

Annual Town Meeting Town of Bolton

<p>What is “Town Meeting”? Simply put, a Town Meeting is an Event AND an Entity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As an Event: it is a gathering of Bolton’s eligible voters. ● As an Entity: it is the legislative body of Bolton. 	<p>What does Town Meeting do? Town Meeting is responsible for three major things: 1st: Voting on the Articles as presented in the Town Warrant. 2nd: Appropriating the money needed to run the town. 3rd: Voting on the town’s local statutes, also known as the By-Laws.</p>
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WHO’S WHO?

<p>What is a Town Moderator?</p>	<p>The Town Moderator is the presiding officer of Town Meeting. It is the Moderator’s responsibility to efficiently run Town Meeting, to ensure there is a productive democratic debate, to decide all questions of order, and to publicly declare the outcome of all votes. Under Bolton Bylaw 59-9, the Moderator may decline to put motions forward that are obviously frivolous or tending to disorder. In Bolton we use the Parliamentary Handbook <u>Town Meeting Time</u> and state and local bylaws to direct our proceedings.</p>
<p>What is the Select Board?</p>	<p>The Select Board is the Town’s Executive Department, there are three members elected by the voters of the Town. The Select Board is responsible for calling the Town Meeting.</p>
<p>What is the Advisory Committee?</p>	<p>The Advisory Committee reviews and approves the spending by each department and the Town, and reviews all Warrant Articles and makes recommendations to Town Meeting voters on what action it believes is in the best interest of the townspeople.</p>
<p>What is a Town Clerk?</p>	<p>The Town Clerk is the keeper of all records of the business of the Town; the Town Clerk is required to post the Warrant Articles and keep records of the proceedings and votes of Town Meeting.</p>
<p>What is a Town Counsel?</p>	<p>The Town Counsel is the legal advisor for the Select Board and Town Meeting. Town Counsel is seated at arm’s length to the Town Moderator, to answer legal questions arising during deliberations.</p>

THE WARRANT

<p>What is the Warrant?</p>	<p>The Warrant is the “warning” of the meeting: it lists the time, place, and agenda. It is issued by the Select Board and posted throughout the Town by the Town Clerk. It is posted in public places throughout the Town Of Bolton, inserted into a complimentary edition of the local newspaper, and posted on the Town website at least 7 days prior to Town Meeting.</p>
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What are the Articles?	Articles are the individual items on the warrant, this is the agenda of things to be voted on at the meeting. Articles are submitted to the warrant by the Town Administrator, Boards, Committees, and individual citizens.
What is a “Consent Agenda”?	With a Consent Agenda, several Articles on the Warrant can be addressed by a single vote. The Moderator will explain this and a slide will show the Articles being grouped together.
How does a Consent Agenda work?	<p>When the Consent Agenda is called, the Moderator will read out the number of each article one at a time.</p> <p>If one, or more, voter objects to an article they may say “HOLD” when that number is called. That article will be removed from the Consent Agenda and restored to its place in the Warrant. When all the individual Articles are called, the Moderator will ask for a Motion that the voters pass all remaining Consent Articles as a Unit, with a single vote. Then, any articles that have been held will be debated and voted upon individually.</p>

PARTICIPATION MATTERS: DEBATE & VOTING

Who can vote at Town Meeting?	Any registered voter living in the Town of Bolton can come to Town Meeting and vote.
What is a quorum?	A quorum is the minimum number of voters required to be in attendance for Town Meeting to start and take any action. <i>Bolton requires a minimum quorum of 75 registered voters.</i>
How does one vote at Town Meeting?	Bolton conducts most votes by Voice Vote of “Yea” (in favor) or “Nay” (opposed). Bolton began using an Electronic Voting system for the meeting in 2022, affectionately called “clickers”. It is the Moderator’s discretion when to utilize the Electronic Voting Devices.
What is a Majority vote?	A Majority vote is exactly what you think it is: just like in the Senate, where a single vote can tip the scales. If there are 150 voters at Town Meeting a majority vote could pass 76–74.
What is a 2/3rds vote?	A 2/3rds vote requires that 2/3rds or more of the total number of voters at the meeting AT the time of the vote, vote together. Not 2/3rds of the total number of voters who attended the meeting, but who are AT the meeting when the vote is taken. If there are 150 voters a 2/3rds vote would require 100–50 to pass. Bolton Bylaw 59-5 allows the Moderator to determine if a vote reaches 2/3rds count. At the moderator’s discretion, or if 7 voters rise to challenge the Moderator, a vote will be counted by electronic or other means.
What is the Main Motion?	The Main Motion is typically the exact wording for each Article as presented in the Warrant. The Moderator typically will not read the

