



Town of Webster

Town Meeting Guide October 20, 2025

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Town Meeting Information

Thank you for taking an interest in the Town of Webster's Town Meeting. Town Meeting is part of a great tradition of democracy which has been taking place in Webster ever since its townspeople came together to found Webster in 1832. Town Meeting is the legislative body of the Town, acting much like our legislative counterparts at the State and Federal level, to fund a budget and to establish bylaws. One important difference is that in Webster's Open Town Meeting form of government, every registered voter of the Town is a Legislator and has the opportunity to participate in, and vote on, every issue.

Procedures

Webster's Town Meeting is governed by State law, the Town's Bylaws, tradition, and the book "Town Meeting Time: A Handbook of Parliamentary Law". Voters don't need to read these documents in order to participate in Town Meeting as your elected Town Moderator is there to guide the Town through the meeting while adhering to all applicable rules and regulations. Always remember that if you are not clear on the issue being voted on or the topic being discussed, you can always step up to the nearest microphone and ask questions.

At the front of the room you will find:

- The Moderator: Elected to preside over Town Meeting
- The Town Administrator: Webster's Chief Administrative and Financial Officer
- Town Counsel: the Town's attorney
- The Town Clerk: Officially records the votes taken at Town Meeting

Sitting at tables, also at the front of the room, are the following Boards/Committees:

- The Board of Selectmen: The Governing Body of the Town
- The School Committee: Recommends the School Department Budget
- The Finance Committee: Makes recommendations on all articles involving Town finances

Town Meeting Warrant

The Board of Selectmen post a Warrant before the Town Meeting. The Warrant lists the agenda for what topics will be discussed and voted on at the Town Meeting. Each item on the agenda is called an "Article". An Article may be specific or broad. The booklet distributed at the Town Meeting includes both the Warrant that was posted by the Board of Selectmen as well as the Motions expected to be presented following the reading of each Article. Keep in mind that these may change.

Motions

While a Warrant Article generally describes what topics will be discussed, a Motion is a statement of a specific action that is proposed to be taken. For example, a Motion to appropriate (designate) funds would specify the dollar amount, the source of the funds, and what purpose the funds are for. The Motions that are expected to be presented are printed in this booklet, but the actual Motion that ends up being presented may differ. It's important to realize the difference between the Warrant Article and

the Motion: the Warrant Article is the agenda item describing the subject matter to be voted on, and the Motion outlines the specific action to be voted on.

Amendments to Motions

A Motion may also be made to amend the original Motion, in which case that amendment will be discussed and voted on before the original Motion. If the amendment passes, then discussion will return to the original Motion as amended. If the amendment is defeated, then discussion will return to the original Motion.

Motions to Pass Over

A Motion to “Pass Over” is a proposal to take no action on the Warrant Article at the Town Meeting. The Town’s practice has been to either make a “Motion to Pass Over” or a “Motion to Pass Over for More Information”. The Town of Webster’s General Bylaw, 253-14, prohibits an Article that received a favorable vote on a “Motion to Pass Over” from being re-considered prior to the next Annual Town Meeting. If the Motion to Pass Over is approved, then no action will be taken and the Town Meeting will move on to the next Article. If the motion is defeated, then the Town Meeting would ask for a Motion to take action as it relates to the Article being discussed.

Discussion

After a Motion is presented, the topic of the Article is then open for discussion, questions, and debate by everyone participating in the Town Meeting. In order for this to take place, residents may line up behind microphones stationed in each aisle if they have questions or would like to make comments. When recognized by the Moderator, the individual clearly states their name and address so that others in attendance know who is speaking. All comments should focus on the specific topic of the Article being discussed and not address a particular person or group other than the Moderator.

Ending the Discussion

If a voter has heard sufficient discussion and wants to end further debate, they can make a Motion to end the debate which is often referred to as “moving the question”. A voter cannot both comment on an Article and then “move the question” during the same turn at the microphone: he/she can only do one or the other. A motion to “move the question” is not debatable and requires a 2/3 majority vote in order to pass. If the motion to “move the question” passes, then further debate on the Article ends and Town Meeting will vote on the Motion. If the Motion to “move the question” is defeated, then the debate of the Motion continues.

