

2020 Town Meeting Rules & Procedure

The following are the Moderator's rules for the 2020 Plainfield Town Meeting being held outside under tents at the Smith Auction Gallery at 10am. July 11, 2020.

Due to the corona pandemic and the safety of your neighbors, all voters are requested to wear facemasks and practice social distancing. If you are unwilling or unable to wear a facemask, a separate section of the meeting space will be available for you to be seated with appropriate distancing.

This is your meeting; the Moderator's job is to keep it going forwards in a productive and organized manner and to ensure clarity as to what is being voted upon; so as to not get entangled in procedural debates, the following straight-forward rules will apply. But remember this is your meeting so any ruling by the moderator may be challenged by seven voters and then put to a majority vote by the house.

All will be given an opportunity to speak beginning with the person who offered the motion; all questions and comments should be addressed to the Moderator who will choose who responds to the question.

I will try to recognize you by name but if I don't, please identify yourself (even if I should be able to call on you by name, sometimes a mental lapse prohibits);

All motions and amendments must be in writing;

I will entertain only one amendment at a time, - no amendments to amendments;

A motion to call the question needs to be supported by seven voters, is not debatable and needs a 2/3 vote to carry. However the Moderator shall have the right to refuse to recognize a motion to call the question if, in the Moderator's opinion, the voters have not yet had an adequate opportunity to discuss the issue.

Voting will be by a voice vote, show of voter's card or secret ballot by numbered tear-offs. A tie vote fails; if a 2/3 vote is required and the 2/3 calculation results in a fractional vote, rounding up to the next full vote will be required for an affirmative vote;

I will not entertain a motion to pass over an article; RSA 40:11 requires all warrant articles to be acted upon before the final adjournment of the meeting;

I will try to avoid situations where a negative vote is needed to express a positive intent (e.g., motion to table or postpone once a motion is on the floor);

(OVER)

The meeting is a forum to ask questions and to debate the issues; we are all neighbors assembled to conduct the business of the town and discussions should be to the to the issue and be civil; hand-outs advocating a position are allowed at the business meeting but only if they identify who prepared the document – name, not just email or hash tag.

I will allow non-voters to speak, but only to offer information, not to advocate a position;

Article remains open for further action until the moderator starts to read the next article; after that, the meeting must move to vote to reconsider and such motion may only be made by a voter who voted on the prevailing side of the vote to be reconsidered.

Paul Franklin. Town Moderator
July 4, 2020