

JULY 31, 2017 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING GUIDE

DATE & TIME:

July 31, 2017 7:00 PM

LOCATION:

Bartlett High School Auditorium,
52 Lake Parkway, Webster

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Town Meeting Procedure Information

Thank you for taking an interest in Webster's Town Meeting. Town Meeting is part of a great tradition of democracy which has been happening in Webster ever since its townspeople came together to decide to found the town in 1832. Town Meeting is the legislative body of the town, acting much like our legislative counterparts at the state and federal level to fund a budget and establish bylaws. One important difference from those legislatures is that in Webster's Open Town Meeting form of government, every registered voter of the town is a legislator and has the opportunity to participate in and vote on every issue.

Procedures

Webster's Town Meeting is governed by state law, the town's bylaws, tradition, and the book *Town Meeting Time: A Handbook of Parliamentary Law*. But voters don't need to read those documents or be parliamentarians in order to participate in the meeting, as the moderator will handle the details. But if you're not clear on what is being voted on or what is being discussed, please feel free to ask.

At the podium:

- Town Administrator: chief administrative and financial officer

Boards/committees (from left to right):

- Board of Selectmen: the main executive body of the Town
- School Committee: recommends the school budget
- Finance Committee: makes spending recommendations

People on stage (from left to right):

- Town Counsel: the Town's attorney
- Moderator: presides over Town Meeting
- Town Clerk: records the official proceedings

Warrant

The Selectmen post the warrant before Town Meeting. The warrant lists the agenda for what topics will be discussed and voted upon at the meeting. Each item on the agenda is called an article. An article may be specific or broad, and its purpose is to inform the voters of what topics may come up at the meeting. The booklet distributed at the meeting includes both the text of the warrant that was posted as well as the specific motions expected to be presented.

Motions

While a warrant article describes generally what subjects will come up, a motion is a statement of a specific action that is proposed to be taken. For example, a motion to appropriate money would specify the dollar amount, source of funds, and for what purpose. The motions that are expected to be presented are printed in this booklet, but the actual motion presented may differ. It's important to realize the difference between the warrant article and the motion: The warrant article is the agenda item describing what

subject matter may come up, and the motion describes the specific proposed action which will be voted upon.

Amendments

A motion may also be made to amend the main motion, in which case that amendment will be discussed and voted on first. If the amendment passes, then discussion will return to the main motion as amended. If the amendment is defeated, then discussion will return to the original main motion.

Motions to pass over

A particular motion that may come up is the motion to pass over, which is often referred to as "postponing indefinitely". This motion simply is a proposal to take no action on the warrant article at this meeting. The town's practice has been to utilize a "motion to pass over" or a "motion to pass over for more information". Webster by-law 253-14 prohibits an article from being taken back-up prior to the next annual town meeting, unless it is passed over for more information. If the motion is approved, then no action will be taken on the article and the meeting will move on to the next article. If the motion is defeated, then the meeting would entertain a "positive" motion to take a specific action as it relates to the article.

Discussion

After a motion is presented, the floor is open for discussion, questions, and debate. In order to participate, speakers line up behind the microphones. When recognized by the moderator, they clearly state their names and addresses, so that others know who is speaking. Comments should be specifically about the issue before the voters, and not addressed to any particular person or group other than the moderator. Pursuant to rules accepted by Town Meeting (October 2015 ATM), the speakers are limited to 7 individuals for and 7 against the article. Each speaker is limited to 2 minutes. The sponsor or mover of the article shall have 5 minutes and shall not be counted in the 7 speaker limit. Town meeting can extend a speakers time for an additional 2 minutes by a 2/3 majority vote.

Ending discussion

If a voter has heard a sufficient amount of discussion and wants to close off and stop further debate, they can make a motion to end debate, which is often referred to as "moving the question". A voter cannot both make a comment and move to end debate during the same turn at the microphone; he or she can only do one or the other. A motion to end debate is not itself debatable, and requires a 2/3 majority vote in order to pass. If the motion to end debate passes, then discussion is over and the meeting will move to a vote on the main motion. If the motion to end debate is defeated, then the discussion of the main motion continues.

Reconsideration

If substantive new information is available such that the meeting could change its mind about a vote it has already taken, a voter can move to reconsider that vote. The moderator will not entertain a motion to reconsider simply because there are now a different group

of voters in the hall or because some people wish that the vote had gone the other way. If the motion to reconsider is accepted by the moderator, then it will be discussed, and if the majority votes in favor, then the original motion that was previously voted upon will again be before the voters. Reconsideration can only be raised by an individual who voted on the prevailing side. Webster by-law 253-13 requires a 2/3 vote in order to reconsider.

Voting

The Town will continue its use of the newly-introduced electronic voting system. Rather than a voice vote or the raising of hands, each resident will be assigned an electronic voting remote when they register at the door. Voters simply need to press the appropriate button for their vote to be recorded. Not only will this system be more accurate, but it also allows each vote to remain confidential. Additionally, the use of the electronic voting system will eliminate the need for any ballot votes, and thus potentially greatly reduce the length of the meeting. The voting system will be tested and calibrated prior to the meeting to ensure that the vote will be accurate.

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF WEBSTER
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT
JULY 31, 2017**

Worcester, ss

To either of the Constables in the County aforesaid:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are hereby required and directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Webster aforesaid who are qualified to vote in elections and Town affairs to meet in the Bartlett High School Auditorium, 52 Lake Parkway, in said Webster on **Monday, July 31, 2017 at 7:00 PM** then and there to act on the following Articles to wit:

ARTICLE 1: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire by gift, purchase, eminent domain or otherwise, two certain parcels of land, with improvements thereon, located at 37 Negus Street and 39 Negus Street, being shown on Assessor's Map 1, Parcels 7 and 8, and described in a deed recorded with the Worcester Registry of Deeds in Book 51954, Page 364 (37 Negus Street) and in a deed recorded with said Registry in Book 51954, Page 362 (39 Negus Street); said acquisition to be funded through the library construction budget as voted on Article 14 of the December 8, 2014 Special Town Meeting and the January 26, 2015 ballot vote; or take any action thereon.