Reconsideration

If substantial new information becomes available that could alter the outcome of a vote after it has already been taken, a voter can make a “Motion to Reconsider” that earlier vote. The Moderator will not entertain a “Motion to Reconsider” on the basis of having different voters present in the room or because some voters are unhappy with the outcome of the original vote. If the “Motion to Reconsider” is accepted by the Moderator, it will be discussed by the Town Meeting. If the majority of the Town Meeting vote in favor of Reconsideration, then the original Motion that was previously voted upon will again be read to the voters. A “Motion to Reconsider” can only be made by an individual who earlier

voted on the prevailing side. The Town of Webster General Bylaw 253-13 requires a 2/3 majority vote in order to Reconsider.

Voting

Rather than a voice vote or raising hands, each voter will be assigned an electronic voting device when they register at the door. Voters simply need to press a designated button, as instructed by the Moderator, for their vote to be recorded. Not only will this system be more accurate, but it also allows each vote to remain confidential. Additionally, the use of the electronic voting system will eliminate the need for any ballot votes, thus potentially reducing the length of Town Meeting. The electronic voting system will be tested prior to the Town Meeting to ensure that all votes will be accurate.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Moderator's Motions to begin the meeting:

1. The Moderator moves the Town votes to dispense with the reading of the warrant.
2. The Moderator moves that the Moderator may extend the floor to Town Management and staff and other non-voters provided that they must be recognized by the Moderator.

ARTICLE 1. REPORTS FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OR BOARD OF SELECTMEN

To hear and act upon the report and recommendations of the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee; or take any other action thereon.

Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen

Recommendation: The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

Recommended Motion: I move that the Town vote to approve the Finance Committee Report.

Background: - The Finance Committee works with Town Management and provides oversight for fair and comprehensive annual budgets and capital improvements program. Article 6 – Finances and Fiscal Procedures of the Charter of the Town of Webster provides a road map for the fiscal year budget and capital improvements program processes and Chapter 110 - Finance Committee provides direction to the Finance Committee for their role throughout these processes. One of the directives for the Finance Committee is to report a statement of the doings by the Committee during the year, a statement of bonded indebtedness of the Town, the amount of free cash and its recommendations or suggestions on those articles in the warrant which have been submitted to the Selectmen.

ARTICLE 2. GENERAL FUND PRIOR YEAR BILLS

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the Town Administrator Unpaid Bills account for the purpose of funding the payment of prior years' unpaid invoices; or take any other action thereon.

Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen

Recommendation: The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

Recommended Motion: I move that the Town vote to transfer from the authorizations listed below totaling \$7,879.39 to the Town Administrator Unpaid Bills account (0112352-579000) for the purpose of funding the payment of prior years' unpaid invoices.

Amount	Vendor	Account #	Account Description
\$ 37.98	Auto Zone	0121052-524003	Vehicle Maintenance
\$ 4.15	Auto Zone	0121052-524003	Vehicle Maintenance

\$ 1,454.72	McGovern MHQ Inc	0121052-524003	Vehicle Maintenance
\$ 1,700.00	McGovern MHQ Inc	0121052-524003	Vehicle Maintenance
\$ 150.00	McGovern MHQ Inc	0121052-524003	Vehicle Maintenance
\$ 80.30	VitalShred	0121052-542000	Office Supplies
\$ 4,025.00	Axon Enterprise	0121052-558003	Supplies & Materials
\$ 277.50	Fire Tech & Safety	0122052-558001	Supplies & Materials
\$ 149.74	Davide Moreira	0122052-524001	Building & Grounds
\$ 7,879.39	Total		

Background: In accordance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 64 Town Meeting may appropriate funds to pay bills of a previous year's appropriation. If there were sufficient monies in the appropriation at that time, but the bill was presented too late by the vendor, lost, etc. So that appropriation has been closed out, then a majority vote is sufficient. As is the case with the prior year bills presented.

ARTICLE 3. SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND PRIOR YEAR BILLS

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the Sewer Unpaid Bills account for the purpose of funding the payment of prior years' unpaid invoices; or take any other action thereon.

Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen

Recommendation: The Board of Selectmen recommend to pass over this article.

Recommended Motion: I move that the Town vote to pass over this article.

