

Moderator's Rules and Procedures

Moultonborough School District Annual Meeting and Moultonborough Annual Town Meeting

The Town Meeting's business is regulated by the Moderator, and your right to vote is subject to the Moderator's authority to keep order. As provided by RSA 40:4, the Moderator may establish the rules to be used at Town Meetings. The only legally-binding rule is that the voters can overrule the moderator by a simple majority. Any voter can raise such a request at any time by a "Point of Order". It is always OK to ask for a point of order or clarification of a procedural rule.

The Moderator will use the following general rules of procedures for the Meeting:

Civility Protocol

- Everyone is expected to act in a civil manner during Town Meeting. Anyone failing to abide by this will be ruled out of order by the Moderator.
- The following examples of uncivil behavior will not be tolerated:
 - Rude and/or insulting remarks or other disrespectful behavior
 - Shouting or raising of voice
 - False or factually unsupported accusations
 - Generally accusatory behavior

Voting

- All voters will receive "Voters Cards" upon checking in with the Supervisors of the Check List. Please print your name on your card and keep it in your possession.
- When asked for your vote, you may raise your card. You will also need to show your voter card when casting secret ballot votes.
- In case of a tie or close voting outcome after show of cards, the Moderator may call for a secret ballot. This must happen before any other business occurs. If a secret ballot vote results in a tie or close voting outcome, the Moderator may request a recount of the ballots. The Moderator plans to vote only if it is necessary to break a tie or to force a tie.
- Any 5 voters may ask for a secret ballot on a question prior to a vote being taken. The request must be in writing and presented before the article comes to the floor. The petitioning voters must be present and identify themselves to the Moderator at the time of the vote. Moderator may call for a secret ballot vote on any article at the Moderator's discretion.

Procedural/Deliberation

In the interest of time at the beginning of the meeting, the Moderator will entertain a motion to waive the reading of the entire Warrant.

- The Moderator will take the Articles in the order that they appear on the Warrant unless the Moderator announces the intent to take the articles out of order, which will require the approval from the Legislative Body.
- The Articles will be considered as follows:
 - The Article number will be announced, and the text will be presented in full.
 - The Moderator will seek a person to move and second the consideration of the Article.
 - The Article will be placed on the floor for debate and final vote.
- No one shall speak unless recognized by the Moderator. Only one speaker will be recognized at a time.
- Voters wishing to address a warrant article shall approach the microphone and, when recognized, state their name and address before speaking. The speaker will address their questions or comments

- only to the Moderator. The Moderator will choose who responds to the question.
- Voters who experience difficulty moving to the microphone will be provided a portable microphone and may speak from their seat.
 - Initial presentation of an Article will be limited to ten (10) minutes, and all speakers in the debate are limited to three (3) minutes.
 - The Moderator will not accept negative motions, which are motions that require a “no” vote to vote in the affirmative, such as “I move that we NOT adopt the budget”.
 - Persons shall be allowed to speak for the first time before hearing speakers for a second time
 - Motions made to amend an Article must be made in writing before the end of debate. The Moderator will allow consideration of no more than one amendment at a time, i.e., no motions to amend a motion to amend. Discussion must be germane to the amendment.
 - Non-Voters may speak to an Article only with the consent of the Town’s registered voters. The Moderator will allow other speakers, such as non-resident Town Officials and consultants, or experts, who are at the Meeting to provide information about an Article.
 - The Moderator will only accept motions to “pass over” an article if more than one article on the warrant addresses the same question, and then only to clarify the articles being considered during the meeting. The motion to pass over is not subject to debate and requires a majority vote.
 - Motions to “Call the Question” limit debate and require a 2/3 vote to pass. If passed, debate on a motion ends and a vote is taken after all those voters who are standing in line at a microphone, or holding a microphone, and others that have made the Moderator aware of their interest to speak, have an opportunity to speak. Additionally, the Moderator shall have the right to refuse to recognize a motion to “Call the Question”, if, in the Moderator’s opinion, the voters have not yet had an adequate opportunity to discuss an issue.
 - Each article remains open for further action until the moderator moves to the next article. A motion (and second) to reconsider a previous article can be made and if it passes by majority vote, the article is re-opened.
 - A motion to limit reconsideration can be made only on articles already acted on by the legislative body. (A motion to limit reconsideration on all previous articles, or a group of articles identified by number, can be made.)
 - At the end of the meeting, but before adjournment, the order is “to transact any other business that may legally come before” the meeting. This means any proper motion may be made. However, any motion passed must also comply with NHRS 39:2 which says, “The subject matter of all business to be acted upon at the town meeting shall be distinctly stated in the warrant, and nothing done at any meeting ... shall be valid unless the subject thereof is so stated.”
 - Our meeting will be audio and video recorded. The Moderator does have the option to segregate non-registered voters.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul T. Punturieri
Town and School District Moderator