

Procedures for January 25, 2018 Town Meeting

This document describes the procedures for the Thursday, January 25, 2018 Special Town Meeting, which will start at 7:00pm. Some procedures are different than usual Town Meetings. Anyone with questions is encouraged to contact the Moderator, Rebecca Townsend (rtownsend@longmeadow.org). Town Meeting is governed by Massachusetts General Laws, our charter, bylaws, our Town Meeting Rules of Procedure, and *Town Meeting Time*, the handbook for procedure published by the Massachusetts Moderators Association.

Doors will open 5:30 pm. The Department of Public Works will illuminate the parking lot. The front lot is designated for people with mobility challenges. Hearing assistive devices are available upon request. Children are welcome. Children do not need a visitor's pass and may sit with their parents or guardians. Adult non-voters, including the press, shall sit in the designated regular visitor's section in the bleachers. Upon check-in, voters will be given a voting card and ballot.

People may hold signs outside the high school, but not inside. No signs may be left in the ground unattended. Distribution of pamphlets/literature may occur both outside the High School and in a designated area in the Cafeteria. No distribution of literature within the Gymnasium nor in the walkway from the Clerk's staff to the Gymnasium.

Speaking

All speakers must wait to be recognized by the Moderator, and then, once recognized, must state their names and address. Non-voters must seek permission (prior to the meeting) in order to be recognized. Proper decorum must be maintained at all times. All speech must be relevant to the question and civil. "No person" according to *Town Meeting Time*, "is to engage in personalities." Any speaker violating rules will be called to order.

As is typical, citizen petitioners are first to make a motion and speak to it. They will be allotted 10 minutes. We will then hear the Planning Board's recommendation. When there exists a clearly identifiable organization in opposition, they are permitted to speak as well, for 10 minutes. We will have such a case at this Town Meeting.

Speaking will then turn to the floor (alternating among microphones marked Green-In Favor, Yellow-Questions or motions, and Red-In Opposition). These subsequent speakers will have approximately 2 minutes.

Should anyone have multiple questions, they may ask them all at one time to the Moderator, who will direct the questions to the people who can answer them. Cross-examination and back-and-forth dialogue is prohibited. If a speaker requests a follow-up, it may be granted with Moderator discretion. That counts as a second turn at speaking. Since we have a bylaw regarding how frequently someone may speak, speakers are encouraged to be judicious. The frequency restriction does not apply to answers to questions.

Speech must be civil, respectful, and ethical. People in line who have not yet had a chance to speak will be given preference over repeat-speakers whenever feasible. A voter may speak

twice on a given issue and shall wait until others have had an opportunity to speak before he or she speaks a third time (except for clarification or explanation). Any speaker wishing to speak a fourth time must gain approval of Town Meeting.

Because this is a single-issue meeting which has generated a great deal of pre-meeting discussion, a motion to “call the question” will not be in order until sufficient time has elapsed for voters to speak (approximately 45 minutes). Of course, if no one rises to speak, we may come right to a vote without a motion to call the question. A motion to call the question is not debatable; a speaker must make the motion directly after they are recognized. It requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority approval to succeed.

Voting

At this meeting, the vote on the main motion under Article 1 may be conducted by ballot following a properly made motion to fix the manner of voting by ballot if that motion were then to pass by majority vote of the meeting. Once voting has started, no one may enter the Gym. Police officers will call for anyone outside the Gym, for example, the Clerk’s staff at the check-in desks, to enter and sit. No one may vote if they are not seated inside the Gym first. Police will close the doors and not permit anyone to enter. If anyone leaves, they will not be permitted to come back in while voting or vote-counting is occurring.

The Moderator will instruct voters to follow the directions of the Ushers. Ushers will ask voters in each section, row by row, to proceed to the center aisle in two lines toward the front of the Gym. There will be two tables in the front of the room (one for Select Board, and one for the Planning Board). Board members will move from their table to the front floor section on the respective side of the gym for their tables.

The Clerk and Assistant Clerk will place a covered voting box at the end of each table. Also with them will be a Registrar of Voters and one of the regular Town Meeting counters for hand-counts. Voters will rip their perforated voting card and drop either the YES or the NO side into the voting box. They will retain the stub, walking toward the side of the gymnasium. Before they turn the corner to walk down the side aisle and return to their seats, they will drop the stub with the other side of the voting ballot into a DISCARD bin (staffed with two Counters). The bin will be at the end of each of the two tables, and covered with a slit in the top.

- At the voting box, no one is permitted to talk with the Clerk, Assistant Clerk, or other staff observing the voting.
- Everyone must surrender their ballot. If a voter chooses not to vote, they would drop their entire ballot (not ripped) into the VOTE bin. It will be counted as a blank vote.
- If a voter requires assistance, they will inform the usher.
- Everyone will return to their seat and should remain there. Again, if they choose to leave, they will not re-enter.
- If someone decides to leave the High School during debate, they must surrender their voting card and ballot. A Police Officer and a Counter will be stationed by the Gym exits with a box for surrendered cards and ballots.

Once the vote is finished, the Counters who are supervising the Discard bins will remain in the Gym with the bins. A Police Officer will escort the Clerk and Assistant Clerk and the voting boxes to a secure location outside the Gym where counting will occur. Two designated vote counters will count the ballots in each box at separate tables. There will be a count and a verification of the count. Two pre-selected Observers from proponents and opponents may observe the voting at each table. If Observers have a question about a ballot, they will inform the Clerk or the Assistant Clerk, not the counters. The issue will be resolved.

Once the Clerk's staff has completed the count, the Clerk will report the total vote, the number in favor, and the number opposed, to the Moderator. The Moderator will announce those numbers and declare the outcome of the vote. A motion to dissolve the Special Town Meeting will then be in order.

Map of High School Gym Showing Pathways for Voting Using Ballot

