

## **Moderator's Guide to Town Meeting Procedures: The Basics** (as of March 25, 2016)

**Representative Town meeting:** The Town Meeting is the legislative body for the Town of Wellesley. Wellesley has a Representative Town Meeting with 240 elected Town Meeting Members ("TMMs").

**The Warrant:** All town meetings are initiated by a Warrant issued by the Board of Selectmen. The Warrant is a list of items to be considered at the meeting.

**Citizens' Petitions:** A citizen may sponsor a warrant article by filing a citizen's petition with the Town Clerk prior to the closing of the warrant. Information about filing a citizen's petition is available from the Town Clerk.

**Who can attend and speak at town meeting?** The proceedings of Town Meeting are open to the public. All town residents are allowed to address town meeting and participate in the debate.

People who are not town residents need the permission of the Moderator or of Town Meeting to speak. Please alert the Moderator in advance if a non-resident intends to speak.

For more information please see the Moderator's Guide to Participation at Town Meeting and review the Guidelines for Conduct of Wellesley Representative Town Meeting, available at [http://www.wellesleyma.gov/Pages/WellesleyMA\\_Clerk/tmconduct.pdf](http://www.wellesleyma.gov/Pages/WellesleyMA_Clerk/tmconduct.pdf).

If you email the Moderator ([pegmetzgermod@aol.com](mailto:pegmetzgermod@aol.com)) in advance to alert her that you want to speak she will be sure to look for your hand.

**Seating at Town Meeting:** Town Meeting Members sit in the front section of the auditorium. People who are not elected TMMs must sit in the rear sections of the auditorium behind the voting TMMs (unless they have received a name tag from the Town Clerk indicating that they have permission to sit in the front section).

**Who can vote at town meeting?** Only elected TMMs can vote at Town Meeting.

**Who can make a motion at town meeting?** Only elected TMMs can make a motion at town meeting. Motions may propose action at variance with the outcome desired by the sponsor of the article; but motions are only permitted if they are "within the scope of the warrant" as determined by the Moderator. Motions must be reduced to writing and anyone who decides prior to Town Meeting to make a motion is expected to inform the Moderator and the Chair of the Advisory Committee prior to the Meeting.

**Can written materials be distributed at Town Meeting?** Material can be distributed at Town Meeting only with permission of the Moderator. Please email the Moderator ([pegmetzgermod@aol.com](mailto:pegmetzgermod@aol.com)) a copy of what you would like to distribute at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

**Do I need to know "parliamentary" procedure to attend Town Meeting or participate?** No. Town Meeting operates in accordance with state law, the Town Bylaws, the Guidelines for Conduct of Wellesley Representative Town Meeting and *Town Meeting Times*, a handbook to the practices of town meetings throughout New England. Wellesley's Town Meeting does not operate under *Robert's Rules*.

**What is the role of the Moderator?** The Moderator presides at Town Meeting, regulates the proceedings and decides all questions of order.