

# TOWN MEETING HANDBOOK

A GUIDE FOR BROOKLINE TOWN MEETING MEMBERS

November 2022



# PARLIAMENTARY GUIDE

Rank	Motion	Second Required	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Required	May Reconsider	May Interrupt
<b>PRIVILEGED MOTIONS</b>							
1	Dissolve (adjourn "sine die," the final adjournment without a day being set for reconvening)	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	No
2	Adjourn to a fixed time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	No
3	Point of no quorum	No	No	No	None	No	No
4	Fix the time to (or at) which to adjourn	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
5	Questions of privilege	No	No	No	None	No	Yes
<b>SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS</b>							
6	Lay on the table	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes	No
7	The previous question	Yes	No	No	2/3	No	No
8	Limit or extend debate	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes	No
9	Postpone to a time certain	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
10	Commit or refer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
11	Amend or substitute	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
12	Postpone indefinitely	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Yes	No
<b>INCIDENTAL MOTIONS</b>							
Same as motion out of which it arises	Point of order	No	No	No	None	No	Yes
	Division of a question	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	No
	Separate consideration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	No
	Withdraw or modify a motion	No	No	No	Majority	No	No
	Reconsider or rescind	Yes	At Moderator's discretion	No	Majority	No	No
<b>MAIN MOTIONS</b>							
None	Main motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Varies	Yes	No
None	Take from the table	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	No
None	Advance an article	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No

Adapted from Town Meeting Time, Johnson, Trustman and Wadsworth, Massachusetts, Moderators Association, 3rd Edition (2001).

COVER ART: Caroline Barnes, [www.brooklineturkeys.com](http://www.brooklineturkeys.com)

## TOWN OF BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS

Dear Town Meeting Member:

Welcome to Town Meeting. The New England Town Meeting is the embodiment of grass roots democracy. Brookline's Town Meeting has been in place for over three hundred years. It provides the people of Brookline with access to their municipal government and allows a high level of participation.

This Handbook has been produced and edited by the current and past Town Moderators with the assistance of the Brookline Town Meeting Members Association (TMMA). It is designed to be used by Town Meeting Members as a guide to the procedures of our Town Meeting.

The purpose of the TMMA is to serve all Town Meeting Members as a non-partisan, non-advocacy association. Its goals are:

- To foster open, efficient, and effective participatory and democratic governance in the Town of Brookline and to increase the understanding of Town Meeting Members and their constituents of issues facing Brookline that may come before Town Meeting.
- To gather, develop and disseminate relevant information about Town issues to Town Meeting Members and their constituents for the purpose of providing an informed discussion of issues at Town Meeting,

The TMMA maintains an internet listserv at [BrooklineTMMA@groups.IO](mailto:BrooklineTMMA@groups.IO) on which Town Meeting Members and a limited number of others post comments and information relating to Town issues and events before and after Town Meeting.

Additional copies of this Town Meeting Handbook may be obtained from the offices of the Select Board or the Town Clerk, and on the [Town's website](#).

At the time of this edition, Town Meetings are being held remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The special rules and procedures applicable to such meetings are referred to from time to time in this Handbook and covered more completely in the [Virtual Town Meeting Addendum](#).

Many thanks to Jennifer Goldsmith, Town Meeting Member, for her valuable assistance in editing prior editions of the Town Meeting Handbook.

Sincerely yours,

Kate Poverman, Town Moderator, and  
The Town Meeting Members Association

November 2022

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PARLIAMENTARY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- HISTORY & FUNCTIONS..... 1
- TOWN MEETING FAQs ..... 2
- TOWN BUDGET FAQs ..... 7
- ROLES IN TOWN GOVERNMENT..... 8
  - Moderator..... 8
  - Town Meeting Members..... 8
  - Town Clerk..... 8
  - Select Board..... 8
  - Town Administrator ..... 9
  - Deputy Town Administrator for Policy and Fiscal Affairs ..... 9
  - Town Counsel..... 9
  - Advisory Committee and Subcommittees ..... 9
  - Town Boards, Commissions and Committees..... 11
- SERVING IN TOWN MEETING ..... 12
  - Running for Election as a Town Meeting Member ..... 12
  - Running a Town Meeting Campaign ..... 12
  - Becoming Informed About Town Meeting and Town Issues ..... 13
  - Engaging as a Town Meeting Member ..... 14
  - Certain Regulatory Restrictions and Responsibilities ..... 15
  - Resignation or Termination..... 15
- THE WARRANT PROCESS ..... 16
  - Timing of Warrant Petitions..... 16
  - Procedures for Drafting and Submitting a Warrant Article..... 16
  - Procedures after the Warrant is Published ..... 19
- THE BUDGET PROCESS..... 22
  - Annual Budget Cycle ..... 22
  - Departmental Budget Preparation ..... 22
  - Budget Review..... 22
  - Financial Plan Review ..... 22
  - Adoption of the Budget ..... 23
- TOWN MEETING PROCEDURES..... 24
  - Arriving at Town Meeting - Preliminary Matters ..... 24
  - Call to Order ..... 25

General Conduct and Conventions of Town Meeting.....	25
Conflict-of-interest Disclosures .....	26
Etiquette of Speaking at Town Meeting .....	27
Adjournment.....	28
Dissolution .....	28
THE ORDER OF TOWN MEETING .....	29
Introduction of the Article by the Moderator .....	29
Presentation of the Article.....	29
Debate.....	30
Actions on the Main Motion and Amendments.....	32
Motion to Close Debate.....	36
Voting Process.....	36
Counted and Recorded Votes.....	37
Electronic Voting at In-Person Town Meetings.....	38
Secret Ballots.....	39
Votes by the Moderator.....	39
Voting Quantum Requirements.....	39
ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET AND ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS VOTE.....	40
Presentation and Discussion of Budget.....	40
Voting on the Budget.....	41
RESOLUTIONS AND REPORTS.....	42
Resolutions.....	42
Special Committee Reports.....	42
Complimentary Resolutions or Statements of Thanks.....	42
Resolutions on National and International Issues.....	42
EFFECTIVE DATES OF TOWN MEETING ACTIONS.....	43
REFERENDA AND OVERRIDES.....	44
ANNUAL BUDGET CALENDAR.....	46
GLOSSARY OF BUDGET TERMS.....	47
APPENDIX.....	49
Key Contacts and Resources.....	49
Town Organization Chart.....	51
ADDENDUM: PROCEDURES FOR VIRTUAL TOWN MEETINGS ON ZOOM.....	52

# HISTORY & FUNCTIONS

Brookline's Town Meeting has been in place for over three hundred years, with the goal of providing the residents of Brookline clear access to our municipal government and allowing inclusion and participation.

- Today we recognize that in 1638, European colonists took by force the land of the Massachusetts Tribe of Ponkapoag and settled it as a colony later to be named Brookline.
- Brookline was settled in 1638 and incorporated in 1705, the year after its first Town Meeting was held. At that meeting, only male property owners were eligible to participate. In 1919, Massachusetts ratified the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Constitution, giving women the right to vote in Brookline elections.
- In 1910 town finance committees were established by state statute. In Brookline, the finance committee is called the Advisory Committee.
- In 1915 Brookline became the first town in Massachusetts to adopt a Representative Town Meeting, where citizens in each precinct elect Town Meeting Members to represent their interests. All citizens may be heard when recognized by the Moderator, but only elected Town Meeting Members are allowed to vote.
- The conduct of Town Meeting is managed by the Moderator. In doing so, the Moderator exercises discretion subject to state law, the Town bylaws and Town Meeting votes and traditions.

"There are aspirations behind the Town-meeting conception of democracy which must be recognized as indelible parts of the democratic creed.

The Town-meeting conception of democracy is an idealized way of expressing the democratic hope that those who are governed will be able to reach those who govern them, that they will be able to make their voices heard where it counts and will be recognized as persons and not as faceless cogs in an efficient machine.

It speaks for a belief that a society is safer and freer when the bulk of its citizens understand the programs and goals that their government has chosen and when they have achieved this understanding because these programs and goals have been honestly debated in public."

- American Democracy: The Power of the Democratic Idea, Rockefeller Panel Report (1960)

# TOWN MEETING FAQs

## Q | What are the functions and responsibilities of Town Meeting?

A | As the legislative body of Town government, Town Meeting is responsible for:

- Approving the Town budget, including both operating and capital appropriations, allocations to the Brookline School System budget, and other allocations,
- Considering and voting on changes to the Town's zoning and general bylaws,
- Accepting or rejecting state laws that are subject to local option,
- Requesting special state legislation for the Town, and
- Approving any significant changes in Town administrative structure and procedures.

## Q | How often, when, and where does Town Meeting meet?

A | Town Meetings are typically held twice annually, once each in the spring and fall.

An Annual Town Meeting is held each spring, in late May. A Fall Town Meeting is held each November, typically during the week before Thanksgiving week. Special Town Meetings may be called at other times by the Select Board to deal with Town business. Special Town Meetings may also be called by written petition signed by 200 voters.

In-person Town Meetings are held in the Brookline High School Auditorium, 155 Greenough Street, and virtual Town Meetings are held remotely with a core staff operating in the Auditorium.

Virtual Town Meetings are held over Zoom and can be accessed by Town Meeting Members and other participants, such as petitioners, through links that are distributed shortly before the meeting. All Town Meetings are broadcast on Brookline's local television channels, channel 23 on Comcast and channels 3 and 15 on RCN. Links can be found at [Brookline Interactive Program Guide](#).

Town Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. and usually end by 10:30 p.m. They typically last three or four evenings depending on the length and complexity of the meeting agenda. In recent years, Town Meetings have lasted four or more sessions because of the number of articles in the warrant and the duration of debates.

## Q | What process initiates a Town Meeting?

A | A Town Meeting is initiated when the Select Board issues a warrant.

The warrant contains the meeting agenda and serves as notice to all residents of the issues that will be considered at Town Meeting.

The Town bylaws require that legal notice of Town Meetings be given by posting the warrant on the Town Clerk's principal bulletin board at least 14 days before either an Annual or Special Town Meeting is scheduled to convene.

The bylaws also provide that each warrant is to be posted on the Town website, posted in 10 public places, and mailed to all Town Meeting Members at least 15 days before an Annual Town Meeting and 7 days before a Special Town Meeting, although failure to comply with any of those provisions will not invalidate the meeting. Typically, the warrant is approved by the Select Board more than two months before the Town Meeting to which it applies, and the legal and other postings and mailings take place shortly thereafter. A copy of the warrant is also mailed to all Town Meeting Members at that time and is simultaneously posted on the [Town Meeting website](#).

## Q | What is a warrant?

A | A warrant is a notice to all residents of the Town that a Town Meeting will be held.

The warrant is issued by the Select Board and must state the time and place where the meeting will be held and the subject matters to be acted on.

## Q | What is a warrant article?

A | Each item of business within the warrant is called a warrant article.

The warrant sets forth the agenda for the Town Meeting. The agenda items are referred to as warrant articles. The subjects of warrant articles can vary greatly. The Annual Town Meeting warrant always includes an article asking Town Meeting to approve the annual budget. Many warrant articles address issues of town governance including housing, the environment, public health and a range of equity, quality of life and sustainability issues.



## Q | How are warrant articles developed and brought to Town Meeting?

A | Warrant articles may be proposed by the [Select Board](#), Town departments, boards and committees, or citizens.

The roles of different players in Town governance are described in the [Roles in Town Government](#) section of this Handbook.

Citizens may have an article placed on the warrant by obtaining the signatures of at least ten registered Brookline voters, who need not be Town Meeting Members, and submitting the proposed article and the signatures to the Select Board before the closing of the warrant for the meeting, which occurs 75 days prior to the meeting date.

A warrant article initiated by a citizen is referred to as a citizen petition article. The [Warrant Process](#) section of this Handbook provides a detailed description of this process.

## Q | How do Town Meeting Members receive more information about the articles in a warrant?

A | After the articles have been submitted, Town Meeting Members receive comprehensive reports on each article.

These reports are generated by the Select Board, the Advisory Committee, and departments or committees.

The Combined Reports: The Town Clerk sends this comprehensive document to all Town Meeting Members at least 15 days prior to the Annual Town Meeting and at least 7 days prior to a Special Town Meeting. The contents include:

- the text of each article in the warrant,
- the explanations of all articles,
- the reports of the Select Board and the Advisory Committee on articles on which they have reported,
- motions and amendments that have been submitted by other parties under the articles, and
- every report submitted in time for publication by a board or committee with jurisdiction over the subject matter of any article.

The Supplemental Reports: The Town Clerk sends these reports to all Town Meeting Members in the week prior to a scheduled Annual or Fall Town Meeting. The Supplemental Reports include reports and recommendations of the Select Board, the Advisory Committee and other Town entities that were not available when the Combined Reports were sent out. The Supplemental Reports also

contain all proposed motions and amendments under the articles that were submitted after the deadline for the Combined Reports. These documents are also posted in the [Town Meeting Files](#) section of the [Town Meeting website](#)

## Q | Who presides over a Town Meeting and what rules govern its conduct?

### A | The Moderator runs Town Meeting.

The Moderator makes rulings, supervises the proceedings, and exercises judgment and discretion considering the laws of the Commonwealth, the Town bylaws, a parliamentary rule book entitled “Town Meeting Time” (a publication of the Massachusetts Moderators Association that is available at the Town libraries) and this Handbook. In the event of a substantive difference between “Town Meeting Time” and this Handbook, the Handbook will prevail. The rules governing the priority and requirements of specific motions from “Town Meeting Time” are set forth in the front of this Handbook and will rarely if ever be waived or altered by the Moderator. However, the Moderator may in the Moderator's complete discretion, and in the interest of such factors as expediency, common sense, fairness, and justice, make rulings and other decisions that are or may be contrary to the provisions of either “Town Meeting Time” or this Handbook.