Background: In accordance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 64 Town Meeting may appropriate funds to pay bills of a previous year's appropriation. If there were sufficient monies in the appropriation at that time, but the bill was presented too late by the vendor, lost, etc. So that appropriation has been closed out, then a majority vote is sufficient.

ARTICLE 4. WATER ENTERPRISE FUND PRIOR YEAR BILLS

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum sufficient to the Water Unpaid Bills account for the purpose of funding the payment of prior years' unpaid invoices; or take any other action thereon.

Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen

Recommendation: The Board of Selectmen recommend to pass over this article.

Recommended Motion: I move that the Town vote to pass over this article.

Background: In accordance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 64 Town Meeting may appropriate funds to pay bills of a previous year's appropriation. If there were sufficient monies in the appropriation at that time, but the bill was presented too late by the vendor, lost, etc. So that appropriation has been closed out, then a majority vote is sufficient.

ARTICLE 5: ACCEPTANCE OF LAND – HOUGHTON STREET

To see if the Town will vote to accept 2 parcels of land located on Houghton Street, Assessor IDs 3_L_4_0, and 3_L_6_0, to be donated by DLV Realty LLC. Both parcels are located in a Single Family Residential (SFR) zoning district; or take any other action thereon.

Sponsored by the Board of Selectmen

Recommendation: The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

Recommended Motion: I move that the Town vote to approve as read.

Background: The lots were purchased by a land developer in the early 2000's, sold to a finance company, and then later foreclosed. The lots are not buildable have no utilities, no stormwater management, and are far from the existing roads. The lots are contiguous with the other town-owned lots, and there are no disadvantages to taking the lots. The taxes are around \$100/year.

ARTICLE 6: REPLACEMENT OF MULTI-GAS METERS

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from any available funds in the Treasury, a sum of \$15,000 for the replacement of aging multi-gas meters; or take any other action thereon.

Sponsored by the Fire Department

Recommendation: The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommend favorable action on this article.

Recommended Motion: I move that the Town vote to transfer from free cash the amount of \$15,000 for purposes of this article.

Background: The fire department regularly uses handheld Multi 4-Gas Detectors and single source CO detectors during a variety of emergency responses to ensure the safety of personnel and the public. These meters are essential tools at fire scenes, where they help monitor atmospheric conditions for hazardous gases that may be present due to combustion or chemical reactions.

They are also used during carbon monoxide (CO) calls to detect and confirm elevated levels of CO, which can pose serious health risks. The current meters provide critical data by sensing for:

- **LEL (Lower Explosive Limit)** – to detect potentially explosive concentrations of flammable gases,
- **O₂ (Oxygen)** – to identify oxygen-deficient or enriched environments,
- **CO (Carbon Monoxide)** – a toxic gas often presents in fires, malfunctioning heating equipment and confined spaces,
- **H₂S (Hydrogen Sulfide)** – a dangerous gas commonly found in industrial or waste-related incidents.

Current Meters

The MSA Multi 4-Gas Detectors currently in use are approximately 13 years old. Due to their age, replacement parts have become increasingly expensive and difficult to source, making routine maintenance and servicing more challenging. Compounding this issue is the fact that we do not have a dedicated calibration station. As a result, we are unable to calibrate the detectors as frequently as required for optimal safety and performance, and must rely on another department to perform calibrations on our behalf.

These detectors were originally acquired through a Homeland Security grant, which is no longer available. Without access to similar funding, replacing or upgrading the equipment presents a significant financial hurdle. Given the critical role these detectors play in ensuring safety, it is important to consider options for modernization to maintain compliance and reliability.

New Meters

The new multi-gas detectors will significantly improve our operational safety and efficiency by expanding detection capabilities beyond the current four gases **LEL (Lower Explosive Limit)**, **O₂ (Oxygen)**, **CO (Carbon Monoxide)**, **H₂S (Hydrogen Sulfide)**, and now **HCN (Hydrogen Cyanide)**. HCN is a highly toxic gas commonly released during the combustion of synthetic materials, making its detection critical at structure fires and other hazardous environments.

Furthermore, acquiring our own calibration station will allow us to calibrate the detectors in-house, in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended schedule and procedures. This will ensure that our meters consistently provide accurate and reliable readings, reduce dependency on other departments, and improve turnaround time for maintenance. Regular calibration is essential for detecting low-level concentrations of toxic gases and maintaining compliance with safety standards.