Sponsored by the Town Administrator

Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee approves article as written

Recommended Motion: I move that the Town vote to approve the article as read.

Background: In coordination with the construction of the new public library, the Town would like to purchase the two parcels at 37 and 39 Negus Street. This will expand the parking area of the library, solve the Lake Street egress sight line problems and improve the overall aesthetics of the project and area.

Due to unforeseen issues with the originally designed retaining wall, the town has two options: 1) build a redesigned retaining wall at cost of \$488,000 or 2) purchase the parcels at 37 and 39 Negus and expand the parking lot at a total cost of approximately \$650,000. The Library Building Committee recommends option two. For the \$162,000 difference, options two greatly improves the project as previously described; option one costs nearly as much but with none of the additional advantages.

The total project cost of \$650,000 can be funded within the \$12,000,000 library appropriation that the Town previously authorized in December 2014.

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the Town Hall Stabilization Fund \$55,000 to a capital account for the purpose of funding improvements to the basement in Town Hall; or take any action thereon.

Sponsored by the Town Administrator

Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee approves article as written

Recommended Motion: I move that the Town vote to approve the article as read.

Background: The Renovation of the Town Hall basement includes the improvements to the lower level bathrooms and offices. Improvements for the bathroom include framing walls with green board & durarock, tile floor and install new partitions, plumbing and the installation of fixtures. Improvements to the offices include the installation of new drop ceiling grids and ceiling tiles with light fixtures to cover existing piping and installation of commercial grade carpet in the hallway and three side rooms.

This funding will address an immediate need in the Town Hall. Further work in Town Hall and other town buildings will be analyzed and prioritized as part of the Town's capital improvement process.

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to transfer \$25,000 from the General Liability Insurance account to a Town Administrator Professional Services account for the purpose of funding a streetlight audit; or take any action thereon.

Sponsored by the Town Administrator

Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee approves article as written

Recommended Motion: I move that the Town vote to approve the article as read.

Background: The streetlight audit is the first step in our process to convert our streetlights to LEDs. Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) offers a grant funding for 30% of the cost of LED streetlight materials and installation. To be eligible, the town needs to complete a streetlight audit. LED street lights reduce energy use by 50-70% as compared to existing High Pressure Sodium (HPS) lights. Routine maintenance costs also decrease by 50% or more. The town will see a savings of approximately \$168,000 annually with the conversion to LED streetlights. The total estimated cost to convert to LEDs is \$303,000; this is a 1.8 year return-on-investment payback. The full funding request for the streetlight conversion will be made at the October Town Meeting.

In addition to significant costs savings, LED streetlights improve safety, drivability conditions and aesthetics.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$127,050 to the Public Buildings Maintenance Electricity account as follows:

\$70,000 from the Police Electricity account

\$26,300 from the Fire Electricity account
\$750 from the Animal Control Officer Electricity account
\$5,000 from the DPW Electricity account
\$20,000 from the Senior Center Electricity account
\$800 from the Marble House Electricity account
\$4,200 from the Library Electricity account

; or take any other action relative thereto.

Sponsored by the Town Administrator

Board of Selectmen recommends approval; Finance Committee approves article as written with detailed sub-accounts

Recommended Motion: I move that the Town vote to approve the article as read.

Background: This article will move the electric utility accounts from the several different departments into one consolidated budget. This will assist us as we manage the Town's electric costs and help us better budget in future fiscal years. Additionally, this will help with the accounting of net metering credits the Town of Webster receives from our solar field at the old landfill on Cudworth Road. We will still be able to track utility usage by department/building.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to transfer the sum of \$58,331 to the Public Buildings Maintenance Heating Fuel account as follows:

\$6,700 from the Police Heating Fuel account
\$15,131 from the Fire Heating Fuel account
\$3,500 from the Animal Control Officer Heating Fuel account
\$18,000 from the DPW Heating Fuel account
\$8,000 from the Senior Center Heating Fuel account
\$4,000 from the Marble House Heating Fuel account
\$3,000 from the Library Heating Fuel account

; or take any other action relative thereto.

Sponsored by the Town Administrator

Board of Selectmen recommends approval; Finance Committee approves article as written with detailed sub-accounts

Recommended Motion: I move that the Town vote to approve the article as read.

Background: This article will move the heating fuel utility accounts from the several different departments into one consolidated budget. This will assist us as we manage the Town's heating costs and help us better budget in future fiscal years. We will still be able to track utility usage by department/building.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to accept General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53F3/4, which establishes a special revenue fund known as the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund, to reserve cable franchise fees and other cable-related revenues for appropriation to support PEG access services and oversight and renewal of the cable franchise agreement, the fund to begin operation for fiscal year 2018, which begins on July 1, 2017; or take any other action relative thereto.

Sponsored by the Town Administrator

Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee approves article as written

Recommended Motion: I move that the Town vote to approve the article as read.

Background: The Town receives fees collected from customers by the local cable operator to support public, educational and government (PEG) programming. These funds are to be used only to support the local PEG access programming. The Massachusetts legislature passed a law effective January 15, 2015 that permits municipalities to maintain all funds related to Cable PEG access in a receipts reserved for appropriation fund upon successful local option vote at Town Meeting authorizing such a receipts reserved for appropriation fund. This is essentially how the town manages these funds currently; we need Town Meeting to authorize the fund to be in compliance.