## Q | How is the agenda for Town Meeting set?

### A | Town Meeting agendas consist of the articles in the warrant.

Topics discussed at Town Meeting must be within the scope of a subject described in an article as it appears in the warrant. The Moderator interprets the breadth of “scope.” Since the purpose of the warrant is to inform voters about a subject considered by Town Meeting and not to set forth the exact action sought, the courts have supported liberal interpretations of scope as defined by Moderators. “Scope” is further explained in [Amendments to Articles](#).

## Q | How can Town Meeting be viewed remotely?

### A | Town Meeting sessions are livestreamed by [Brookline Interactive Group \(BIG\)](#).

These livestreams are available on Comcast Channel 23 and RCN Channel 3 and 15. The [Program Guide](#) lists Community and Civic channels. BIG also offers a [Hi-Def streaming channel](#). Archives of Town Meeting proceedings are available on-line at BIG and in the Town Meeting section of the [Town Meeting website](#).

## Q | How does voting on warrant articles happen at Town Meeting?

A | Voting typically happens by an electronic, voice, or hand vote.

In-person Meetings: When Town Meetings are held in person, the Moderator will initially call for either a voice or hand vote. A vote will be recorded if a Town Meeting Member makes a motion for a recorded vote that is seconded and approved by at least 35 Town Meeting Members.

Votes at in-person meetings have in the past been recorded using handheld devices provided to Town Meeting Members when they arrive at each evening session. Each Town Meeting Member's vote was displayed on the projection screen during the voting period, which is usually 45 seconds. The method of recording votes will change starting with the next in-person meeting owing to the current unavailability of the handheld devices that have been used in the past.

Remote Meetings: In remote meetings, Town Meeting Members use a voting platform on Zoom. They have 45 seconds to vote "yes" or "no." Their answer cannot be changed once they have entered it. Individual Town Meeting Members' votes are not displayed. Results are displayed in aggregate.

The Moderator announces the results of votes at in-person and remote Town Meetings.

The Town Clerk posts recorded votes the day after the vote is taken on the Town Meeting Files section of the [Town Meeting website](#). The results of recorded votes are included in the minutes of Town Meeting and are published and retained by the Town Clerk for at least three years. The [Voting on the Main Motion](#) section of this Handbook provides a detailed description of the in-person voting process. The [Virtual Town Meeting Addendum](#) describes voting procedures at a virtual Town Meeting.

## Q | What is the difference between Annual Town Meeting and a Special Town Meeting?

A | Town Meeting is the generic term applied to any Town Meeting gathering.

The Annual Town Meeting by statute consists of two parts: the annual Town election, typically held on the first Tuesday in May; and a business meeting of Town Meeting Members held in late May or occasionally early June. The annual business meeting is referred to in this Handbook, as the "Annual Town Meeting." A Fall Special Town Meeting takes place in November. A Special Town Meeting is often called to be held "within" the Annual Town Meeting or within the regular Fall Special Town Meeting. In this event the Moderator conducts each meeting separately and will adjourn the principal meeting and convene the Special Town Meeting within the regular meeting at the approximate time designated for the latter. A Special Town Meeting is also required to be called by the Select Board within 90 days of receiving a petition signed by at least 200 registered voters requesting such a meeting.

## Q | Where are copies of Town Meeting materials available?

**A** | Materials are available on the [Town Meeting website](#) and at the Main Library.

Town Meeting materials are posted on the [Town Meeting website](#). The Brookline Library, Brookline Village Branch, 361 Washington Street, maintains a file of Town Meeting documents, including the Financial Plan, the Combined Reports, and plans and supporting documents relating to projects that come before Town Meeting. All warrants, reports and other material relating to each Town Meeting, and videos of Town Meeting proceedings, are posted on the Town website for three years.

## TOWN BUDGET FAQs

**Q** | What is the amount of Brookline’s total budget?

**A** | Brookline’s FY ‘23 Budget is \$348 million.

**Q** | What are the sources of Brookline’s revenue and expense budgets?

**A** | Revenue and Expense details can be found in [Brookline Budget Central](#).

**Q** | What is the role of Town Government in Budget development and approval?

**A** | The Budget is developed, reviewed, and approved through several governing bodies.

The Town Administrator prepares the initial budget, which is then reviewed and revised by the Advisory Committee, which serves as the Town finance committee. The Advisory Committee holds meetings and hearings, open to the public, which analyze the budget. The budget is then presented to and approved at the Annual Town Meeting, subject to adjustments at the Fall Special Town Meeting. The [Advisory Committee](#) section of this Handbook provides a detailed description of this process.

**Q** | What is the timeline of the Town’s budget process?

**A** | The budget process starts late each fall and ends in May or June, and the budget is subject to adjustments later in the year.

The [Budget Process](#) section of this Handbook, below, provides a detailed description of this process, and a Glossary of financial terms.

# ROLES IN TOWN GOVERNMENT

## Moderator

The Moderator is elected by the voters of the Town for an unsalaried three-year term. The Moderator is the presiding officer of Town Meeting with the principal duties of ensuring that the meeting is conducted in an orderly manner and that the will of the Town Meeting is carried out.

The Moderator sets guidelines for the length of presentations and determines the preliminary order of speakers at Town Meeting to assure that all sides of an issue are presented. The Moderator also appoints the Advisory Committee, the Committee on Town Organization and Structure, and three members of the Audit Committee, as well as the members of any temporary Moderator's committees mandated by Town Meeting. The Moderator also occasionally appoints ad hoc committees to carry out specific tasks. The Moderator may appoint one or more assistants or deputies to provide the Moderator with assistance or to stand in for the Moderator during debates in which the Moderator has a conflict or is otherwise unable to moderate.

The Moderator is available by phone or email for consultation by Town Meeting Members and petitioners to assist them on procedural issues or in preparing articles, amendments, or motions for Town Meeting. In addition, prior to the Annual Town Meeting the Moderator conducts an annual instruction session on Town Meeting procedures that is especially geared for new Town Meeting Members. The Appendix of this Handbook provides [Key Contacts](#), including the Moderator's contact information.

## Town Meeting Members

Town Meeting is comprised of 255 elected members. Fifteen registered voters are elected from each of Brookline's 17 precincts. One third of Town Meeting Members are elected each year for a three-year term. However, if a precinct has been redistricted, all 15 positions must be elected to staggered terms. The five candidates who receive the most votes are elected to three-year terms. The next five are elected to two-year terms, and the five people who receive the third largest number of votes serve for a one-year term. In addition to the elected members, the Moderator, Town Clerk, five Select Board members and any state legislator residing in Brookline serve as Town Meeting Members-at-Large. Only Town meeting members, including Members-at-Large, have the right to vote on matters that come before Town Meeting.

## Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is a full-time paid official elected by Brookline voters for a three-year term. The Town Clerk records the minutes of each Town Meeting and maintains the official record of all votes taken. The Town Clerk administers the oath of office to the Moderator and other elected and appointed officials and may administer a non-mandatory oath to Town Meeting Members. The Office of Town Clerk has many statutory duties relating to Town elections and the Town census, among other responsibilities, and maintains a vast array of Town records.

## Select Board

The Select Board is a five-member body in which each member is elected for a three-year term, with one or two members elected in each year. The members of the Select Board receive modest annual stipends for their roles. The Select Board serves as the Town's executive authority, with overall responsibility for supervising Town affairs. Its role is defined by state law and the Town bylaws. Among the duties of the Select Board are:

- to appoint the Town Administrator and other department heads,
- to appoint boards and commissions,

- to execute policies voted by Town Meeting,
- to review and make recommendations on the annual budget and all other warrant articles,
- to supervise the expenditure of funds appropriated by Town Meeting,
- to sign all bonds and notes for borrowings,
- to serve as Police and Fire Commissioners, and
- to serve as the Town's licensing board.

Regarding Town Meeting, the Select Board has the power, and in the case of citizens' petitions, is required, to insert articles in the warrant; however, only Town Meeting has the final authority to accept, reject or modify the action sought by any article.

### **Town Administrator**

The Town Administrator works under the direction of the Select Board as Chief Operating Officer of the Town, supervises department heads and is responsible for developing the Town's annual financial plan.

### **Deputy Town Administrator for Policy and Fiscal Affairs**

Under the supervision of the Town Administrator, the Deputy Town Administrator facilitates Town Meeting by overseeing the development and production of the warrant and Combined Reports, and by processing and distributing motions, amendments, and other documents to be considered at Town Meetings.

### **Town Counsel**

The Town has an in-house legal department headed by Town Counsel. The Town Counsel is appointed by the Select Board. The Town's legal department provides legal representation for the Town in matters in which the Town is involved or by which it is or may be affected. With respect to Town Meeting, The Town Counsel aids citizens in drafting warrant articles and provides legal advice relating to Town Meeting matters to the Moderator and Town Meeting Members. Town Counsel provides guidance and training in the Massachusetts Conflict-of-Interest and Open Meeting laws to Town Meeting Members, committee and board appointees and elected officials.

### **Advisory Committee and Subcommittees**

Membership and Appointment: In Brookline, the finance committee is called the Advisory Committee. It is comprised of 20-30 citizens appointed by the Moderator. Under the Town bylaws, the Advisory Committee should to the extent practicable include at least one Town Meeting Member from each precinct. No more than four Town Meeting members may reside in the same precinct and no more than 14 members may be at-large (non-Town Meeting Members). New members of the Advisory Committee are usually appointed to one-year terms and thereafter are usually reappointed for three-year terms. Occasionally, reappointments are for two years to adjust membership so that approximately one-third of the terms expire each year.

In appointing members of the Advisory Committee, the Moderator applies multiple criteria, including experience in Town affairs and expertise in finance, architecture, land use planning, writing, communication, engineering, and law. The Moderator seeks to maintain diverse representation, including gender, age, ethnic diversity, and lived experience. In making appointments, the Moderator often confers with the elected officers of the Advisory Committee. Town Meeting Members and Town citizens interested in participating in the Advisory Committee may [contact the Moderator](#).

Functions: The Advisory Committee studies and makes recommendations to Town Meeting on all financial articles, which constitute its principal focus, and on most other warrant articles. The Advisory Committee addresses the annual budget article in the Annual Town Meeting, reviewing the proposed operating and capital budgets for the coming year. The Advisory Committee examines the finances and records of any board, committee, or officer of the Town to the extent permitted by law, in performing its duties.

Authority: The Advisory Committee is the only Town body that has authority to make transfers from the Town's Reserve Fund for unforeseen or emergency expenditures, at or between Town Meetings, and from the Liability Insurance Fund to cover insurance premiums and insured losses.

Subcommittee structure: The work of the full Advisory Committee is complemented by a subcommittee structure, including both ad hoc and standing subcommittees, assigned to undertake comprehensive review and to make recommendations on warrant articles to the full Committee.

The subcommittees report their recommendations to the full Advisory Committee, which votes on each article. These votes become the basis for written recommendations that are included in the Combined Reports, and often supplemented thereafter. The Advisory Committee's recommendations are advisory only and may be accepted or rejected by Town Meeting in whole or in part. The Committee may decline to study or take a position on certain articles or resolutions with no financial implications.

The annual budget is presented to Town Meeting by the Advisory Committee, although amendments to the budget may be offered by the Select Board or other Town Meeting Members. The Advisory Committee begins its review of the budget as soon as the Town Administrator's Financial Plan is released, typically in mid-February. The various elements of the proposed budget are assigned to subcommittees and are reviewed in much the same manner as warrant articles.

Communication and meetings: A notice of each public hearing or meeting of the Advisory Committee and its subcommittees is posted on the Town website's calendar at least 48 hours before the meeting. A zoom link to each virtual meeting is embedded in the calendar item. Materials to be considered at the meeting are posted as well. Notices of meetings are also posted outside the Town Clerk's office at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting and are sent via e-mail to a list of Town Meeting Members maintained by the Town Meeting Members Association. In addition, the Committee uses its best efforts to provide the principal proponent(s) and other interested parties of whom the Committee is aware with special notice when an article of interest to them is to be considered or reconsidered by the Committee or any subcommittee.

The Advisory Committee and its subcommittees typically meet during the three- to four-month period prior to each Town Meeting. The Committee often meets immediately before a Town Meeting session to consider amendments and other matters that have arisen since its most recent meeting or published report. The Committee, through its subcommittees and occasionally via the full Committee, holds at least one public hearing on each article that comes before it, during which the petitioners, Town Meeting Members and residents may offer comments. Anyone may submit written commentary to any meeting.

A schedule of proposed meetings and public hearings is developed at the beginning of each meeting cycle and is published on the [calendar on the Town's website](#).

The [Advisory Committee webpage](#) contains a list of members, subcommittees, contact information and meeting schedules. Individuals who wish to be notified about the schedule for deliberation of a specific warrant article or departmental budget should inform the Advisory Committee's Executive Assistant using the contact information on that website. See [Appendix: Websites and Links](#).

### **Town Boards, Commissions and Committees**

Oversight for many Town activities is exercised by appointed and elected boards, commissions, and committees. Some of these entities have jurisdiction over, or responsibilities related to, the subject matter of articles that come before Town Meeting. Members of the School Committee and Board of Library Trustees are elected to staggered three-year terms in annual Town elections.

The Select Board appoints the members of one hundred current boards, committees, and commissions, including the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Board. The Moderator occasionally appoints special committees when requested by Town Meeting vote. On rare occasions, the Moderator may independently appoint ad hoc study committees. Representatives of these entities periodically take positions and sometimes speak at Town Meetings on relevant articles. Information about the Town's boards, commissions and committees, their leadership, missions, and minutes can be found on the Town's [Boards and Commissions web page](#). Individuals interested in serving on a Moderator's committee may [contact the Moderator](#).



# SERVING IN TOWN MEETING

## Running for Election as a Town Meeting Member

Registered Brookline voters may run for election to Town Meeting from the precinct in which their legal voting residences are located.

