meeting in the same manner.
- If a TMM has a point of order, it can be raised by using the “Q&A” feature, which will be monitored by one of my staff assistants so that any such point of order can be brought to my attention promptly. This same feature would allow a TMM who does not have a microphone to contribute to the meeting, as above, with a member of the staff reading the comments and questions submitted through the Q&A feature so that they may be entered into the record.
- The Zoom video and audio feed will be simultaneously broadcast by Belmont Media on local cable stations and by livestreaming on the internet. It will also be simultaneously recorded for future viewing. Any member of the public, whether or not a Belmont resident, will be able to view the proceeding live. TMMs may choose to listen to and view the proceedings in the same manner, but will not be considered present unless also logged in to TurningPoint.

With the assistance and cooperation of the Town Clerk’s office and the Town’s Information Technology Department, I have tested these platforms and am satisfied that they will allow the conduct of a Town Meeting that will function in substantially the same manner as a Town Meeting conducted in a physical location and in accordance with the operational and functional requirements set forth in Chapter 92. Furthermore, Belmont has held nineteen successful sessions of Annual and Special Town Meeting in 2020,

Belmont Select Board
Request for the 2023 Special Town Meeting by Remote Participation

2021 and 2022 that were attended by between 250 and 260 Town Meeting Members, using the combination of technologies described in this letter.

We will conduct further testing of these platforms in addition to training sessions and a warrant briefing which we propose to hold in the same manner prior to Town Meeting. Those training sessions and tests will allow us to ensure that all TMMs have the training and equipment necessary to participate fully, and to determine whether any adjustments are needed to the process to make sure it runs as smoothly as possible. I hereby confirm that I have conferred with the Chair of the Belmont Disabilities Access Commission about accessibility to the Town Meeting.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Widmer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael J. Widmer
Town Moderator

cc: Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator (by email)
Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Town Clerk (by email)
George A. Hall, Jr., Town Counsel (by email)



MOTIONS
2023 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
January 30, 2023

Draft as of January 9, 2023
(Subject to Change)

PRELIMINARY MOTION

ORDER OF THE ARTICLES

MOVED: That the Town Meeting hear the motions in the following order: 1, 2.

(Majority Vote)

ARTICLE 1:

REPORTS

MOVED: That the reports of the Select Board and other Town Officers, departments and committees be accepted.

MOVED: That Article 1 be laid on the table.
(Majority Vote)

MOVED: (If Required) That Article 1 be taken from the table
(Majority Vote)

ARTICLE 2: TRANSITION FROM ELECTED TO APPOINTED (HIRED) TREASURER/COLLECTOR

MOVED: That the position of Town Treasurer and Collector of Taxes be converted from an elected to an appointed position, subject to the approval by the voters of a question to be placed on the 2023 Annual Town Election Ballot as follows:

"Shall the Town vote to have its elected Town Treasurer and Collector of Taxes become an appointed Town Treasurer and Collector of Taxes of the Town? Yes _____ No _____".
(Majority Vote)

Reporting: The Select Board will report on this Article.