



Town Meeting Policy

SELECT BOARD

Town of Boxborough, MA

Intent and Purpose

To establish a policy for Boxborough Town meeting including incorporating the requirements of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 39.

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Annual Town Meeting

The date of Annual Town Meeting is set by bylaw to take place on the second Monday in May of each year. No later than their last meeting during the month of December, the Select Board will set and announce the Annual Town Meeting Calendar. The calendar shall include deadlines for article review, town counsel review, finance committee deadline, print date, and mail deadline. The Town Administrator shall send a memo outlining the calendar for Annual Town Meeting to all departments, committees, commissions, and officials.

Articles for Annual Town Meeting are to be filed with the Select Board. The latest possible date on which to submit a late filed article shall be the date of the final Select Board meeting during the month of February, at which time, the Select Board shall close the warrant to any new articles. Final language must be completed by the last Select Board meeting during the month of March. The Select Board shall insert all subjects submitted by written request of ten or more registered voters. The signatures on the petition must be certified by the Town Clerk through the Board of Voter Registrars to verify that the signers are registered voters in the Town.

Special Town Meetings

Except in extreme emergencies, or a Special Town Meeting called by petition, notice of Special Town Meeting shall be given at least 30 days before the close of the warrant.

A request for a Special Town Meeting may also be submitted to the Select Board by petition of 200 registered voters. Pursuant to MGL Chapter 39 § 10, the Select Board must call the Special Town Meeting to be held no later than 45 days after receipt of said petition, and shall insert in the warrant all subjects so requested. The signatures on the petition must be certified by the Town

Clerk through the Board of Voter Registrars to verify that the signers are registered voters in the Town.

The Select Board shall set a Special Town Meeting calendar for article review, town counsel review, finance committee deadline, print date, and mail deadline. The Town Administrator shall send a memo outlining the calendar for Special Town Meeting to all departments, committees, commissions, and officials.

All Town Meetings

It is the policy of the Select Board that any Elected Board or Official may put any warrant article on any town meeting as long as they meet the time requirements. The Select Board shall also insert in the warrant for annual town meeting all subjects submitted by written request of ten or more registered voters. In the case of an already scheduled special town meeting, written request of one hundred registered voters is required. The signatures on the petition must be certified by the Town Clerk through the Board of Voter Registrars to verify that the signers are registered voters in the Town.

Once the Select Board has accepted the articles and set a place for them on the warrant (for Annual Town Meeting, at their final meeting, typically during the month of February), the Town Administrator shall send draft articles to all affected boards, with the option to submit recommendations. Recommendations shall be submitted in a timely fashion and should apply to the scope and responsibility of the respective boards.

Public Hearings shall be held in compliance with State and Local Statutes before any Town Bylaw or Zoning Bylaw may be discussed before Town Meeting. Whenever possible, these hearings should be held before the warrant goes to print. When this is not possible, the hearing shall be held no closer than seven days before the meeting for which it is proposed.

As soon as date is set, the Town Administrator shall contact all interested parties including Town Counsel, Town Moderator, Town Clerk, the Principal of Blanchard School, Acton Boxborough Community Education, Littleton Cable, and the Boxborough Department of Public Works. At least one week in advance of Town Meeting, the Town Administrator shall contact Blanchard School administration, Littleton Cable and the Department of Public Works to review set-up, any special requests for furniture (e.g. special chairs, tables, easels, etc.), audio-visual equipment, projection screen, computers, and cable broadcasting.

The Select Board should be aware of the deadline, fourteen days prior to Town Meeting (Annual and Special) for the posting of the warrant and delivery to, at a minimum, all registered voter households. The warrant shall be posted in the mail and in (5) public places with the Return of Service Forms returned by the constable to the Town Clerk the Friday preceding the Monday, two weeks before Town Meeting.

Board meetings should be scheduled accordingly to allow ample time for discussion and final review of the articles before the date scheduled for printing. Allowance should be made for dialogue with

affected committees to ensure full understanding of the articles appearing on the warrant. Boards should not schedule hearings during the week of town meetings, nor the subsequent week in the case of the Annual Town Meeting.

All articles must be voted upon, with final language complete, by the Select Board and the Finance Committee, no later than last Select Board meeting scheduled prior to the printing of the warrant. Recommendations of Finance Committee, Select Board, and sponsoring boards shall be included on the Warrant whenever possible and shall be forwarded in final form to the Town Administrator no later than the last Select Board meeting scheduled prior to the printing of the warrant.

Motions for Town Meeting shall be reviewed by Town Counsel, and forwarded to the Town Clerk, Moderator, Finance Committee, the Select Board, and the board moving the motion preferably at least one week before Town Meeting but no later than 2 business days before the Town Meeting. The intent of the motion should be understood when the Select Board vote the warrant article. All split decisions of boards should be duly indicated in the motion, noting votes for, against, and abstentions.

Whenever possible, individual articles will be moved by the committee or elected official who has sponsored the article.

At the close of Town Meeting the Select Board and Town Administrator must review action to determine whether new committees must be formed or whether any other actions are needed and follow up on road acceptance articles, bylaws, etc. to ensure proper procedures are followed.

A complete copy of the Warrant, motions as amended, record of the votes and other back-up material should be maintained in the Office of the Select Board to be used as future reference.

This policy revokes and replaces all previous policies on this topic including the Warrant Article Policy dated June 7, 1976, the Town Meeting Policy (undated: 1980's?), and the Town Meeting Procedure Policy dated March 13, 2000.