- A new candidate must obtain nomination papers from the Town Clerk's office in Town Hall. At least ten registered voters who live in the candidate's precinct must sign these papers for nomination. Nomination papers must have valid signatures; that is, signatures must correspond exactly to the names on the voting list and correct addresses must be listed. If a person's signature is not legible, the person should print their name next to their signature. Candidates should obtain at least 15 signatures to account for possible errors.
- Candidates must submit nomination papers to the Town Clerk's office at least 49 days before the election for their names to appear on the printed ballot.
- A candidate may run as a "write-in" candidate bypassing nomination procedures described above, but such a tactic is unlikely to succeed.
- An incumbent Town Meeting Member may become a candidate for re-election by providing written notice to the Town Clerk at least 56 days before Election Day.
- The Town Clerk mails forms to incumbent Town Meeting Members to complete and return indicating their intent to run (or not to run) for re-election.
- Incumbents are not required to file new nomination papers if they return the Town Clerk's form indicating their intention to run for office prior to the 56-day deadline.

## Running a Town Meeting Campaign

Campaign approaches vary by precinct, number of candidates and competitiveness of an election. Examples of effective practices include:

- Door-to-door canvassing within a precinct to meet voters and make a case for one's candidacy.
- Obtaining voting lists from the Town Clerk's office to identify frequent Town Election voters, which will enable candidates to narrow the scope of their efforts and reduce the cost of campaign literature.
- Creating flyers or campaign postcards to share a candidate's message or platform. Campaign literature should include the name and address of the person or entity paying for material (usually the candidate), and campaign literature may be distributed by hand in public places or door-to-door. By law, campaign literature may not be deposited in mailboxes or slots.

- Using social media, including Facebook communities or school groups, which is likely to reach more people than door to door canvassing.
- Reaching out to community groups or school groups, holding a house party to introduce a candidate, and sending informed detailed emails to neighbors, which can serve to enhance the visibility of a campaign.
- The League of Women Voters (LWV) and other advocacy groups in Brookline prepare questionnaires that offer candidates the opportunity to introduce themselves, their platforms, and their positions on relevant issues. The LWV responses are available on the [LWV website](#). Other advocacy groups may distribute their endorsements electronically and by mail.
- The LWV typically holds a Candidates' Night one or two weeks in advance of the election. Candidates involved in local or Town-wide contested races have the opportunity in this forum to present their views to attendees.
- Other organizations including neighborhood associations periodically hold similar meetings.
- Candidates may choose to stand at their polling place on Election Day and greet voters. However, no campaigning, including standing the polls or holding or posting signs, may be conducted within 150 ft. of the entrance to a polling place.

Town Meeting Members or candidates often organize a precinct-specific slate of candidates and focus their campaigns on the election of all those named on the slate.

## Becoming Informed About Town Meeting and Town Issues

### At the Precinct Level

- Many precincts hold warrant review sessions in advance of each Town Meeting. Typically, the 15 precinct representatives will gather as a group, assign leadership on specific warrant articles, and have discussions of these topics over Zoom or in the home of a member of their precinct delegation. Some precincts invite their communities to these meetings and hold them in public spaces.

### Through the Town Meeting Members Association

- Becoming active in the Town Meeting Members Association (TMMA) is an excellent way for Town Meeting Members to become informed about and involved in Town issues. Once elected, Town Meeting Members have access to the TMMA listserv ([brooklinetmma@groups.io](mailto:brooklinetmma@groups.io)) in which Town Meeting Members communicate their views about pertinent issues.
- The TMMA holds a series of well-publicized meetings throughout the year to which all are invited. A meeting held shortly after the conclusion of each Town Meeting includes a session with the Moderator during which procedural and other issues that arose during the Town Meeting are discussed. This “post-mortem” may also be conducted through a written question and answer format.

- The TMMA often holds public information meetings prior to the first deliberative session of Town Meeting, at which sponsors of contested or pivotal articles make presentations.
- The TMMA periodically sponsors visits to sites that would be affected by capital expenditures or zoning articles contained in the warrant for the meeting. These are usually scheduled on Sundays.

#### Accessing Town-Wide Resources

- The [Town website](#) contains considerable information about the Town and current activities of its boards, commissions, and committees.
- The Annual Report of the Town also contains that information and includes a detailed narrative and fiscal year summary and budget projections for each Town and School department. Annual Reports are available from the Town Clerk or Select Board's office and are posted online on the [Town website](#).
- Meetings of Town boards, commissions and committees are open to the public, and notices of meetings are included in the calendar contained in the Town website, posted on the Town Clerk's bulletin board, and often set forth in the local media and in emails to Town Meeting Members. The meetings of the full Advisory Committee and its subcommittees offer in-depth discussion on issues to come before Town Meeting. In addition, meetings of the Select Board and School Committee are televised by Brookline Interactive Group (local access television).
- The Town's general [bylaws](#) describe the structure of Town government and current Town regulations, including some of the rules under which Town Meeting is conducted. The current version of these bylaws, including recent additions, is posted on the Town website.
- The Town's annual financial plan, as compiled by the Town Administrator, is published early each calendar year and is available in the offices of the Town Clerk and Select Board.

### Engaging as a Town Meeting Member

Town Meeting may be difficult to navigate for new Town Meeting Members. Several strategies can assist with the transition from candidate to elected Town Meeting Member.

- Find a mentor: Mentoring that pairs new members with experienced Town Meeting Members can provide support and clarity. New members can seek out willing and experienced mentors from among their precinct delegations or the TMMA.
- Consult with a precinct captain: If a precinct delegation has elected a precinct captain, new Town Meeting Members will have an experienced colleague to whom to bring questions. A precinct captain can also take the lead in scheduling precinct warrant review sessions.
- Attend formal and informal training meetings: The Town Meeting Members Association facilitates training sessions each spring to orient newly elected members. These formal sessions can be complemented by panels and video training sessions led by current Town Meeting Members.

- Attend the Moderator’s training meeting: The Moderator conducts an instruction session on Town Meeting procedures shortly before each Annual Town Meeting. This session is especially directed at new Town Meeting Members.
- View videos of past Town Meetings: Videos of Town Meetings are available on the [Town Meeting website](#). They are also available on the [Brookline Interactive Group](#) website. These recordings demonstrate the specific practices and procedures applied in Town Meetings.
- Sit with precinct delegations at Town Meeting: It can be educational to sit with a mentor or with precinct delegation members since these individuals can assist in understanding the activities underway during a Town Meeting.

## Certain Regulatory Restrictions and Responsibilities

Open Meeting Law and Social Media. Town Meeting is exempt from the State Open Meeting Law. However, Town Meeting Members who are also members of a Town board, commission or committee that is subject to that law should not communicate about matters falling under, or likely to fall under, the jurisdiction of the board, commission, or committee to which they are elected or appointed over the TMMA listserv or, arguably, other restricted social media such as WhatsApp. The reason for this restriction is that the Attorney General has ruled that such communications may reach a quorum of members of the relevant board or committee and may therefore violate the Open Meeting Law.

Massachusetts Public Records Law (.). Persons subject to this statute, including elected officials, must retain relevant documentary records (including emails) for a substantial period of time and must respond to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Neither the Massachusetts courts nor the State office that administratively enforces the PRL have directly addressed the question of whether an elected Town Meeting Member is subject to the PRL, and those who have considered the question are divided in the conclusions that they have reached. While some towns have taken the position that the PRL does not apply to Town Meeting Members, Brookline’s Town Counsel takes the position that Town Meeting Members, when acting in their capacity as Town Meeting Members, are subject to the PRL. In view of Town Counsel's position, it is therefore advisable for a Brookline Town Meeting Member to retain any records of communications that relate to Town governmental matters for at least three years, as provided in the State municipal records retention schedule. The Office of Town Counsel is always available to answer any questions a Town Meeting Member may have and to assist Town Meeting Members in responding to FOIA requests.

## Resignation or Termination

A Town Meeting Member may resign by filing a written notice of resignation with the Town Clerk. The resignation is effective as of the filing date. The term of a Town Meeting Member who moves outside of Brookline will end on the move date. Town Meeting Members who move from one precinct to another within the Town continue to hold office as Town Meeting Members from their original precincts until the next Town election.

# THE WARRANT PROCESS

Warrant articles are developed by individuals, groups, or elected officials, often in response to a concept or opportunity they identify primarily to improve Town functions. The following guidelines are intended to provide practical instructions on preparing and processing a warrant article by citizens' petition. Questions about developing a warrant article may be directed to the Moderator and the Town Counsel's Office. In addition, Town Meeting Members with experience in developing warrant articles are excellent guides and resources for a petitioner.

The warrant process can take several months from beginning to end and involves interactions with Town Meeting colleagues throughout. This is a collaborative process and works best if petitioners seek guidance from experienced Town Meeting Members. Note that steps 1-5 below all take place prior to filing the article.

After the article has been filed, a petitioner should expect to attend a series of subcommittee and full committee meetings of the Advisory Committee, Select Board meetings and often meetings of other Town committees, commissions, or boards with jurisdiction over the subject matter of an article. At most meetings, the petitioner will be asked questions about the article and will have the opportunity to explain it. It is highly advisable for the petitioner attend all these meetings.

## Timing of Warrant Petitions

Petitions must be filed by noon on the announced date for the closing of the warrant. By law, that date is 75 days before the scheduled date of the opening session of the Town Meeting. The Office of the Select Board can provide the exact date for the submission deadline.

Approximate Town Meeting Date	Approximate Filing Deadline
Late May	Early March
Late November	Early to mid-August

## Procedures for Drafting and Submitting a Warrant Article

1. Develop Warrant Concept and Consult with Relevant Parties
2. Draft an Article
3. Submit the Draft Article for Review
4. Prepare an Explanation
5. Prepare a Petition to Submit the Article for Inclusion in the Warrant and Obtain Required Signatures
6. File a Petition with the Select Board's Office

**1. Develop Warrant Concept and Consult with Relevant Parties**

The petitioner(s) should begin the warrant process by discussing their idea for an article with parties that will be involved with or affected by the article, including relevant departments. They should review existing regulations, laws, and relevant Town bylaws, and see if other towns have similar measures that may serve as models.

If Massachusetts law covers the subject matter of the proposed article, the petitioner should consult with Town Counsel to confirm that the article would be permissible.

There are six areas in which, under the State Constitution, a Town Meeting may either not act or may only petition for action by the State legislature:

- (1) regulation of elections,
- (2) levy, assessment, and collection of taxes,
- (3) borrowing of money or pledging of credit,
- (4) disposition of park land,
- (5) governance of civil relationships, and
- (6) punishment of felonies.

Note that, in most if not all these areas, existing general legislation provides towns with the authority to act within the limits of the authority provided in such legislation. The advice of Town Counsel is nevertheless especially pertinent to articles related to any of these subjects.

**2. Draft an Article**

The wording of warrant articles follows a formal and consistent style. A Town Meeting article should begin with the words: "To see if the Town will..." and end with the words "...or act on anything relative thereto." However, alternative language is not prohibited and is at the discretion of the petitioner.

Purpose of Warrant Article	Syntax, Phrasing and Guidance
Proposed amendments to Town bylaws	"To see if the Town will amend the Town bylaws by [general description of the amendment proposed or a marked-up version of the bylaw provision showing the proposed changes, with specific reference to the article and section numbers to be amended. The article ends with the phrase "or act on anything relative thereto."
Proposed appropriation of funds	"To see if the Town will appropriate [estimated amount], or any other sum, for [purpose of the appropriation], or act on anything relative thereto."  Appropriation articles should specify the source of the appropriation, whether from the tax levy, by transfer from an existing appropriation, by borrowing, or any combination of these.  To obtain the proper language for the source of the appropriation, the petitioner should consult with both the Deputy Town Administrator and Town Counsel before submitting the article.

Purpose of Warrant Article	Syntax, Phrasing and Guidance
Proposed penalty for failure to comply with an existing or proposed by-law	The petitioner should refer to the appropriate penalty section of the Town bylaws to make sure that the penalty is properly provided for and referenced. Here again, the petitioner should consult with both the Deputy Town Administrator and Town Counsel.
Proposed adoption of a non-binding resolution	<p>The article should contain "Whereas" clauses setting forth the background of the proposed resolution and a "Now, therefore, be it hereby Resolved" section as the last section, setting forth the language for the resolution to be adopted.</p> <p>Resolutions should also conclude with the phrase "or act on anything relative thereto."</p>

**3. Submit the Draft Article for Review**

Though not a legal requirement, the Moderator strongly recommends that all citizen petitions be submitted to Town Counsel or the Moderator for review. Proposed changes in the zoning bylaws should be reviewed by the Director of Planning.

While it is up to the petitioner(s) to prepare the initial draft of an article, these officials can assist in the proper wording of the article, conforming proposed amendments of existing zoning or general by-laws to the current wording of the bylaws and, in certain cases, addressing practical or legal issues that might be raised by the proposed article.

**4. Prepare an Explanation**

An explanation must be submitted with the draft article to describe the article’s purpose and intent. This explanation will appear in the Combined Reports and is the petitioner's first opportunity to inform Town Meeting Members of the purpose of the petitioner’s article. The petitioner should write a clear and concise explanation of what the warrant article aims to accomplish and why it is needed.

**5. Prepare a Petition to Submit with the Article and Obtain Required Signatures**

Each citizen’s article must be accompanied by a petition form that includes signatures of at least ten registered Brookline voters and their voting addresses. If a person’s signature is illegible, their name should be printed next to their signature to prevent the signature from being deemed invalid. The petition form may be obtained from the Town Clerk. It is a good practice to obtain at least five additional signatures in case some are deemed invalid.

The primary sponsors of an article should be identified in the petition form as the principal petitioners. The Office of the Select Board will notify the principal petitioners when the article is scheduled to be discussed by the Select Board, and the Executive Assistant of the Advisory Committee will also provide notification when the article is to be heard by the full Advisory Committee or one of its subcommittees. The principal petitioners should include their telephone numbers and e-mail addresses in the petition so that they can be contacted easily.

**6. File the Petition with the Select Board or Town Clerk’s Office**

To be included in a warrant, the petitioner must file with the Town Clerk or the Select Board: (i) the petition with ten signatures, (ii) the article as it will appear in the warrant, and (iii) the petitioner’s explanation of the article. The Office of the Select Board is located on the sixth floor of Town Hall. The Town Clerk’s office is on the first floor.

