

## Guide to Submitting a Citizen's Petition for Annual and Special Town Meetings

There is no standard form for a citizen's petition; however, one similar to the form included with this guide may be used. The petition must clearly state the name of the article and the exact wording of the article as it will appear in the warrant. The petition must clearly indicate what action is being requested of the Board of Selectmen: to insert an article on the Annual Town Meeting warrant or on the warrant of an already scheduled special town meeting, or to request that the Board of Selectmen call a special town meeting for the purpose of considering the petition article. **All of this information should be included on each signature page submitted so that it is clear that voters know what they are signing.** The signature requirements vary according to the type of petition: 10 for an annual town meeting warrant, 100 for an already scheduled special town meeting warrant, and 200 to request that a special town meeting be called. It is prudent to get more than the requisite number of signatures, in the event that some signatures are rejected. In addition to voter's signature, the petition must include the voter's complete address. The printed voter's name is also helpful in the certification of illegible signatures.

Petitions must be filed in ample time for the Board of Registrars to convene to certify signatures and for the Selectmen to place on the warrant to meet the printing and posting deadlines.

Relevant portions of MGL 39:10, covering the petition process, are excerpted below. It is the responsibility of the petitioner to satisfy all the requirements for filing a petition. If you have any questions, please call the Town Clerk at 978-263-1116 x117.

### **MGL Chapter 39: Section 10. Warrant; issuance; contents**

Section 10. Every town meeting or town election, except as hereinafter provided, shall be called in pursuance of a warrant, under the hands of the selectmen, notice of which shall be given at least seven days before the annual meeting or an annual or special election and at least fourteen days before any special town meeting. . . .

**The selectmen shall insert in the warrant for the annual meeting all subjects the insertion of which shall be requested of them in writing by ten or more registered voters of the town and in the warrant for every special town meeting all subjects the insertion of which shall be requested of them in writing by one hundred registered voters or by ten per cent of the total number of registered voters of the town whichever number is the lesser.**

**The selectmen shall call a special town meeting upon request in writing, of two hundred registered voters or of twenty per cent of the total number of registered voters of the town, whichever number is the lesser; such meeting to be held not later than forty-five days after the receipt of such request, and shall insert in the warrant therefore all subjects the insertion of which shall be requested by said petition. . . .The written requests of registered voters for the insertion of subjects in town meeting warrants shall not be valid unless the required number of registered voters not only sign their names but also state their residence, with street and number, if any.** The selectmen shall submit such written requests to the board of registrars of voters or the board of election commissioners who shall check and forthwith certify the number of signatures so checked which are names of voters in the town, and only names so checked and certified shall be counted.

## Suggested Form for Petition to Add Article to Town Meeting Warrant to Call a Special Town Meeting

Petitioner hereby requests the Boxborough Board of Selectmen to:

- Place the following article on the Annual Town Meeting warrant [**10 signatures required**]
- Place the following article on the special town meeting warrant for an already scheduled STM on \_\_\_\_\_ (list date) [**100 signatures required**]
- Call a special town meeting to consider the following article [**200 signatures required**]

### Article wording:

	<b>Voter Name</b>	<b>Voter Signature</b>	<b>Street Address</b>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
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14			
15			