

Does Belmont face issues that you feel strongly about?

Would you like to be more involved in the budget and in setting priorities?

Are you willing to spend some time studying the issues and discussing them with your neighbors?

Then consider becoming a Town Meeting Member.

The Role of Town Meeting

Town Meeting is the legislative body of Belmont. Town Meeting authorizes major policies of the town, votes on the budget, and approves amendments to the Town General By-Laws and Zoning By-Laws.

The town is divided into eight voting precincts, and there are 36 Town Meeting Members (TMMs) from each precinct. TMMs serve for three years, and each year twelve seats in each precinct are up for election. Occasionally, seats for one or two-

year terms become available if an incumbent moves or leaves office.

Town Meeting convenes on the fourth Monday evening in April. Typically, there are three or four sessions scheduled for consecutive Monday and Wednesday evenings. Special Town Meetings may be called at other times of the year as needed.

How to Get on the Ballot

Only Belmont residents who are U.S. citizens may run for office. You can obtain nomination papers in January from the Town Clerk's office at ground level of the Town Hall. You need to obtain and submit enough signatures of registered voters from your precinct to allow the certification of at least 25 signatures. It is advisable to submit at least 30 signatures. Return the signed nomination papers by 5 PM of the filing deadline. Verify the submission date with the Town Clerk as, depending on the date of the election, the submission deadline can be as early as February 12. (Actual date of February 14, 2011) A list of registered voters in each precinct is also available from the Town Clerk for a fee. Precinct maps are downloadable from the Town Clerk's web page.

Your Campaign

Now you must let your neighbors know that you are running for TMM and why you should be elected. Tell your friends. Will they help you by distributing your campaign leaflets or emails? Some candidates prefer to mail a postcard or brochure. You can buy labels with the addresses of registered voters in your precinct from the Town Clerk's office.

The Belmont Voter Guide

All candidates for TMM whose name makes it onto the ballot will receive a Candidates' Questionnaire from the Belmont League of Women Voters. Each candidate is asked to comment briefly on specific town issues. Your name and response will appear in the Belmont Voter Guide, which the League mails to all Belmont households one week before the April election. Be sure to submit your reply in time to be included.

Candidates' Night

Generally two weeks before the election, the Belmont League of Women Voters sponsors

Candidates Night. The public and all persons seeking elective office are invited. In the first part of the program, TMM candidates have the opportunity to speak informally with Belmont citizens. The second part of the program, which is broadcast on local cable TV, begins with the introduction of the TMM candidates, precinct by precinct. Due to time constraints, TMM candidates do not address the audience. Following the TMM introductions, the forum focuses on the candidates for town-wide office.

Election Day

On Election Day, you may want to introduce yourself to citizens as they come to vote. Connecting a friendly face to a name on the ballot can make a difference! Be sure that you and all your campaign signs, buttons, and literature remain at least 150 feet from the polling place.

Before Town Meeting

Elected TMMs will receive a Town Meeting Member Handbook and a Warrant packet by mail from the Town Clerk. A copy of Belmont's Annual Report is available through the Board of Selectmen office or on the Town website.

Plan to attend the Warrant Briefing sponsored by the Belmont League of Women Voters held the week before Town Meeting. This informal review of the Warrant articles is a good place to ask questions without having to worry about parliamentary procedures.

Write-in Campaigns

If you miss the filing deadline, you may run for TMM as a write-in candidate. The following information is required for a write-in vote:

Candidate's name
Candidate's street address
Office the candidate seeks
Length of term of office.

If you are distributing stickers for voters to affix to the ballot, the stickers must be no larger than 1.5 inches by 0.25 inches.

Sample: Jane Doe TMM-3 yrs.
100 Main Street

Paid for by the Voter Education Fund of the League of Women Voters of Belmont
P.O. Box 426, Belmont, MA 02478-0004
Donations are tax-deductible.

Running for Town Meeting Member in Belmont



Belmont League of Women Voters
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www.belmont.ma.lwvnet.org

Town of Belmont
www.Belmont-ma.gov