The filing deadline is at 12:00 p.m. noon on the date that has been announced for the closing of the warrant. By law, that date is 75 days before the scheduled date of the opening session of the Town Meeting. If in doubt, the petitioner should check with the Office of the Select Board for the submission deadline.

## Procedures after the Warrant Is Published

After the articles are filed and the warrant is published, the petitioner(s) make presentations to various boards and committees to explain their article and answer questions. They may also amend their article, as discussed below.

### Presentations to Town Boards and Committees

#### Advisory Committee and Subcommittees

- A specialized subcommittee of the Advisory Committee will be assigned to review the article based on the article's subject. For example, an article requesting a zoning change would be reviewed by the Land Use, Zoning and Sustainability subcommittee. The subcommittee will schedule at least one public hearing to consider the article and receive comments from the public. The principal petitioner(s) will be invited to attend, present the article, and answer questions. The subcommittee will then vote to make a recommendation on the article to the full Advisory Committee.
- Following the subcommittee review, the article will be discussed before the full Advisory Committee and the petitioner(s) will again be asked to attend, present their position, and answer questions. The Advisory Committee will vote on what recommendation to make to Town Meeting on the article.
- For articles with no budgetary implications or effect, the Advisory Committee may decide not to make a recommendation but will often prepare an informative report. These articles still require a public hearing by either the subcommittee or the full Advisory Committee, and a vote of the full Advisory Committee.

#### Select Board and other Town Bodies

The Select Board will invite the principal petitioner(s) to present the article and will vote to make a recommendation on the article. In addition to the Advisory Committee and the Select Board, the petitioner(s) may be invited to appear before various Town entities, such as the Planning Board, the Committee on Town Organization and Structure, the Planning Board, the Commission on Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations, or other committees that view the warrant article content as being within their purview. These groups hold meetings to discuss warrant articles in advance of scheduled Town Meetings and will reach out to the petitioner(s) if they anticipate review or discussion. Petitioners may also approach committees for their review and endorsement of a warrant article. Committee leadership can be found on the Town's [Board and Commissions website](#).



## Building support for a warrant article

Petitioners may organize a campaign among Town Meeting Members and other Town citizens to support their article. The petitioners may also wish to prepare a mailing to Town Meeting Members or use social media to obtain broad support for a warrant article.

## Amendments

Once the warrant is published, an article may not be changed or withdrawn, nor may a petitioner be added or withdrawn. However, motions made under an article may, in effect, amend the article. Amendments must be “within the scope” of the original article. Scope is a legal decision made by the Moderator, and it is not appealable (although the petitioner may always discuss the basis for the decision with the Moderator). It is advisable to consult the Moderator before filing motions that do not track the words of the article or any amendment of any motion under the article.

### Scope of amendments

The purpose of the warrant is to inform the voters of matters that will be considered at Town Meeting. Evaluating whether an amendment is within scope of the article is at the sole discretion of the Moderator. The examples below demonstrate how scope might be considered.

Example 1: If an original article seeks funds to build a school, it may not be amended to request funds to build a fire station in addition to the school.

Example 2: If an original article requests \$5 million to build a school, it may not be amended to request \$10 million to build a school because voters have not been notified that the Town may pay an additional \$5 million to fund the school.

Example 3: If an amendment seeks to reduce funding for a school from an original request of \$5 million to \$3 million, it is within the scope because the voters were given notice that as much as \$5 million was being requested.

Before filing an amendment, it is good practice to consult with the Moderator.

## Filing Amendments

Amendments to articles may be filed any time after the warrant is issued but must be filed sufficiently in advance of the session at which the article is being considered to give Town Meeting Members, committees, and boards time to review and comment on the amendment.

Amendments to articles that do not have a fiscal impact must be filed **48 hours** before the beginning of the session at which the article is to be considered. All amendments of the budget article, and any other amendments that may have fiscal impact, must be submitted by 12:00 p.m. noon at least **eight calendar days** before the session at which the article will come before Town Meeting. These filing deadlines give the Advisory Committee and other boards and committees adequate time to review and make recommendations on a proposed amendment. Exceptions to these filing deadlines will rarely be given and will be given at the Moderator’s sole discretion.

Town Meeting Members will receive amendments and reports electronically. The Moderator may allow exceptions to the advance filing requirement if a motion is non-substantive or easy to understand. Exceptions may also be allowed in the interest of justice or an orderly Town Meeting process so long

as such motions can be delivered electronically to Town Meeting Members at least 24 hours prior to the Town Meeting session at which they will be presented. These exceptions are rare and are made strictly at the discretion of the Moderator.

Amendments and other motions will also be distributed in hard copies to Town Meeting Members at the checkers' stations (for in-person meetings) and by mail if the Moderator and Select Board Office determine that the mailing will arrive in advance of the meeting.

All amendments should be submitted to the Select Board electronically ([mgoff@brooklinema.gov](mailto:mgoff@brooklinema.gov)).

### **Presenting at Town Meeting**

Ultimately, the article is presented to Town Meeting. In this setting, the principal petitioner or a designee delivers a presentation in support of the article. The [Participating in Debate at Town Meeting](#) section of this Handbook provides a detailed description of the presentation process.

# THE BUDGET PROCESS

## Annual Budget Cycle

Early Fall	Departmental Budget Preparation: Department Heads prepare budgets for forthcoming fiscal year
Late November/ Early December	Budget Review Select Board review and public hearings on operating and capital budgets
Mid-February	Financial Plan Review The Town Administrator submits a Financial Plan to the Select Board and Advisory Committee, and it is mailed to Town Meeting Members.
February - May	Advisory Subcommittee and Committee review
Late May	Annual Appropriations Vote Budget presentation and vote at Annual Town Meeting

A detailed budget timeline may be found on page 46, below.

## Departmental Budget Preparation

Each year, the Town's budget process begins early in the fall when each Town department head prepares an estimate of expenditures for the forthcoming fiscal year. If the department is presided over by a board or commission, that body will review the budget in advance of submission to the Town Administrator.

## Budget Review

The Select Board holds public hearings on both operating and capital budgets in late November or early December. The Town's long-range financial forecast is presented by the Deputy Town Administrator and Finance Director. Following Select Board review, the Town Administrator develops the Financial Plan, which includes:

- the Town Administrator's proposed operating and unclassified budgets and capital expenditures for the forthcoming fiscal year,
- a description of costs, goals, and objectives for each department,
- estimates of state, county, MBTA and other assessments,
- collective bargaining objectives,
- proposals for various reserves, and
- comments about other fiscal matters.

## Financial Plan Review

The Town Administrator submits the recommended Financial Plan to the Select Board and Advisory Committee annually in mid-February for detailed study. Subcommittees of the Advisory Committee hold public hearings on each department's budget request, on all proposed capital appropriations, and on all non-departmental appropriations. The subcommittees then make recommendations to the full Advisory Committee, which takes a final vote on the entire fiscal year budget and presents it to Town Meeting.

The Town Administrator or Deputy Town Administrator may attend these meetings to explain the proposals contained in the Financial Plan and to comment on any third-party proposals for changes in the budget.

Town Meeting Members and others interested in the budget overall or in specific capital or non-capital appropriations are encouraged to become engaged in the budget process at as early a stage as possible. While the budget schedule follows a consistent sequence, timing may vary based on circumstances. For example, budget schedules are less predictable in years during which there is a proposal for an override.

By statute, the budget presented to the Annual Town Meeting for consideration is the recommendation of the Advisory Committee. The budget is contained in the Advisory Committee's report under the budget article in the Combined Reports. The Select Board's separate comments and recommendations are also included in the Combined Reports.

The Select Board's Office provides copies of the Town Administrator's Financial Plan and initial budget recommendations to all Town Meeting Members. These are provided at the time of their submission to the Select Board and Advisory Committee and are also available on the Town's website.

## Adoption of the Budget

The final budget as approved by the Advisory Committee is moved by the Committee under the budget article on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting. The Committee will present a "balanced" budget in which total proposed appropriations equal projected revenues for the fiscal year. After a debate, Town Meeting will adopt a budget that may or may not be in balance, although it is a far better financial practice to emerge from the Annual Town Meeting with a balanced budget. The budget will be reconsidered at the November Special Town Meeting and adjustments may be made to various budget items based on events or circumstances arising after the Annual Town Meeting and will be made in order or to balance a budget that was left unbalanced at the Annual Town Meeting. State law mandates that final Massachusetts municipal budgets be in balance, so it is important that the November reconsideration process be concluded successfully and in a timely manner.

See [Annual Appropriations Vote](#), below, for a more detailed description of the procedures applicable to the adoption of the budget at the Annual Town Meeting.

# TOWN MEETING PROCEDURES

NOTE: PROCEDURES FOR VIRTUAL TOWN MEETINGS ARE DISCUSSED IN THE [VIRTUAL TOWN MEETING ADDENDUM TO THIS HANDBOOK](#)

## Arriving at Town Meeting - Preliminary Matters

Annual and Special Town Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. Town Meetings are held in the Brookline High School Auditorium, 155 Greenough Street. Virtual Town Meetings are held remotely via Zoom, with a core staff, including the Moderator, located in the Auditorium. The material in this and subsequent sections of this Handbook relate to in-person meetings, unless otherwise specified. The [Virtual Town Meeting Addendum](#) to this Handbook describes special procedures governing remote Town Meetings.

On arrival at in-person meetings, Town Meeting Members sign in with Town staff and receive name tags and individually programmed voting devices to record electronic votes. Check-in tables are labeled by precinct in the vestibule immediately outside the auditorium.

The auditorium is partitioned to seat Town Meeting Members toward the front and guests to the rear of the orange dividers in each seating section. The Moderator may announce special seating arrangements or exceptions at the beginning of a Town Meeting.

In the auditorium, the Select Board, and a group of members of the Advisory Committee sit at the front of the audience. From the perspective of Town Meeting Members, the Select Board sits to the left of the Moderator and the Advisory Committee to the right. The Moderator stands on stage at a podium with the Town Clerk on the right side of the podium and the Town information technology staff members who manage audiovisual presentations and electronic votes on the left side of the podium, again from the perspective of Town Meeting Members.

Approximately ten minutes before the first session of each Town Meeting begins, the Moderator leads a voluntary Pledge of Allegiance, pursuant to a Town bylaw. After the call to order of the first session of each Town Meeting and before conducting any business, the National Anthem is sung by a Town Meeting Member designated by the Moderator, joined by any Town Meeting Members who choose to do so. Following the National Anthem, an acknowledgment of the history of Indigenous people in Brookline is read by the chair or designee of the Indigenous People Committee.

Traditionally, at each Annual Town Meeting the Town Clerk reads the roll of former Town Meeting Members who have passed away since the previous Annual Town Meeting or have not been previously acknowledged, after which Town Meeting observes a moment of silence.

A screen is positioned behind the Moderator prior to the beginning of each session of a Town Meeting. The screen is used before Town Meetings begins to display special instructions and during Town Meetings to display speaker visual presentations and votes.

If the Moderator deems it appropriate, tellers will be appointed to assist in counting hand votes.

## Call to Order

When the Town Clerk determines that a majority of Town Meeting Members have checked in to the meeting, the Moderator will declare a quorum present and will call the meeting to order.

Once a session of the meeting is called to order, the session will continue until adjourned, although the Moderator may call for short recesses from time to time in appropriate circumstances. The Moderator assumes that a quorum remains present throughout the meeting, but any Town Meeting Member may question the presence of a quorum at any time. If such a request is made, the Moderator pauses all business to determine if a quorum is present. If a quorum is not present and cannot be attained promptly (for example by calling back Members in the vicinity of the auditorium), Town Meeting may either vote to adjourn to a later date or, if the Moderator considers it appropriate, vote to dissolve the meeting.

## General Conduct and Conventions of Town Meeting

- Town Meeting reviews all articles in the warrant, which are explained in presentations by the Select Board, the Advisory Committee, citizen petitioners, interested Town Meeting Members and, at times, members of the public.
- The meeting is conducted by the Moderator, who has control over the meeting's proceedings subject to and within the limits of relevant Massachusetts law and the Town bylaws.
- The Moderator is also guided by Town Meeting's traditions and common sense.
- The parliamentary handbook for the proceedings of Brookline's Town Meetings is "Town Meeting Time," by which the Moderator is also guided to the extent applicable.

Town Meeting Members are expected to conduct themselves according to the following rules:

- Town Meeting Members are expected to pay full attention to the Meeting proceedings.
- All electronic devices should be silenced during Town Meeting. Use of smartphones, tablets, laptops, and other electronic devices is permitted in the auditorium during Town Meeting but should be limited to accessing electronic records relevant to Town Meeting. Other uses (doing a crossword puzzle, for example) have been found to distract Town Meeting Members from giving full attention to proceedings.
- Private or restricted communications via social media or other means of electronic communication among groups of Town Meeting Members during a Town Meeting about matters under consideration at the meeting violate the spirit and traditions of our Town Meetings and are strongly condemned. Such non-public deliberations are contrary to the fundamental purpose of a Town Meeting, which is to debate Town issues fully and publicly, before all Town Meeting Members and members of the public.
- No political demonstrations or activities may take place within or immediately outside of the auditorium.
- No political signs, banners, flags, or oversized badges are permitted within the auditorium, whether or not related to matters that may or will come before Town Meeting.
- Applause is permitted after a speaker has finished speaking but not during the presentation.
- Overt expressions of opposition, particularly booing or hissing, will not be tolerated by the Moderator.

The purpose of these rules is to promote unprejudiced discussion, to ensure that deliberations and debates relating to matters being considered at Town Meeting are public and accessible to all Town Meeting Members and Brookline residents, and to maintain respectful decorum at Town Meetings. While the Moderator has the statutory power to remove from the meeting any person who materially interferes with its proper decorum and good order, the Moderator exercises this power with great care and only on rare occasions and after a suitable warning.