	entire Main Motion when beginning debate on an article but will reference the Article number and the key headline of the article. The Moderator will reference the Board that proposed the Article, the required vote on the article, and ask for a member of the audience to move the Article (usually the Selectboard) and for a second.
When can the Main Motion be altered prior to Moving the Article?	In some cases, the Main Motion may be altered slightly, at the approval of the Moderator, if the small change does not significantly alter the meaning of the Article. The Moderator will clearly state the small change to the meeting to be sure it is clear to all the voters. This does not require a vote.
When does a change in an article require an Amendment? “I move to Amend the Article to say.....”	If the change is significant, “Beyond the Four Corners of the Article” then an Amendment may be proposed to alter the Main Motion after the Main Motion has been made and seconded. The Moderator will look at the scope of the proposed change and if the change significantly alters the meaning of the Article then an Amendment will be required. We like to have the Amendment in writing. Examples are a significant change in the dollar value of an article, adding a clause to an article, or change a location of a zoning article. After the amendment to the article has been voted, the amended article can be voted.
What does it mean when someone asks, “Question of Personal Privilege”?	If a voter has an issue that relates to the rights and privileges of Town Meeting, specifically the comfort and convenience of those in attendance (such as needing the wireless microphone, the volume of the speaker, or the temperature of the room)
What is a “Point of Order”	A query as to whether correct procedure is being followed that can be called by any voter in attendance. Examples of “Points of Order” are: is the speaker a registered voter?, is what the speaker is saying frivolous or irrelevant?, is the pending action frivolous or irrelevant?, or was the motion seconded?
What does it mean when someone states “I move the Previous Question”	If a voter wants to end a long debate and vote on the Article before the meeting they may attempt to “Move The Question”. The Moderator will determine if that is in order based on the amount of debate that has occurred. Only after sufficient debate will this be accepted. The Moderator won’t allow debate to be cut off precipitously. This requires a second and <u>cannot</u> be debated once accepted by the Moderator.
What if a Proponent moves to “Withdraw my Motion”	If a Voter moves to “Withdraw My Motion”. This motion is used when the proponent of the article wants to withdraw the Article. This requires Unanimous consent.
What if a Proponent moves to “Postpone Indefinitely” or “Postpone to A Time Certain”	A Voter may move to “Postpone Indefinitely” or “Postpone to a Time Certain”. This requires a second and a majority vote, and may be debated. This motion is used when the proponent of the article wants to make changes and bring it back at a later time.

<p>What does it mean to make a motion on an Article to “Lay on The Table”?</p>	<p>This was originally a way to take up more urgent issues and come back to an Article at a later time in the meeting, but it has come to be used to kill an Article without further debate. Since this stifles reasonable debate, the Moderator is likely to try to reason with a petitioner to allow debate to continue. If the Moderator accepts the motion it requires a second and a 2/3rds vote and may not be debated.</p>
<p>What is a “Motion to Dissolve the Meeting”</p>	<p>At the end of the meeting, it must be closed down permanently. The Moderator will ask for a Motion to Dissolve. This requires a second and a simple majority vote.</p>
<p>What is a “Motion to Adjourn The Meeting to a Fixed Time”</p>	<p>If the meeting does not finish business in one night, it must be adjourned to a later date and time, typically the next day at the same time. The Moderator will ask for a Motion Adjourn to the date of XXX and time of XXX. This requires a second and a simple majority vote.</p>
<p>What is a “Point of No Quorum”</p>	<p>If a Voter believes that the number of persons at the meeting has fallen below the quorum level (75) and that the issues to be debated are so important that the meeting must be ended until a quorum is reached that person may ask if a quorum is present. If there is little work remaining, the moderator may ask the petitioner to withdraw the question and appeal to the logic of finishing the business-at-hand. This cannot be used to cut off debate or interrupt a speaker. The Moderator may take a recess to try to find additional voters if necessary. If this motion does precede, this does not require a vote and the Moderator and Clerk will count the Voters present to determine if a quorum is present.</p>
<p>What is a “Motion to Reconsider”</p>	<p>Bolton has a tradition of not reconsidering Articles after they have been voted. Only if some information is brought forward that the meeting did not know at the time of the vote would a motion to reconsider be accepted. It requires a second and a 2/3rds vote.</p>
<p>What is a “Motion to Advance An Article”</p>	<p>Bolton has a tradition of not changing the order of the Articles that are printed in the Warrant. The Warrant is prepared by the Select Board and they take great care in making the order. Under Bolton Bylaw 59-7 the Moderator will decide if an article is allowed to be taken out of order. Only if some information is brought forward that all parties agree that the order should be changed would a motion to Advance an Article be accepted. It requires a second and a 2/3rds vote.</p>
<p>What is a “Motion to Commit or Refer To A Committee”</p>	<p>It may be determined after debate that an issue requires more time and consideration to be brought back to the Town Meeting at a later time. A Motion to Refer to A Committee may be made to bring it back at the next Town Meeting. The Committee must be specified and may be a permanent board or a special committee. It requires a Motion, a Second and a Majority vote. It may not interrupt a speaker and may be debated.</p>