

TOWN OF CONCORD
MODERATOR'S NOTES & PROCEDURES FOR THE 2015 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

One guiding principle for Concord Town Meeting is “keep it simple.” We follow procedures set forth in Town Meeting Time, a book published by the Mass. Moderators Assn. and available at town libraries. “Concord Town Meeting Traditions and Procedures” (Feb. 2015 edition) provides more information and is available at the Town House, online at www.concordma.gov, and in the lobby during Town Meeting (printed on green paper).

PART 1 – IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

CIVILITY IN DEBATE All speakers must address all remarks to the Moderator. Our Concord Town Meeting has a long tradition of vigorous, civil and respectful debate. This means that we stick strictly to the issue, avoid impugning the motives of any person or group, and avoid any personal attacks or references to other speakers by name. Any speaker who fails to honor this tradition will be ruled out of order.

Civility enables all participants to speak and be heard without interruptions or demonstrations, such as clapping, hissing, booing, or cheering. All participants are expected to listen to all presentations carefully. The Moderator has the obligation to ensure that the meeting proceeds in an orderly and respectful manner, so that thoughtful deliberation and decision-making may occur.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE & TIME LIMITS ON SPEAKING All speakers must stick to the indicated time limits. This year, as for the past several, the limits are *five minutes* for presenting a main motion, and *two minutes* for speaking pro or con on a motion. Any additional time must have the Moderator's advance permission. Sometimes providing a handout with more comprehensive information can be the best way to communicate your point of view effectively.

DOCUMENTS YOU WILL NEED Please be sure you have a copy of the Finance Committee Report, which indicates the recommendations of the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and other town boards and committees (when available). If a Selectmen or Finance Committee affirmative action recommendation is indicated in the FinCom Report, they may not come to the microphone solely to repeat this. Also, please pick up copies of handouts provided on the tables outside the hall, as the Moderator may not read articles or motions which are printed on a handout. When a handout is available, the Moderator usually notes this at the start of debate.

VOTING SLIP All registered voters receive a separate Voting Slip each day when they check in with Election Officials in the lobby. Please keep your Voting Slip handy, and raise it during a vote by show of hands. When a standing vote is being counted by the Tellers, you must show your Voting Slip in order to be counted by the Tellers responsible for counting the section where you are seated. In the event the Meeting decides to vote on a matter by secret ballot, you will be instructed by the Moderator how to detach your ballot. Please note that the ballots are not transferrable, so if you leave the Meeting early, please take your Voting Slip with you. ***A different slip is used during each night of Town Meeting.***

SMOKING Smoking is not permitted in any part of the premises.

VISITORS: NON-RESIDENTS & RESIDENTS NOT ELIGIBLE TO VOTE Anyone not registered to vote in Concord must check in at the door to the high school, sign the guest list, and receive a Visitor's badge. The badge must be worn while in attendance at the Meeting. Separate seating for persons in these categories is provided to avoid confusion in counting votes. A resident not registered to vote, or anyone not residing in Concord, may speak *only with the prior specific permission of the Moderator.*

TOWN & SCHOOL EMPLOYEES NOT RESIDENTS OF THE TOWN Town or school employees who are not residents of the Town may sit with their respective boards and committees and may be granted prior permission to speak by the Moderator.

REFRESHMENTS Food and drinks may only be consumed in the Cafeteria or the hallways. They may not be brought into the Auditorium, except for water.

CELL PHONE USE, BROADCASTING & PRIVATE VIDEOTAPING Cell phones may not be used to make or receive calls in any meeting hall, and all cell phones must be placed in vibrate only mode. The Meeting is cablecast live by Comcast Channel 9. Private videotaping is not permitted without prior permission of the Moderator.

HEARING ASSISTANCE Hearing assistance devices are available in the lobby.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION OF THE BUILDING In the event we need to evacuate the building, please exit promptly and carefully through the nearest designated exit. If you have children in the Child-care Center, do not attempt to go for them. They will be safely cared for by the people in charge.

RECYCLING Recycling barrels are available in the lobby for materials you do not wish to take home. Copies of the Warrant, FinCom Report, and "Town Meeting Traditions & Procedures" pamphlet should be replaced on a lobby document table for reuse by another voter.

PART 2 – TOWN MEETING PROCEDURES IN A NUTSHELL

TO VOTE Have your Voting Slip handy—you will need it for all votes.

TO MAKE A MOTION

1. Stand at a microphone and wait to be recognized by the Moderator.
2. Give your name and address and wait for acknowledgment by the Moderator.
3. State your motion: "I move that ..."
4. Your motion must be seconded by another voter saying: "I second the motion."

