

TOWN OF CONCORD
MODERATOR'S NOTES & PROCEDURES FOR 2022 SPECIAL 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 the libraries.

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 hissing, booing, clapping 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 limit themselves to the announced time limits. For this Special Town Meeting, speakers from the floor will have **two minutes** for speaking pro or con on a motion. Any extra time must have the Moderator's advance permission.

DOCUMENTS YOU WILL NEED Please be sure you have a copy of the Motion under Article 1, the Finance Committee Report and the handouts prepared by other town boards and committees.

VOTING SLIP All registered voters receive a Voting Slip when they check in with Election Officials in the lobby. Please keep write your name on the top of your Voting Slip, keep it handy, and raise it when the Moderator calls for a vote. If a standing vote is being counted by the Tellers, you must show your Voting Slip to identify you as a voter to the Tellers who are responsible for counting the section where you are seated. In the event that the Meeting votes to vote on a matter by secret ballot, you will be instructed by the Moderator as to how to detach your ballot. Please note that the Voting Slips are not transferrable, so if you leave the Meeting early, please take your Voting Slip with you.

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.

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 broadcast live on local cable access channel 9 by MMN and on radio by WIQH 88.3 FM. The Meeting is livestreamed on the MMN website: <https://concordma.gov/2335/Minuteman-Media-Network-MMN> . 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 Please take note of the designated exit nearest to your seat and your path to that exit. In the event we need to evacuate the building, please exit

promptly and carefully. If you have children in the Childcare Center, do not attempt to go for them. They will be safely evacuated by the people in charge.

RECYCLING Recycling barrels are available in the lobby for materials you do not wish to take home.

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 SPEAK IN FAVOR OR AGAINST 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. **NOTE that you may not call to end debate on a motion after you have spoken about it.**

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. Amendments require a majority vote to pass.
8. 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 __" (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.