In the interest of fairness, the Moderator may permit the suspension of an established rule of the Meeting in a particular instance. However, a motion from the floor for a “suspension of the rules” is not permissible. Points of order and questions of privilege may be made as described below, but the Moderator’s rulings on these are not appealable.

## Conflict-of-Interest Disclosures

Town Meeting Members are exempt from the state conflict-of-interest law (M.G.L. c. 268A, et seq.) because members have a special status as voters rather than elected officials. The Massachusetts Office of Inspector General’s [Summary of the Conflict-of-Interest Law for Municipal Employees](#) explains, “Town meeting members and charter commission members are not municipal employees under the conflict-of-interest law.”

However, as a principle of ethics, prior to addressing Town Meeting speakers should disclose any material economic interest that they or any member of their immediate families or any close business associates have in the matter under consideration. Similarly, any speaker who is employed in any capacity, such as attorney, architect, or broker, by another party interested in an article under discussion should disclose that relationship before speaking. Any Town Meeting Member who is party to a potential conflict of interest should consider voluntarily abstaining from voting on the article in question. The Moderator will, on request, announce any such abstention before or after the vote on the main motion under the article.

If Members also serve on an elected or appointed committee, board, or commission, they may be or become subject to the State conflict-of-interest law, which requires that they always act in the best interests of the entity they represent – the Town of Brookline – and not themselves, their family, or their friends. The Massachusetts Office of Inspector General’s [Guide for Members of Public Boards and Commissions](#) explains, “Even if you are not a fiduciary under the law, fiduciary principles should guide the decisions that you and your board make.” These fiduciary requirements apply to all elected and appointed boards and commissions.

While Town Meeting Members do not have the same obligations and heightened duties as individuals elected to boards or commissions, Town residents expect the highest level of integrity and responsible decision-making from Town leaders, officials, and employees.

Town bylaws require periodic training on the conflict-of-interest law for Town Meeting Members, and on the conflict-of-interest law and Open Meeting Law for elected and appointed officials. The Office of Town Counsel provides these trainings for persons subject to these laws based on the requirements of statute and our bylaws.

The training required in the Massachusetts conflict of-interest law is also available online from the State Ethics Commission [website](#). Similarly, training on the Open Meeting Law may be obtained

online from the Attorney General's Office [website](#). Questions regarding the applicability of Massachusetts conflict-of-interest law may be directed to [Town Counsel](#) or the State Ethics Commission.

## Etiquette of Speaking at Town Meeting

### Requests to Speak

The Moderator has the sole authority to recognize speakers in Town Meeting, as provided by Massachusetts law. Anyone who wishes to speak on any article should contact the Moderator by email or phone with as much advanced notice as possible, providing the following information:

- Name, email, and precinct,
- Article number or subject matter,
- Whether they wish to speak in support or opposition,
- Whether they represent any specific group or organization, and
- A description of any proposed visual presentations.

Speakers will be recognized in substantially the order in which their requests are received, except that the Moderator may alternate between pro and con speakers and generally gives priority to petitioners, the Select Board and the Advisory Committee. Factors governing speaking order include time limitations, status as a Town Meeting Member, and the Moderator's discretion.

When the Moderator recognizes a speaker, the speaker should address Town Meeting from the podium at the front of the auditorium or from one of the four microphones at the foot of the aisles in the auditorium, as directed by the Moderator. Microphones should be adjusted so that there is approximately one- to two-inches of space between the microphone and the speaker. The speakers identify themselves, whether they are a Town Meeting Member, and which precinct they represent.

Town Meeting Members who do not arrange to speak in advance of a debate may proceed to one of the microphones in the auditorium and will be recognized by the Moderator.

If a speaker cannot communicate a request to speak to the Moderator, the request may be made to the Town Clerk. The [Participating in Debate in Town Meeting](#) section of this Handbook provides an explanation of the Moderator's process in creating speakers' lists, reserved time blocks, and changes to the order of speakers on speakers lists.

### Time Limits

Generally, speakers are limited to three-minute speaking blocks. However, the Moderator may increase this limit if the speaker has requested and received prior permission.

The Moderator will often provide the principal proponent(s) of articles with additional time to present to Town Meeting. When the proponents of an article have been allowed extra time to present, the Moderator will inform opponents and grant them a comparable block of time for rebuttal.

The Moderator may provide additional time for presentations by the Advisory Committee because it and its subcommittees have comprehensively reviewed and prepared reports on all articles. Allowing



additional presentation time gives the Advisory Committee time to explain the basis for its recommendation to Town Meeting.

### Preparation

Town Meeting Members who plan to speak on articles should organize their thoughts and arguments so that they can be presented effectively within the time limits described above. Speakers benefit from practicing their presentations aloud with a timer. It can also be helpful for speakers to bring a timer to the podium to monitor their speaking time during presentations. The Moderator will provide speakers with a warning towards the end of their time blocks and a request to terminate the presentation at the end of their allotted time.

### Audiovisual Presentations

The Moderator provides prior approval of the use of PowerPoint presentations and other visual tools but does not review the content. Visual presentations should be carefully prepared for clarity and consistency to accompany spoken presentation. Visual presentations should be submitted at least a day in advance to [tm@brooklinema.gov](mailto:tm@brooklinema.gov). On the day of the presentation, presenters should confer with the IT professionals to ensure smooth presentation. These individuals are located on stage or in the booth in the rear of the auditorium.

## Adjournment

The Moderator will regulate the proceedings so that no article will come before Town Meeting that is likely to result in a debate that lasts significantly beyond 10:30 p.m. When the article under debate at that hour is resolved but other articles remain to be considered, the Moderator will entertain a motion to adjourn to the next reserved evening, subject to Town Meeting's right to adjourn to any other date. If that motion fails, as has sometimes occurred, Town Meeting will continue until a motion to adjourn succeeds.

## Dissolution

When all the articles in the warrant have been acted upon or otherwise resolved, the Moderator will call for a motion to dissolve the meeting and, after a second and a vote on that motion, will announce the adjournment of the meeting sine die. Dissolution of a meeting becomes effective at 5:00 p.m. the day after the last session of the meeting.

# THE ORDER OF TOWN MEETING

Town Meeting follows a predictable sequence of activities, including motions of various types, debate protocols, and the voting process.

## Introduction of the Articles by the Moderator

### Order of Articles

Warrant articles are typically considered in the order in which they appear in the warrant.

The Moderator may propose changes to the order of articles based on the belief that these changes would be equitable or beneficial to the course of the meeting. If there is substantial interest in a particular article by citizens other than Town Meeting Members, the Moderator may propose designating a specific time and evening when that article will be considered. If there are guests, such as students, who will speak on an article, the Moderator may propose designating a day and time for their convenience. Town Meeting Members may also make a motion to change the order in which an article is heard. Any change from the order in which articles appear on the warrant, whether initiated by the Moderator or on the motion of a Town Meeting Member, is subject to the approval of Town Meeting.

When the subject matter of two or more articles is substantially the same, the Moderator may rule that these articles be debated together. This ruling is not ordinarily put to a vote of Town Meeting. However, Town Meeting has the right to propose “dividing the question” so that the articles are debated or voted on separately. During and after a combined debate, the Moderator must make sure that Town Meeting Members understand exactly what motions are being debated and the order in which votes will be taken on each motion.

## Presentation of the Article

### Making Motions

An article itself is not a motion; it is simply the notice of the general subject matter to be discussed. Town Meeting Members must make and second a motion for an article to be debated. The motion’s contents usually track the language of the article. Any motion that was submitted within the timeframe described above may be offered and heard if the Moderator deems it to be germane and within the scope of the article. The Moderator will always preface the debate on an article by summarizing the motion and any proposed amendment. The Moderator will refer to their location in the Combined Reports or a supplement. The Moderator will also state the name of the moving and seconding parties.

### The Main Motion

The principal substantive motion made under an article is known as the main motion.

- Typically, the main motion is the motion proposed by either the Select Board or the Advisory Committee. It is printed in the Combined Reports or a supplement.

- In the case of a citizen’s petition article, the main motion will always be proposed, or at least approved, by the principal petitioner or petitioners, although it may appear in the Combined Reports as the motion of the Select Board or Advisory Committee.
- Any Town Meeting Member can make a motion under an article even if the Select Board, Advisory Committee, or petitioner(s) fail to do so.

Once the main motion is presented and debated at Town Meeting, several outcomes may result. An article may be:

- passed,
- substituted for or amended,
- referred to a Select Board or Moderator’s committee,
- referred to a Town board, commission, or committee,
- postponed,
- defeated by the approval of a No Action motion (which is effectively the same as voting against a motion), or
- defeated by a vote on the motion’s merits.

## Debate

After a motion has been made and seconded, the debate begins. The principal objective of the debate is that it be informative and provide ample opportunity for all sides of an issue to be presented and discussed.

### 1. Order of Speakers

The Moderator prepares a speakers' list for each article based on those who have directly contacted the Moderator and determines the order of speakers.

- In case of a citizen petition article, the first speaker will usually be the principal petitioner or a designee.
- For articles other than citizen petitions, the Moderator will first call on the Advisory Committee or the Select Board, depending on which one is sponsoring the main motion in the Combined Reports.
- Thereafter, to the extent feasible, the Moderator will alternate between proponents and opponents of the motion, and will include members of the Select Board, Advisory Committee and other relevant boards and commissions in the speakers’ lists, if requested.
- All Town residents are entitled to speak at Town Meeting when recognized by the Moderator. However, the Moderator ordinarily will not invite non-Town Meeting Members to speak until every Town Meeting Member requesting the opportunity to speak has been heard.

- The Moderator may make exceptions for non-Town Meeting Members who are directly and substantially affected by the motion and, on rare occasions, for outside experts or officials of non-Brookline entities who may be interested in the subject matter of an article.
- The Moderator typically permits students from Brookline schools to speak without observing many of the usual formalities.
- Because debate may be curtailed, the process described above may result in limiting participation to Town Meeting Members.

## 2. Participating in Debate at Town Meeting

The Moderator regulates Town Meeting debates and determines the order of the speakers.

- The Moderator establishes time limits for speakers. Limits are usually not more than three minutes unless prior arrangements have been made to exceed that limit.
- The Moderator will provide equal blocks of time for presentations by proponents and opponents in the interest of providing information to Town Meeting in as complete and useful a manner as possible.
- The Moderator generally alternates between speakers supporting a motion and speakers opposing the motion.
- The Moderator will not allow someone to address Town Meeting a second time until all other speakers have been heard.
- The Moderator will disclose to any requesting speaker the names of others who have signed up to speak on the same side of the issue and will permit two or more speakers to establish the order of their presentations so long as anyone whose priority on the list would thereby be lowered consents to this change.
- The Moderator may interrupt the speaker schedule during debate for a question-and-answer period, during which Town Meeting Members may come to a microphone (or, in a virtual meeting, contact the Chat Monitor) and ask questions regardless of whether they have signed up in advance to speak.
- The Moderator will attempt to limit these sessions to questions, as opposed to orations.
- In recognition that the need to speak cannot always be anticipated and may grow out of specific actions or discussion at the meeting, the Moderator will often recognize Town Meeting Members who wish to speak even though they have not advised the Moderator in advance of their intention to do so.

### 3. Who May Address Town Meeting?

- Town Meeting Members, petitioners, and Town residents who have received prior approval may address Town Meeting, based on the debate procedures described above.
- Non-Residents may address Town Meeting if prior approval has been given by the Moderator. The Moderator will introduce non-resident speakers, may summarize their qualifications and reasons for wishing to speak, and will call for any objections. If 15 or more Town Meeting Members object to allowing the non-resident speaker to speak, the Moderator will not permit that individual to address the body. The Moderator may also limit the number of outside representatives of an advocacy group who wish to speak on an article of interest to them.
- Town Department Heads and other Town employees will be available at Town Meeting for the purpose of providing information and answering questions posed by Town Meeting Members when matters within their respective jurisdictions are debated. By long-standing tradition, Town Department Heads and other Town employees do not advocate positions before Town Meeting. The Moderator may, however, allow exceptions to this general proposition. During the Annual Town Meeting, Town Meeting Members are permitted to ask department heads any question related to their department.

## **Actions on the Main Motion and Amendments**

Amendments and substitute motions may seek to insert, strike out or substitute words in the main motion. Amendments and motions must be submitted in sufficient time to be distributed to Town Meeting members and boards and committees: 48 hours in advance of the session at which the article is to be heard if the amendment has no fiscal impact, and at 12:00 p.m noon, eight days in advance of the session at which the article is to be heard if the amendment does have a fiscal impact. An exception to these filing deadlines will rarely be given and will be given at the Moderator's sole discretion. The Moderator will usually require that the entire subject matter of the article in question be dealt with in a single debate.

An article itself is not a motion; it is simply the notice of the general subject matter to be voted on. A comprehensive list of possible motions, together with the priority in which they are debated, is set forth in the table entitled [Parliamentary Guide](#) from "Town Meeting Time." This table is provided in the front of this Handbook. If at any time there is an inconsistency between the rules and procedures in this Handbook and rules and procedures in "Town Meeting Time," this Handbook governs.

### Motions to Amend

- Motions to amend require a second and must be within the scope of the article (see "Scope," above).
- A motion to amend is debated at the same time as the main motion but is voted on before the main motion is voted on.

- Only a majority vote is required to pass an amendment, even if the main motion requires a greater-than-majority vote.
- Approval of an amendment must be followed by a vote on the pending motion (usually the main motion), as amended or not.
- A motion to amend may itself be amended, but only one amendment of a motion to amend is allowed at a time. In other words, a motion to "amend the amendment of the amendment" is not permitted.
- A motion to substitute a completely different version of the motion is treated as a motion to amend; that is, if the motion to substitute (i.e., to amend the original motion in its entirety) succeeds, Town Meeting must still vote on the amended language even though it is voting twice on the same wording.

