
TOWN MEETING PROCESS

Boxborough Special Town Meeting December 4, 2017

Motions

- Motions are made by the registered voter who sponsors the article
- Each motion requires a “second”
- Sponsor of the article explains/presents arguments in favor of the article: max 10 minutes
- Other Town Boards may comment on the motion. (No more than 3 minutes allowed)

Debate

- Speakers with questions or comments must be at one of two alternating microphones; the microphones may be marked “yes” or “no”
- Speakers must stand in line or sit in a designated chair behind a microphone
- Clearly speak your name and address before asking a question or making a comment
- All speakers are limited to 3 minutes. A clock will be running on the projection screen.
- Comments must be related to the motion (within the “four corners” of the motion)
- Comments must be civil. Disagree without being disagreeable
- Sponsor of the motion stays at the front microphone to answer questions, not debate
- Moderator will recognize sponsor, Finance Committee or BoS for comments as appropriate

Amendments

- Once a motion has been moved and seconded it is subject to amendments from the floor
- Amendments must be in writing and given to the Town Clerk before they are made; they may be given to the Town Clerk at the start of the meeting or before the article is debated
- Forms for amendments are available on the tables at the back of the hall
- Boxborough’s practice is not to allow “amendments to amendments” except for the personnel plan, the operating budget article, or to clarify the amendment
- Maker of the amendment will present the amendment to the TM
- Moderator will call on the maker and related boards of the original motion, for comments; after which the amendment will be open for debate on the floor

Debate Closes

- When there are no speakers in line or when a resident says “I move the question”
- Motion to move the question is not debatable. It takes precedence and requires a 2/3 vote
- Sponsor or a person from the same board/committee may not move to close the debate
- Residents cannot state their opinion and then move the question to close the debate
- In very rare circumstances, the motion to “move the question” may be ruled out of order if the moderator believes that there has not been a sufficient debate or information
- If the motion is ruled out of order, the maker of the motion will be recognized later

Reconsideration

- Boxborough does not have a Town Meeting By-law governing reconsideration of an article
- Each meeting can vote to adopt a reconsideration rule for that meeting
- Absent adoption of a reconsideration rule any article can be reconsidered at any time