

Moderator's Guide to Participation at Town Meeting (as of March 25, 2016)

- **What do I do if I want to address Town Meeting?**
 - Raise your hand and wait to be recognized by the Moderator;
 - Use a microphone so cable viewers can hear you (a hand held microphone that will be brought to you after you've been recognized by the Moderator);
 - Give your name and precinct; and
 - Make your comments and direct your questions to the Moderator rather than to Town Meeting or any individual. There is no dialogue on the floor of Town Meeting. State, for example:
 - “Madam Moderator, I rise to speak in support [or opposition] to the proposal made under this motion [and then explain why].”
 - “Madame Moderator, through you I would like to pose a question to the proponent [or name a particular town official [and then ask the question].”

- **What else should I consider when making remarks at Town Meeting?**
 - Limit your remarks to the subject of the motions that is on the floor being discussed;
 - Focus your remarks on the issues and avoid references to any individuals. Be clear that you agree or disagree with particular arguments rather than particular people. It is out of order to refer to question anyone's good faith or indulge in references to personalities. We are discussing ideas not people.
 - Demonstrations – particularly hissing or booing – are out of order.
 - Be brief and avoid repetition. Anyone wanting more than five minutes for comments or questions should speak to the Moderator in advance of the meeting. Anyone who hasn't asked for additional time will be asked to wrap-up as they approach 5 minutes.
 - Anyone who speaks to a matter is expected to frankly disclose any personal or financial interest they have in the matter. This standard is written broadly to allow TMMs to make their own assessment of how any interests may influence the speaker's statements. Our practice is to err on the side of disclosure and the standard is understood to apply to interests of the speaker and members of the speaker's family or household.

Who can vote and how are votes taken?

- Only elected Town Meeting Members (“TMMs”) can vote.

- Most Town Meeting votes are by voice vote. The Moderator asks that all in favor say YES. Then the Moderator asks that all opposed say NO. The Moderator listens, decides which side has prevailed and declares the result of the vote. If the vote is too close for the Moderator to declare or a vote that the Moderator has declared is immediately questioned by seven or more TMMs the result is then determined by conducting a standing counted vote.

- If at least 20 TMMs support a motion for a ballot vote before a voice vote has been taken then TMMs will fill out written ballots. The results of a written ballot vote are recorded by the Town Clerk and available publicly.
- A roll call vote will be held if requested by at least 60 TMMs before the taking of a standing vote. This method has not been used in recent memory.
- There are no secret votes at Wellesley Town Meeting.

What percentage is required for a motion to pass? Most motions require approval by a majority of TMMs in order to pass. Certain votes require approval by a super-majority vote of TMMs to pass. For example, a 2/3 vote is required to pass amendments to the Zoning Bylaws, to authorize incurring debt, or to authorize the purchase of an interest in land.

Can motions be reconsidered?

- Only if intention to move for reconsideration shall have been given at the session at which such action is taken.
- Motions to reconsider are entertained only if, in the opinion of the Moderator, there is reason to suppose that Members may have changed their minds. The issue of reconsideration is typically taken up at a subsequent session after the proponents have explained the basis for their notice to the Moderator.
 - Reconsideration typically involves confusion, mistaken information, or new information that would change TMMs' minds. A motion to reconsider only goes forward if the Moderator is convinced that TMMs may have changed their minds. The standard for achieving reconsideration is high and it is rarely requested.
- If the Moderator concludes that there is reason to suppose that TMMs have changed their minds, then Town Meeting gets to vote on the question of whether to reconsider. That debate is limited to the question of whether to reconsider and not the merits of the underlying motion. If Town Meeting votes favorably to reconsider then Town Meeting returns to the original motion and revisits the merits of the underlying issue.
- The Moderator may rule that any motion is a motion for reconsideration if it is not substantially different from a motion previously voted upon.
- A motion that is made to reconsider on the last night of town meeting must be taken up that same night.