#### Motions to Refer

- A Motion to Refer is a request to move the subject matter of a warrant article to a committee or board for further review.
- The referral may be to the Select Board, to a Moderator's committee, or to a Town department, and must specify the scope of the referral and the point at which the referred subject matter should be reported back to Town Meeting.
- If the referral is to a Moderator's committee, the Moderator will appoint such a committee after the Town Meeting ends, using criteria that will vary widely depending on the subject matter of the referral.
- A motion to refer must be submitted 48 hours in advance, and a motion to refer an article with a budgetary impact must be submitted eight calendar days in advance.
- At the conclusion of the debate, the motion to refer is voted on first, before any other motions.
- If the motion to refer is defeated, voting resumes on the other motion(s) on the floor.
- If a motion to refer is approved, all voting under the article will terminate.

#### Motions for Postponement

- A Motion for Postponement of Action may only postpone the debate and vote on an article to a later time or session within the Town Meeting at which it is being considered.
- One Town Meeting does not have the power to bind a future Town Meeting to consider a specific subject matter or take a specific action because no subject matter or action may be considered unless it has been properly covered in an article on the warrant for a future Town Meeting. Therefore, voting to refer a matter to the Select Board with a request that it be brought back to a future Town Meeting results in postponement.

- While the Select Board is not legally required to comply with such a request, it will ordinarily do so.

#### Motions for No Action

Sometimes the recommendation of the Select Board or the Advisory Committee is that no action be taken on an article. A vote of No Action on a proposal is the equivalent of a vote against the proposal. If both the Select Board and the Advisory Committee recommend No Action, the proponents of the article are nevertheless entitled to make a motion for affirmative action under the article. The Moderator will typically accept the affirmative motion as the main motion under the article.

#### Motions of Doubtful Legality

When a motion comes before a Town Meeting that is, in the opinion of the Moderator, of doubtful legality, the Moderator will nevertheless permit the motion to be debated and voted on, but the Moderator will express any doubts to Town Meeting before the vote. This procedure will be followed even if Town Counsel has rendered an opinion that the motion is illegal. However, the Moderator will not permit a motion to be considered if a legal condition precedent to the article or motion has not been met as, for example, when the Planning Board has not held the hearing on a zoning proposal that is required by statute before it can be considered by Town Meeting.

#### Privileged Motions

Special rules apply to privileged motions, consisting of points of order and questions of privilege. At an in-person meeting, the person raising such an objection stands and makes the motion. In virtual meetings, the Town Meeting Member informs the Chat Monitor that he or she wishes to raise a point or order or question of privilege. These are the only motions that the Moderator will immediately recognize and permit to interrupt a speaker. Once recognized, the Town Meeting Member should state, "I rise to a point of order [or question of privilege]" and then explain the basis for the objection. After a point of order or question of privilege is raised, the Moderator decides how to address it. The Moderator's decision is final and may not be debated or appealed. A further description of these motions follows.

## Privileged Motions

Points of Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A point of order is a question of the legality or propriety of the proceedings.</li> <li>• If a Town Meeting Member feels that someone has the floor improperly, or that a motion or discussion is not within the purview of an article, the Member may rise, interrupt the speaker, and address the Moderator saying, "I rise to a point of order." After being recognized, the Town Meeting Member states the point of order.</li> <li>• The Moderator makes a ruling on the point of order.</li> <li>• A point of order must be raised promptly when the problem arises.</li> <li>• The Moderator will not permit such a motion as a means of altering an announced vote, except under extraordinary circumstances.</li> <li>• A point of order may not be used to present a counterargument or to contest a matter of fact. The Moderator will not allow points of order to circumvent those waiting in queue to speak.</li> </ul>
Questions of Privilege	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A question of privilege relates to the rights and privileges of the meeting collectively, its safety or dignity, or the integrity of its proceedings.</li> <li>• For example, a question of privilege would be in order if the windows are open and admitting rain, if the sound system is not functioning properly or if one or more Town Meeting Members are engaged in disruptive or derogatory conduct.</li> <li>• A question of privilege may also relate to the rights, reputation and conduct of a particular Town Meeting Member as an individual or as a Town Meeting Member. For example, if a speaker speaks in derogatory terms of another person, the person attacked, or any other person, may raise a question of privilege.</li> <li>• If a Town Meeting Member feels a Question of Privilege should be called, the Member may rise, interrupt the speaker if necessary, and address the Moderator saying, " I rise to a question of privilege." After being recognized, the Town Meeting Member states the issue. A question of privilege is not a motion and does not require a second. In virtually no instance will the Moderator permit it to be debated.</li> </ul>

## Motion for Reconsideration

- The rules regarding reconsideration are intentionally strict, to discourage this tactic. As a result, motions for reconsideration are made infrequently in Brookline Town Meetings.
- A motion to reconsider a vote permits the Town Meeting to undo a previous action.
- Such a motion may be made only by a person who was on the prevailing side of the earlier vote. Proof of how one voted is only available when there has been a roll call, a ballot, or recorded electronic vote on the action in question. In the absence of such proof, the Moderator ordinarily accepts on faith one's qualification to move reconsideration.
- A motion to reconsider must pass by a simple majority vote.
- If the motion to reconsider passes, the earlier vote is without any force or effect. It is then necessary for a proponent of the earlier vote to move the action again, and the main motion may be amended in the usual manner, except that compliance with the notice rules about amendments may, in the Moderator's discretion, not be required.



- On occasion, the Moderator may permit a motion to reconsider a vote within the same session of Town Meeting at which the vote was passed. For example, this may occur if an attempt to balance the annual budget requires amending an item on which there has already been a vote or, in general, if the Moderator is persuaded that confusion or a similar factor contaminated the prior vote.
- In rare instances, the Moderator may call for reconsideration without a third-party motion, but only if convinced that the prior vote was for some reason invalid or contaminated.

## Motion to Close Debate

- A motion to close debate, often called "moving the previous question," or "moving the question," is not itself debatable and a two-thirds vote is necessary for the motion to pass.
- A motion to close debate may be made from the floor without the need for the moving party to be formally recognized by the Moderator.
- If a motion for the question is made and if, in the Moderator's judgment, adequate debate has been heard on both sides of the article, the Moderator will allow this motion to be voted on.
- Prior to the vote, the Moderator usually reads the names of those who have signed up in advance to speak but have not yet been heard and points out or calls out the names of those who are standing at microphones (or in a virtual meeting, on a waiting list in the chat room) waiting to be recognized.
- If the motion to close debate passes, all debate ceases and the meeting immediately votes, without further comment, on the pending motion. However, in the case of extremely complicated issues and on rare occasions, the Moderator may call for a summary of the issues from a representative of each side of the question before proceeding to a vote.
- If the motion fails, debate will continue as if the motion had not been made.

## Voting Process

- After all who wish to be heard on the question have spoken, or if the question has been successfully called, the Moderator repeats the pending motions or refers to their location in the Combined Reports or a supplement and voting then commences.
- For each motion on the floor, the Moderator will say "All those in favor..." and the response is "Aye," then "All those opposed..." and the response is "Nay" or "No." If the result is clear, the Moderator will declare the motion to have been adopted or defeated.
- If in doubt, the Moderator may ask for a show of hands and then announce the result. In this case, the Moderator may by tradition announce a specific tally of votes when there is no electronic count, particularly when the vote is close to

unanimous, so that the official record of the meeting will provide a reasonably accurate description of the strength of the winning vote.

- The Town bylaws provide that on matters that require a two-thirds vote, the Moderator may simply declare the motion to have been adopted by a two-thirds vote without counting the vote, provided that, if the announced result is immediately questioned by at least seven Town Meeting Members, a counted vote will be taken.

## Counted and Recorded Votes

- A counted vote may be called for on the Moderator's own motion and must be held if seven Town Meeting Members immediately rise and doubt a vote declared by the Moderator without a count. The verification vote will be taken electronically and, unless there is a call for a recorded vote, the results will be announced by the Moderator but not recorded.
- A vote that records the position of each voting Town Meeting Member may be requested prior to voting on any motion and if at least 35 Town Meeting Members support that request, a recorded vote will be conducted. Since the advent of electronic voting in 2012, other than the few instances in which electronic voting was unavailable, all recorded votes have been taken electronically.
- In the rare instance in which electronic voting is unavailable, a recorded vote will be taken either by roll call or by ballot. If the former, the Moderator will read an alphabetical list of Town Meeting Members, record their responses, and announce the result.
- A ballot vote is available only in in-person meetings and will be taken by written ballot distributed to each Town Meeting Member present, completed by those voting, and turned in and counted by tellers, who will be appointed and sworn in for that purpose. The tellers return the ballots to the Town Clerk, who announces the results of the vote to the Moderator, who then announces the result to the meeting and for the record.
- Once voting in another form is underway, the Moderator will not allow a request for a recorded vote.
- Except as otherwise provided in this section, the Moderator's declaration of the result of a vote is final and may not be questioned.
- Recorded votes are published on the Town website as soon as practicable after they are taken, usually the day after the session at which the vote was taken. They are preserved by the Town Clerk for at least three years and are available for inspection as public records. The results of recorded votes are also published in the Town's Annual Report.

## Electronic Voting at In-Person Town Meetings

As noted above in [Town Meeting Procedures](#), upon arrival at an in-person Town Meeting, Town Meeting Members sign in with Town staff and receive an individually programmed voting device used for recorded votes. These devices are pre-tested to assure operability, but an inoperative device may be exchanged at any time for a replacement. Due to supply problems, the handheld devices used in the past will be replaced with different electronic voting devices, which Town Meeting Members will be trained how to use. As part of the preliminaries for the first session of every Town Meeting, the Moderator conducts a practice vote to familiarize Town Meeting Members with the procedures that will be followed in voting electronically.

Town Meeting members with visual impairments who need assistance with electronic votes should contact the Town Clerk or the Moderator prior to Town Meeting, and such assistance will be arranged.

- A vote may be taken electronically under any of the following circumstances:
  - i. If the Moderator doubts the results of a hand vote,
  - ii. If seven Town Meeting Members immediately rise to doubt the declaration by the Moderator of the results of a vote taken without a count, or
  - iii. Upon the request of not less than 35 Town Meeting Members calling for a recorded electronic vote.
- Once an electronic vote has been declared or properly requested, the Moderator will make sure that Town Meeting Members understand what they are voting on. When the on-site IT manager is ready to proceed, the Moderator will declare voting open and a countdown, usually 45 seconds, will be displayed on the screen.
- At the beginning of the voting period, the Moderator will instruct Town Meeting Members concerning the procedures applicable to their voting devices.
- The Moderator and Town Clerk will accept vote changes on faith, provided that, in the event of a close vote, the Moderator may require Town Meeting Members to explain publicly the circumstances requiring changes of their votes.
- Town Meeting Members may at any time prior to the dissolution of a Town Meeting correct their recorded votes by contacting the Town Clerk and Moderator, and such changes will be made in the records of the meeting so long as the Moderator has electronically or otherwise acknowledged the change prior to the dissolution of the Meeting. Town Meetings are dissolved at 5:00 p.m. on the day following the last session of the meeting, to allow for the correction of votes.
- As soon as feasible after a recorded vote is taken electronically, the results of that vote will be posted on the Town website and will remain so posted for at least three years. Electronic votes taken solely for the purpose of obtaining an accurate tally or resulting from a vote challenge by Town Meeting Members will not be posted publicly.

(Special procedures relating to voting at virtual meetings are set forth in the [Addendum on Virtual Town Meetings](#)).

## Secret Ballots

There is a strong public policy to the effect that elected representatives should be held accountable to their constituents for their actions in office. Accordingly, secret ballot voting, which is relatively common in open town meetings, is not encouraged in representative town meetings. Massachusetts law, however, permits secret ballots to be held in representative meetings if two-thirds of those present approve such a vote.

A secret ballot has not been held in Brookline's Town Meeting in recent history, but there may be factors in connection with an issue that would suggest to some that a secret ballot might be in order.

Consistent with all ballot requests, a motion for a secret ballot must be requested prior to voting on the motion in question and will not be allowed after voting in another form has commenced. If two-thirds of the Town Meeting Members present vote in favor, ballots will be distributed, completed, and collected and counted by the tellers appointed by the Moderator for this purpose. Secret ballots will simply record "yes" or "no" votes and abstentions and will not record the name of the voting Town Meeting Member, and appropriate actions will be taken by the tellers so that voting Members need not identify themselves publicly at the meeting. Secret ballots are not possible at virtual meetings.

## Votes by the Moderator

The Moderator usually abstains from voting. However, as a Town Meeting Member-at-large, the Moderator may choose to vote on motions where the Moderator's vote will affect the outcome, such as tie votes. This right has rarely, if ever, been exercised in Brookline.

## Voting Quantum Requirements

Most motions require a simple majority vote of those present and voting to be adopted. The [Parliamentary Guide](#) on the inside of the front cover of this Handbook sets forth three parliamentary exceptions, and there are other exceptions imposed by statute, including the following:

<b>Circumstances</b>	<b>Quantum of Vote Required</b>
To pay unpaid bills of previous years.....	Four-fifths vote at an annual meeting Nine-tenths of the vote at a special Town Meeting
To authorize the Town to purchase or take land or easements.....	Two-thirds vote
To transfer Town land (except land acquired for park purposes) to another board or for another municipal purpose.....	Two-thirds vote
To amend a Town zoning bylaw.....	Two-thirds vote

## Adoption of the Budget and Annual Appropriations Vote

The annual budget motion is offered by the Advisory Committee under an article in the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting each year. Because of the complexity of budget motions, special procedures apply to the process of considering the budget at Town Meeting. A detailed chart outlining the timing Town's annual budget process, and a glossary of budget terms, may be found below.

There are sometimes differences between the budget proposed by the Advisory Committee and that proposed by the Select Board. However, negotiations between the two bodies may continue until a few days before Town Meeting, and ordinarily eliminate most, if not all, of these differences. As a result, Town Meeting Members may receive one or more revisions to the budget as originally set forth in the Combined Reports.

**A Balanced Budget:** It is possible that the budget will be out of balance at the end of the budget debate because of amendments. If that were to occur, the Moderator would encourage Town Meeting to consider further amendments to balance the budget.