TO AMEND A MOTION

1. Stand at a microphone until recognized by the Moderator. State your name and address.
2. **Have two written copies of your amendment ready to give to the Moderator.** The Moderator will not accept an amendment that is not in writing. All voters thinking about amendments are encouraged to discuss them with the Moderator as early in the Town Meeting process as possible, preferably long before coming to Town Meeting, so that your proposed amendment may be shown on the screen at Town Meeting. Please put your name and address on your amendment to help the Town Clerk keep an accurate record of the Meeting.
3. Say: "I move to amend the motion as follows: ..." [then read your amendment].
4. Every motion to amend must be seconded by another voter.
5. Every amendment must be within the scope of the article under debate.
6. Debate will then proceed on your amendment until the Meeting decides whether to accept it and amend the Main Motion, or to reject your amendment.
7. Only two amendments may be "on the floor" (considered by the Meeting) at the same time.

TO END DEBATE AND CALL FOR A VOTE

1. Stand at a microphone until recognized by the Moderator. State your name and address.
2. Say: "I move the previous question" or "I move to call the question." **YOU MAY NOT MAKE ANY OTHER STATEMENT** regarding the merits of the matter being discussed.
3. Your motion must be seconded and is not debatable. It requires a 2/3 vote to pass.
4. If an amendment is being discussed, you must state whether your motion applies to the amendment only, or to the amendment and the Main Motion.
5. Concord tradition allows the Moderator to ask a mover to hold this kind of motion until a reasonable amount of debate pro and con has occurred. **Before moving the question, please consider whether you believe that there has been a reasonable amount of debate.**

TO QUESTION THE MODERATOR'S DECLARATION (ANNOUNCEMENT) OF A VOTE

1. After the Moderator declares the result of any voice vote or a show of hands, any seven voters may question the announced result. (Mass. Gen. Laws, Ch.39, §15).

2. To do this, stand and say: "I question the Vote." This MUST BE DONE IMMEDIATELY after the declaration of the vote being questioned.
3. If seven voters question a vote, tellers must count a re-vote by a standing, counted vote.
4. Once a standing vote has been counted by tellers, it may not be challenged.

TO CALL FOR A PAPER BALLOT

1. Stand at a microphone until recognized by the Moderator. State your name and address.
2. State your motion: "I move that we vote on this matter by paper ballot."
3. This motion must be seconded and is debatable.
4. The meeting then decides by majority vote whether to vote by paper ballot (unless a different procedure has been adopted by a previous vote of the Meeting).

TO TAKE AN ARTICLE OUT OF ORDER

1. Stand at a microphone until recognized by the Moderator (when no other business is pending on the floor). When recognized, state your name and address.
2. Then say: "I move that the Meeting take up Article__ at __" (the time when article is to be taken up).
3. This motion requires a second, is debatable, and may be amended.
4. The Meeting decides this motion by majority vote.

TO RAISE A QUESTION OF DECORUM OR A POINT OF ORDER

1. Stand at a microphone until recognized by the Moderator. State your name and address.
2. State your point of order, or question, as succinctly as possible.
3. No second is required. The Moderator will respond to, or rule on, the matter you raise.

TO RECONSIDER A VOTE

1. Concord Town Meeting has traditionally limited reconsideration to situations where new information, not previously available, becomes available to be considered by the Meeting.
2. A motion to reconsider must be seconded, is debatable, and requires a majority vote.
3. The Concord Town Meeting Bylaw on Reconsideration of a Vote at the Same Town Meeting governs the limited timing when a motion for reconsideration may be brought:
 - [A] To move reconsideration of a motion at the same session where the original motion passed, a motion to reconsider must be made within 20 minutes of the declaration of the vote to be reconsidered.
 - [B] To move reconsideration of a motion passed at a previous session, notice must be given to the Moderator before adjournment of that previous session at which the vote to be reconsidered was taken.
 - [C] Apart from the above two timing and notice requirements, the Selectmen or Finance Committee may consent to reconsideration of a motion at any time before a meeting dissolves. However, Town Meeting itself must still vote on the merits of whether to reconsider. (See also: Concord Town Meeting Traditions and Procedures).

TO ADJOURN

1. Stand at a microphone until recognized by the Moderator. State your name and address.
2. Say: "I move that the Meeting adjourn (to a specific time, if one has not been set)."
3. A motion to adjourn must be seconded, and is debatable and amendable. A majority vote is required. A motion to adjourn may be made at any time and takes precedence over all other pending business on the floor at the time.
4. If the time and place to which to adjourn has not been fixed by a previous vote at the Meeting, the Moderator will ask that this be done before the Meeting votes on the Motion.
5. A motion to "dissolve" (end Annual Town Meeting altogether) is not in order if there are any undisposed warrant articles remaining.

TO LAY ON THE TABLE

Concord Town Meeting does not use this kind of motion as a means of terminating debate.