

TOWN MEETING REVIEW COMMITTEE

Thursday, November 21, 2019 – Town Hall, Banquet Room (7:00pm)

MINUTES

The Meeting was called to order at 7:02pm.

Members present:

Mark Sylvia, Town Moderator (Chair)  
Chris Bunnell, Assistant Town Moderator  
Brian Bowcock, Precinct Chair (Pct 1)  
Sean Powers, Precinct Chair (Pct 3)  
Paul Foster, Precinct Chair (Pct 4)

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The Chair presented the standard meeting rules adopted at each Town Meeting. The Committee identified the following meeting rules to be revised:

1. Clarify rule about which microphones town meeting members will be recognized at. Presently, there are microphones in each of the aisles and at the center podium. The Committee agreed that the standard rule should be that Town Meeting members must be recognized at either of the two microphones located in the aisles. The microphone at the center podium should be reserved for presenters only.
2. The Committee agreed that the position of Assistant Town Moderator should be an established position included in the Town's bylaws, that the Assistant Town Moderator should be appointed by the Town Moderator and whose term should be concurrent with the Town Moderator's term. In the event the Town Moderator resigns, the Assistant Town Moderator shall serve until the next annual town election.
3. The Committee recommends that the Town Moderator should explain to Town Meeting members prior to each Town Meeting how to call the question – cannot be made while debating any motion.

The Chair walked through town meeting bylaws, traditions and Roberts Rules. The Committee identified the following revisions:

1. The Committee felt that § 50-5. Matters of appropriation – which enables a ballot vote on any appropriation of money by support of at least 25 Town Meeting members should potentially be deleted and that Roberts Rules be followed. The Committee also indicated that this matter should also be discussed when reviewing Town Meeting technology, which may also be a way to address this issue.

2. The Chair indicated that town meeting tradition is in conflict with § 50-7. Count of Votes as it relates to questioning the decision of the Town Moderator as it relates to vote count. The Chair indicated that unless the Committee feels otherwise, the bylaw requirement of 7 members will be in order. Make sure that the bylaw section is applicable in all cases.
3. The Committee discussed § 50-2. Presentation of articles to Selectmen, which requires that articles (other than those specified by law) be presented to the Selectmen eight weeks before the holding of an Annual Town Meeting and thirty days before a Special Town Meeting. The consensus was to meet with the Town Administrator to discuss if this is currently followed and whether there need to be any changes.
4. Mr. Bowcock raised the issue of accessibility as it relates to audio visual materials and powerpoint presentations. He indicated that there should be standards set for font colors and that the Technology Team possibly make themselves or students available to assist those presenters that need it with developing slides.

The Committee also indicated that it is difficult to see audiovisual presentations at Town Meeting. The Chair indicated that this topic will be very important to discuss at the meeting on Town Meeting Technology. Mr. Bowcock commented that there is funding available to support investing in new technology.

The Chair indicated that the next topic would likely be Town Meeting technology.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.