If the budget as adopted is not balanced, the Select Board or Advisory Committee may propose amendments at a later session of the Annual Town Meeting. If a balancing amendment is not approved, a Special Town Meeting will have to be called to adjust appropriations to bring the budget into balance. Alternatively, balancing the budget could be accomplished at the Fall Town Meeting. Notably, this had not been necessary for at least several decades until 2022.

Since there is no legal requirement that a budget adopted by Town Meeting at the Annual Town Meeting be in balance, an amendment made at that meeting that changes the amount of an appropriation does not require a motion for corresponding increases or decreases in other appropriation items. Note, however, that state law does require a final annual budget to be balanced before the end of the calendar year.

## Presentation and Discussion of Budget

Each budget item is subject to properly noticed amendments as it comes up for consideration at Town Meeting.

The budget debate begins with a presentation of the budget by the Chair of the Advisory Committee. This initial presentation is followed by a statement by the Chair of the Select Board and then a presentation of the school budget by the Superintendent of Schools. The meeting then considers the "Conditions of Appropriations," as set forth in the Advisory Committee's main motion, and any amendments to the Conditions of Appropriations proposed by the Select Board or by any Town Meeting Member.

Next, capital expenditure items are considered individually, before any other budgetary appropriations. These items constitute "special appropriations" for purposes of the state referendum law. See [Referenda and Overrides](#), below. The Moderator will state the purpose and amount of each capital item, and Town Meeting Members may come to a microphone

(or in a virtual meeting contact the Chat Monitor) to comment or ask questions about specific capital items.

The Moderator then usually, though not always, reads each remaining line item in the budget, Town and School departmental appropriations, non-departmental expenditures, and non-appropriated expenditures, together with the amount of the proposed appropriation. As is the case with capital expenditures, Town Meeting Members may comment or ask questions about any specific budget item.

Questions to Departments: During the budget debate, department heads are available for questions about their departmental budgets as they are brought before Town Meeting. The Moderator usually permits Town Meeting Members to question department heads or their designees about their departmental appropriations and other matters relating to the operation or management of their departments. This is the sole opportunity available to a Town Meeting Member to question a department head on the floor of Town Meeting on matters unrelated to a specific budget item or warrant article. The Moderator may limit or bypass this privilege to expedite a long meeting or manage a difficult budget debate. The Moderator may also allow a motion to terminate certain portions of the budget debate if in the Moderator's opinion there has been an adequate opportunity for Town Meeting Members to address the issues raised during such portion of the debate. This would apply, for example, if in the Moderator's judgment the debate on departmental expenditures or the School budget was consuming an inordinate amount of Town Meeting's time.

## Voting on the Budget

No votes are taken during the budget debate except in two instances: (1) when an amendment of a budget item is properly before the meeting, a vote will be taken on that amendment; and (2) separate two-thirds votes are taken on each capital appropriation that is to be financed in whole or in part by the issuance of Town debt.

At the end of the budget debate, an omnibus vote is taken that incorporates all majority or two-thirds votes taken during the debate. This vote usually passes unanimously, or close to unanimously.

Amendments of appropriation items must be submitted by 12:00 p.m. noon, eight calendar days before the session at which the item will be discussed. See [Actions on the Main Motion and Filing Deadlines](#). The Moderator has the discretion to permit exceptions to the notice requirement. Exceptions would likely occur if amendments were proposed to balance appropriations and revenues or if waiving the notice requirement would in the view of the Moderator serve the interests of fairness and equity.

While the above process describes the procedures currently followed for the annual appropriations vote, the Moderator has discretion to change these procedures in general or in a particular instance.

## RESOLUTIONS AND REPORTS

Resolutions, unlike other articles, are not binding. They are often debated and voted on after the other articles on the warrant and consist of matters of concern to the Town. The exceptions are Complimentary Resolutions or Statements of Thanks, which usually made before the articles are debated. Reports by Town Boards or Committees are not presented at Town Meeting, unless the Moderator, at its sole discretion, decides otherwise, but are included in the Combined Reports.

### Resolutions

Resolutions are articles. They urge the Town to act take an action, but do not require it to do so. For example, Town Meeting may express by resolution its opinion on matters within the statutory authority of the Select Board, the School Committee, the Library Trustees, the Retirement Board, or the Transportation Board. Since Town Meeting has no legal authority relating to such matters, it may only request, not require, that the Select Board or such other body take specific actions.

Town Meeting may also vote by resolution to give directions to a Town board or committee, or otherwise indicate the concern of Town Meeting, in a matter covered by an article in the warrant but not susceptible to direct action by the Town Meeting.

### Special Committee Reports

Special committee reports unrelated to a specific article on the warrant are submitted to Town Meeting under an article on every warrant providing for the presentation of reports. Examples of reports falling within this category are interim and final reports of Moderator's committees, an annual report of the Housing Advisory Board and reports of special committees created by the Select Board. In rare circumstances, the Moderator will allow the Committee to present a summary of its report to Town Meeting, however, the Moderator will not permit debate or permit a motion to accept, adopt, approve, or ratify these reports.

### Complimentary Resolutions or Statements of Thanks

Complimentary resolutions may be offered when Town Meeting thanks a person or group for a service to the Town or offer other public courtesies. At the discretion of the Moderator, and in rare instances, such a resolution may be put before Town Meeting without a warrant article, but the proponent of such a motion must obtain special permission in advance from the Moderator to do so.

On occasion, a member of the Select Board or other Town Meeting Member may rise to thank a member of the Board or a Town staff member who is retiring from office. The Moderator will allow this to occur without prior clearance.

### Resolutions on National and International Issues

Over the course of at least 50 years, Town Meeting has taken positions on domestic and foreign policies despite having no authority or control over these issues. The Moderator permits warrant articles covering these matters to be considered by Town Meeting. The Select Board and Advisory Committee are unlikely to take positions on such proposals.

Expressions of Town Meeting's intentions or concerns in these instances are not legally binding on anyone or anything.

## EFFECTIVE DATES OF TOWN MEETING ACTIONS

Subject to the exceptions specified in (a) through (d) below, all actions taken by Town Meeting are final when the Meeting has ended and is officially dissolved. The meeting is considered dissolved at 5:00 p.m. the day after the last session of the meeting, to give Town Meeting Members time to confirm that their votes have been correctly recorded.

Exceptions:

- a) Votes that are subject to a referendum become final seven days after the dissolution of the meeting (excluding Sundays and holidays) unless a referendum is called.
- b) Amendments of the Town's general bylaws must be submitted to the State Attorney General for approval and are effective upon being posted by the Town Clerk, who posts a bylaw amendment (i) upon notice of its approval by the Attorney General, or (ii) if the Attorney General takes no action on the amendment for 90 days after its submission, upon the lapse of such 90-day period.
- c) Amendments of the Town's zoning bylaws are conditionally effective upon the dissolution of the Town Meeting at which they were enacted but are subject to the same post-meeting review by the Attorney General, as are amendments to the general bylaws. The conditional effectiveness becomes final on the date of posting by the Town Clerk as described above.
- d) Votes that contain effective dates become effective on such dates or on such later dates as may apply in accordance with (a) through (c) above.



# REFERENDA AND OVERRIDES

## Referendum

A referendum is how citizens of the Town who are dissatisfied with certain decisions of Town Meeting may cause a question to be referred to all registered voters of the Town for a vote.

The following actions by Town Meeting, and only such actions, are subject to referendum:

1. Authorization of a "special appropriation" (that is, an appropriation outside of the annual Town or School budgets) of \$20,000 or more.
2. Establishment of a new Town board or office, abolition of an old board or office or merger of two or more boards or offices.
3. Establishment of the term of office of a Town officer.
4. Increase or reduction of the number of members of a Town board.
5. Adoption of a new Town bylaw (regular or zoning) or the amendment or rescission of an existing bylaw.

A petition for a referendum relating to any action by Town Meeting that qualifies for a referendum (see 1 through 4 above) may be submitted to the Select Board during the seven-day period after dissolution of a Town Meeting. The petition must be signed by no less than 3% of registered voters of the Town. Petition forms are available from the Town Clerk.

If such a petition is filed, the effectiveness of the related Town Meeting vote is suspended, and the Select Board must issue a call for the referendum "forthwith" after the expiration of five days from the petition filing date.

The polls will be open from 2:00 P.M. to 8:00 p.m. on the date set for the Town-wide referendum vote. The question or questions so referred to all registered voters must be worded on the ballot in substantially the same language and form as adopted by Town Meeting. No action of Town Meeting may be reversed by a referendum unless at least 20% of all registered voters in the Town vote to reverse the action.

## Override Votes

Town-wide vote on actions of Town Meeting will also be held under four other circumstances. In each case, a majority vote is required for the proposal to pass and there is no requirement that a minimum percentage of registered voters cast votes.

Operating budget override: The voters may be given an opportunity to override the limits of Massachusetts Proposition 2 1/2. (See "Glossary of Terms" in this Appendix) to some higher amount. If Town Meeting votes funds for an operating budget or budgets contingent on an override vote and a majority of the Select Board votes to hold such a vote, then an override election is held.

The Select Board may also order an override (or debt or capital outlay exclusion) vote prior to Town Meeting's consideration of the appropriation(s) at issue, in which event the relevant budget or appropriation item(s) presented to Town Meeting thereafter, and the action of Town Meeting itself, must reflect the results of the override vote. The question to be placed on the ballot must state the purpose and dollar amount of the override. The Town's tax levy base will be permanently increased by the override amount, if approved.

- Operating budget override: The voters may also be given an opportunity to "override" the limits of Proposition 2 1/2 to a lower amount. If a majority of the Select Board votes to hold such a vote, then an override election is held. The ballot question must state the purpose and dollar amount of the override and, if adopted by the voters, the Town's tax levy base will be permanently decreased by the override amount. There have been no operating budget overrides in Brookline since Proposition 2 1/2 was adopted in 1980.
- Debt exclusion: A Town-wide debt exclusion vote may also occur to approve a bond authorization with a debt schedule to be funded outside of Proposition 2 1/2 limits. If Town Meeting authorizes borrowing contingent on the debt exclusion vote and two-thirds of the members of the Select Board (four members) vote to put this matter to the voters, then a debt exclusion election is held.

A debt exclusion may also be subject to a Town-wide vote prior to the consideration of the applicable debt items by Town Meeting, in the same manner described above for operating budget overrides. The ballot question must state the purposes for which and the amount in which the proposed bonds are to be issued. The amount of any approved debt exclusion is added to the Town's levy limit for the term of the debt only, and only to the extent of the annual amount of debt payments.

- Capital outlay expenditure exclusion: If Town Meeting appropriates funds for capital projects contingent on an exclusion vote and two-thirds of the members of the Select Board vote to put this matter to the voters, then an election is held. The ballot question must state the purpose for which the capital outlay funds are to be spent and the dollar amount of the expenditure. The amount of the capital outlay expenditure exclusion will be added to the Town's tax levy limit only for the year in which the project is undertaken.

# ANNUAL BUDGET CALENDAR

Capital Budget	Dates	Operating Budget
Fiscal year begins	July 1	Fiscal year begins
Request forms distributed to Departments	July	
Relevant boards and commissions hold public hearings	August	
Request forms due	September	Departments submit request forms
Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Committee reviews requests	Sept. / Oct.	Boards and commissions review budget requests Department heads prepare budget requests
CIP Committee reviews preliminary recommendations	October	Budget requests due
Select Board holds public hearing on the CIP Long- Range Financial Forecast is presented	Nov. / Dec.	Select Board holds public hearing on the budget Long-Range Financial Forecast is presented  Town Administrator and staff meet with department heads to ascertain the need for cutbacks and/or expansion based on projected revenue
CIP Committee submits final recommendations to Town Administrator Town Administrator submits recommendations to Select Board	December	Town Administrator develops budget guidelines
Planning Board and Advisory Committee's Capital Subcommittee review the proposed CIP	Dec. / Jan.	Select Board adopts budget guidelines
Town Administrator submits Financial Plan to Select Board and Advisory Committee, and distributes it to all Town Meeting Members	February 15 (or next Town business day)	Town Administrator submits Financial Plan to Select Board and Advisory Committee, and distributes it to all Town Meeting Members
Select Board reviews and votes on capital items in the budget  Advisory Committee reviews and makes recommendations to Town Meeting	February - May	Select Board reviews and votes on the budget  Advisory Committee reviews and makes recommendations to Town Meeting.
Town Meeting votes on capital items in the budget	May / June	Town Meeting votes budget.
Fiscal Year ends	June 30	Fiscal Year ends

# GLOSSARY OF BUDGET TERMS

## **Bonds**

Municipal bonds are issued by a municipality for large capital expenditures such as schools or other buildings. With certain exceptions, including school bonds approved by the State Finance Office, a municipality's total borrowing may not exceed 5% of its total assessed valuation. The period within which the bonds must be retired varies according to the type of capital project being financed.

## **Chapter 90**

The cost of construction on roads that are approved by the State is eligible for "Chapter 90" reimbursement from the State, which has been at the rate of 90% in recent years.

## **Cherry Sheet**

A report by The Commonwealth of Massachusetts containing a statement of monies the Town must pay to the county, MBTA, and Commonwealth, and an estimate of monies to be received from the Commonwealth. These figures must be used when calculating the tax rate.

## **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**

The Town's Capital Improvement Program, which is revised each year, sets forth the proposed expenditures for capital projects for the following several years.

## **Combined Reports**

The official title of the document sent to all Town Meeting Members, which contains the reports of the Select Board, the Advisory Committee and other Town bodies on the articles in the warrant. It is not to be confused with the warrant itself, which is simply a listing of the articles.

## **Conditions of Appropriation**

Conditions set forth in the budget vote, which define how particular appropriations are to be spent, whether and how transfers of funds from one category to another can be made, and other conditions which Town Meeting may impose on appropriations. Many of the Conditions of Appropriation in the budget have developed over the years and are carried over verbatim from year to year.

## **Contingency Fund**

A sum of money appropriated by Town Meeting for the Select Board to use for any unforeseen expenses during the fiscal year. Amounts expended from this fund for individual projects do not usually exceed \$1,500.

## **Free Cash**

See "Surplus Revenue" below.

## **Overlay**

An amount of money held in reserve for the payment of tax abatements and adjustments.

## **Proposition 2 1/2**

A tax limitation measure adopted by statewide referendum in 1980, which limits the ability of the Town to increase its budget from year to year. The principal operative provision limits total property taxes levied to 2 1/2% of the full cash value of the property in a community and limits any increase in the tax

levy not attributable to new growth to 2 1/2% of the prior year's tax levy. To override these tax limitations requires a Town-wide referendum.

**Reserve Fund**

An amount of money voted by the Town Meeting (not to exceed 5% of the prior year's tax levy) for appropriation by the Advisory Committee for any unforeseen or emergency expenses during the year.

**Supplemental Reports**

A distribution to Town Meeting Members that includes reports of the Select Board, Advisory Committee, and other boards or committees that were not available at the time of distribution of the Combined Reports, as well as all amendments and motions proposed to be made under the articles in the warrant submitted after the deadline for mailing of the Combined Reports. Supplemental Reports are either mailed to Town Meeting Members, distributed by the checkers, or both.

**Surplus Revenue**

Funds that derive from (i) the difference between estimates and actual receipts of departmental collections and revenue (for example, licenses and permits) and (ii) any unexpended funds of departmental budgets. When uncollected taxes are subtracted from surplus revenue, the total is called Free Cash, which may be a positive or negative number. Positive Free Cash is available for appropriation by Town Meeting, but only after it has been certified by the State Department of Revenue.

**Tax Levy**

The amount of money to be raised through real and personal property taxes.

# APPENDIX

## KEY CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

### Key Contacts

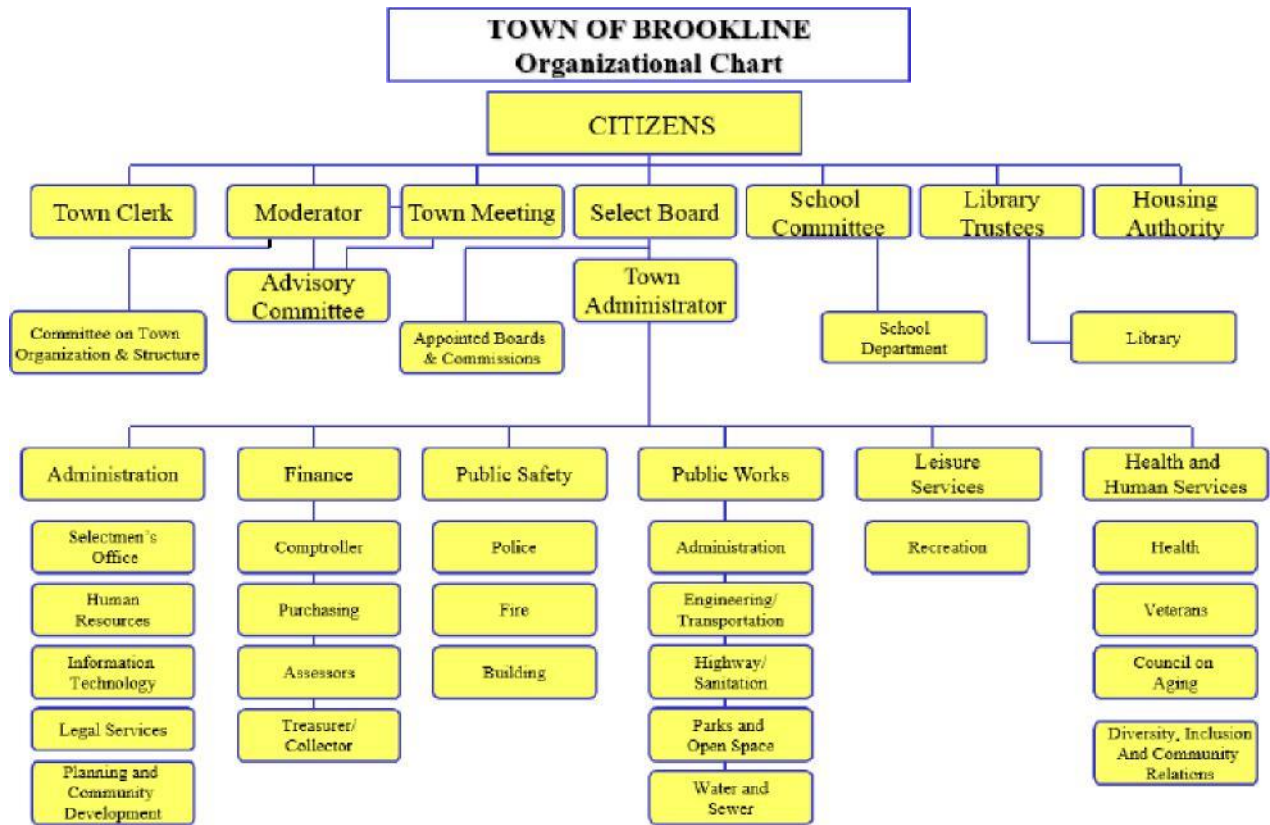
Updated November 2022			
Role	Name	Email Address	Phone Number
Town Administrator	Charles Carey	ccarey@brooklinema.gov	617-730-2200
Deputy Town Administrator for Policy and Fiscal Affairs	Melissa Goff	mgoff@brooklinema.gov	617-730-2205
Finance Director	Lincoln Heineman	lheineman@brooklinema.gov	617-730-2020
Assistant Town Administrator for Operations	Devon Fields	<a href="mailto:Dfields@brooklinema.gov">Dfields@brooklinema.gov</a>	617-730-2211
Select Board	~	<a href="mailto:Selectboard@brooklinema.gov">Selectboard@brooklinema.gov</a>	617-730-2200
Town Clerk	Ben Kaufman	<a href="mailto:bkaufman@brooklinema.gov">bkaufman@brooklinema.gov</a>	617-730-2010
Moderator	Kate Poverman	<a href="mailto:kpoverman@comcast.net">kpoverman@comcast.net</a>	617-650-3525
Assistant Moderators	Sandy Gadsby	<a href="mailto:sgadsby@foleyhoag.com">sgadsby@foleyhoag.com</a>	617-738-6609
	Jon Karon	<a href="mailto:jakaron@karonlaw.net">jakaron@karonlaw.net</a>	617-720-8447
School Committee Chair	David Pearlman	David_Pearlman@psbma.org	617-894-6893
Town Meeting Members Association Chair	Carlos Ridruejo	carlos@caridossa.com	617-901-5908
Advisory Committee Chair	Dennis Doughty	<a href="mailto:doughty@alum.mit.edu">doughty@alum.mit.edu</a>	617-909-0303
Advisory Committee Staff	Lisa Portscher	<a href="mailto:lportscher@brooklinema.gov">lportscher@brooklinema.gov</a>	617-730-2246
Audiovisual Support and Submissions for Town Meeting	David Marquado	<a href="mailto:tm@brooklinema.gov">tm@brooklinema.gov</a>	

### Websites and Links

Brookline Town Website	<a href="https://www.brooklinema.gov/">https://www.brooklinema.gov/</a>
Advisory Committee	<a href="https://www.brooklinema.gov/166/Advisory-Committee">https://www.brooklinema.gov/166/Advisory-Committee</a>
Annual Report	<a href="https://www.brooklinema.gov/349/Annual-Reports">https://www.brooklinema.gov/349/Annual-Reports</a>
Audio/Visual Submissions for Town Meeting	<a href="mailto:tm@brooklinema.gov">tm@brooklinema.gov</a>
Bylaws	<a href="https://brooklinema.gov/310/Town-Bylaws">https://brooklinema.gov/310/Town-Bylaws</a>
Boards and Commissions incl. applications	<a href="https://www.brooklinema.gov/165/Boards-Commissions">https://www.brooklinema.gov/165/Boards-Commissions</a>
Budget Central	<a href="https://www.brooklinema.gov/851/Budget-Central">https://www.brooklinema.gov/851/Budget-Central</a>
Calendar	<a href="https://www.brooklinema.gov/Calendar">https://www.brooklinema.gov/Calendar</a>
Precinct Maps	<a href="https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1362/Precincts-8x11-PDF">https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1362/Precincts-8x11-PDF</a>
Town Meeting General Information	<a href="https://www.brooklinema.gov/Town-Meeting">https://www.brooklinema.gov/Town-Meeting</a>
Town Meeting Files	<a href="https://www.brooklinema.gov/1020/Town-Meeting-Files">https://www.brooklinema.gov/1020/Town-Meeting-Files</a>
Town Meeting Members Association Listserv	<a href="mailto:brooklinetmma@groups.io">brooklinetmma@groups.io</a> (restricted to Town Meeting Members)
Town Meeting Membership	<a href="https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6574">https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6574</a>

<b>Town Organizations and Resources</b>	
League of Women Voters	<a href="https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/brookline">https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/brookline</a>
Brookline Interactive Group You Tube Government Channel	<a href="https://brooklineinteractive.org/Town-meeting/">https://brooklineinteractive.org/Town-meeting/</a>
Secretary of Commonwealth's Citizen's Guide to Town Meetings	<a href="https://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cispdf/Guide_to_Town_Meetings.pdf">https://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cispdf/Guide_to_Town_Meetings.pdf</a>

# TOWN ORGANIZATION CHART





# ADDENDUM: PROCEDURES FOR VIRTUAL TOWN MEETINGS ON ZOOM

## Preliminary Procedures

All participants should login for each session between 6:00-7:00 p.m. Specific check-in instructions will be emailed to all participants before or on the day of each session of the meeting. The Help Desk will be available for those needing help in joining the meeting at a telephone number that will be given to participants with the check-in information. A conference call number will be provided with the check-in instructions for those who cannot join the meeting electronically.

It is important that participants check in early, even as early as 6:00 p.m., to avoid the technical challenges presented when dozens of people try to login simultaneously. After being checked in from the waiting room, participants will enter the meeting and their microphones will be muted. They should feel free at that point to turn off their cameras and continue to work on their computers (or not) while waiting for the meeting to start. Participants are encouraged to leave their cameras on during the meeting to approximate the feel of live meetings more closely and to increase the sense of collegiality between Town Meeting Members, which is diminished when viewers are faced with black screens, rather than colleagues' faces, throughout the proceedings.

- Pledge of Allegiance – at approximately 6:50 p.m. the Moderator will recite the pledge; participants will be on mute but may join in the pledge if they so desire.
- Determination of a quorum and call to order – as soon as possible after 7 p.m.
- Acknowledgement by the Moderator of the proper publication of the warrant.
- Star Spangled Banner.
- Indigenous Peoples' Acknowledgement.
- Announcements by the Moderator – including special procedures for the meeting.
- The Chat Monitor reviews procedures of using Zoom technology in detail.
- Practice vote – A practice vote will be taken to allow the participants to confirm that the voting procedure is working smoothly. The practice vote will also be a confirmation that the meeting may proceed virtually, as required by the virtual meeting enabling legislation.

## Debate Procedures

All participants in the meeting other than the Moderator will be on mute until called upon by the Moderator to speak, at which time the IT staff will prompt the speaker to unmute by clicking on the Mute/Unmute button on the lower left of the speaker's computer screen.

For each debate, the Moderator will first call on alternating pro and con speakers who have signed up in advance to speak. Those who wish to speak at the meeting but have not signed up in advance can request to be recognized by contacting the Chat Monitor by clicking on the Chat icon at the bottom of their computer screens. Each request should contain the following information, in order: last name; first name; precinct number; and either "question," "comment," or other motion sought to be made. All requests are communicated by the Chat Monitor to the Moderator as soon as possible. The Moderator will interrupt the current speaker for points of order or questions of privilege.

The Moderator will take motions for an article to be voted on (also known as "calling the question") when the Moderator believes that all sides of the issue on the floor have been adequately aired.

All debate and deliberation regarding issues under consideration at Town Meeting must take place in a publicly accessible forum or publicly accessible platform, such as Zoom or a similar technology.

Town Meeting Members should not engage in group debate or deliberation using text messages, email, or other modes of private electronic communication while participating in Town Meeting proceedings.

The IT staff will provide closed captions on computer screens at all virtual meetings. Captioning may be accessed within the Zoom interface by clicking on a button labeled "CC" on the bottom right-hand side of the computer screen.

## Voting Procedures

All votes will be first conducted electronically through the voting system incorporated in the Zoom platform, then by a roll call of those present by conference call. Those with difficulty voting can seek assistance from the Help Desk.

The Moderator will announce the motion to be voted on and its location in the Combined Reports or a supplement. When the Voting Monitor is ready to start the vote, the Monitor will inform the Moderator, who will announce the commencement of a 45-second voting period.

Ballots will be displayed on the screens of all those participating electronically, and voters will select "yes," "no," or "abstain," and then select "submit." Once a vote has been submitted, it may not be recalled, so voters will need to be sure that they have clicked on the correct response before submitting the ballot. After the voting period, the Moderator will poll those participating by conference call and then announce the result of the vote.

There will be recorded votes on all motions other than strictly routine ones (such as motions to adjourn) without motions from the floor. The Moderator will announce before a vote if it is NOT to be recorded. Town Meeting Members can call for any vote to be recorded by contacting the Chat Monitor on the Zoom Chat Line. If a recorded vote is requested, the Moderator will proceed with such a vote without polling those present, given that a request for a recorded vote has never failed to obtain the necessary Town Meeting Member support. Individual voting results are available on the [Town Meeting Files website](#) on the day following a vote. Unlike in-person Town Meeting, the results of how each Town Meeting Member voted are not available at the time of the vote.

## **Dissolution**

As is the case with in-person Town Meetings, virtual Town Meetings dissolve at 5:00 p.m. the day after the last session to allow Town Meeting Members to confirm that their votes have been accurately recorded.