

SUTTON TOWN MEETING RULES

Special Covid/Pandemic Protocols

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and to follow emergency orders issued by the Governor for public meetings and other guidance issued by the New Hampshire Secretary of State and New Hampshire Attorney General's Office, the following pandemic protocols are planned for the evening business session of the Town Meeting:

- A. Face Coverings – Protective face coverings shall be worn over the mouth and nose by those who attend the business session of the Town Meeting in the main meeting room (at present, expected to be the Kearsarge Regional High School Auditorium) and any “overflow rooms” (at present, expected to be the high school cafeteria). Exceptions to the mask requirement may be permitted briefly, and on a case-by-case basis, as allowed by the Moderator, but only for those speaking at the designated microphones so as to ensure that comments can be heard by those in attendance, if muffled and unintelligible due to the mask wearing.
- B. Social Distancing – Those who attend the Town Meeting are expected to make every effort to maintain social distancing, meaning keeping a distance of 6 feet away from those around them. Social distancing is not required by members of the same household.
- C. Expanded Meeting Space – In an attempt to allow for as much social distancing as possible, the Moderator expects to allow voters to observe a live audio or video feed of the Town Meeting proceedings in an overflow room, if necessary, due to crowd size. The Moderator will be making every effort to allow those observing from the overflow room to easily participate in the meeting by speaking and voting just as those in the main meeting room – for example, by having a Supervisor of the Checklist monitor votes in that room and by either having a microphone available in the overflow room or allowing those in the overflow room to use the microphones in the main meeting room.
- D. Livestream – The Moderator and Town Officials are planning to attempt to livestream the Town Meeting business session over the internet. Should that occur, voters watching remotely will only be able to *observe* the proceedings, *not participate in the discussion or vote* remotely. Those wishing to provide comments, ask questions or vote on the Articles on the Town Warrant must attend the business session of the Town Meeting in person. (Note: Voting for Town offices will still occur on the day prior to the business session of the Town Meeting, and voters may request and obtain absentee ballots for the election portion of the Town Meeting.)
- E. Voters Unable or Unwilling to Wear Masks – Should any registered voter wish to attend the business portion of Town Meeting who is unable or unwilling to wear a mask, a separate room will be made available for such unmasked voters. An

audio or video feed shall be provided in that room to allow unmasked voters to monitor the meeting. If technology permits, a microphone will be available in that room, and the Moderator will facilitate a process to allow the unmasked voters to speak directly at the meeting. If such technology is not feasible, the Moderator will facilitate a process by which such unmasked voters may have questions or comments delivered to him for reading out to the assembled meeting. With respect to voting, the Moderator will facilitate unmasked voters being able to vote on the Warrant Articles just as those in the main meeting room.

Procedural Rules

Unless changed by the voters at the Meetings, the Town Moderator will use the following Rules of Procedure to conduct the Town Meeting:

1. The Moderator will not follow Robert's Rules. The Moderator will use the following general rules of procedure, whose main purpose is to keep the meeting moving, and not get bogged down in procedural quagmires.
2. By majority vote, the voters can overrule any decision that the Moderator makes and any rule that the Moderator establishes. A voter can raise such a request by Point of Order.
3. The Moderator will take Articles in the order that they appear on the Warrant unless the Moderator announces the intent to take Articles out of order.
4. The Moderator will consider each Article, as follows:
 - a. The Moderator will announce the Article number. The Moderator need not read the full text of the Article, as the text of the Article will have been provided in the Town Report.
 - b. The Moderator will recognize a member of the Budget Committee or of the Board of Selectmen, or the petitioner (if a petitioned Article) to move the adoption of the Article.
 - c. If the Motion is seconded, the Moderator will recognize a member of the Board of Selectmen or the petitioner to explain the Article.
 - d. The Meeting will debate and then vote on the Article.
5. Everyone who speaks must use a microphone so they can be heard. (The Moderator will announce the location of the microphones in the Meeting room.) If a voter is unable to reach one of the stand-up microphones, the voter should raise his/her hand and one of the hand-held microphones will be provided.
6. No one may speak unless he or she has the floor.
 - a. No one may have the floor unless recognized by the Moderator.
 - b. Each speaker must provide his/her name and address.

- c. Even if a voter does not have the floor, a voter may speak to raise a Point of Order, to challenge a Moderator's ruling, or to overrule the Moderator.
7. The Moderator will allow only one motion on the floor at a time. There are two exceptions to this rule:
 - a. A voter may raise a Point of Order at any time, and
 - b. If a voter has the floor, the voter may make
 - i. A motion to amend the pending motion, or
 - ii. A motion to Call the Question.
8. The Moderator will not accept negative motions, which are motions that require a "no" vote to vote in the affirmative such as "I move that we not adopt the budget."
9. Motions to Call the Question and limit debate shall require a 2/3 vote. If passed, these motions stop debate on a motion. However, all those voters who are standing at a microphone or holding a microphone, and anyone seated at the head table who has previously told the Moderator that he/she wishes to speak on the Motion will be allowed to speak. In addition, the Moderator shall have the right to refuse to recognize a Motion to Call the Question, if, in the Moderator's opinion, the voters have not yet had an adequate opportunity to discuss an issue.
10. Non-voters may not speak at the Meeting without the permission of the voters except, the Moderator will allow non-resident Town officials and consultants or experts who are at the Meeting to provide information about an Article to speak.
11. All speakers must be courteous and must speak to the issues, not the individuals raising them. The Moderator will not allow personal attacks or inappropriate language.
12. If any person behaves in a disorderly manner, and after notice from the Moderator, persists in such behavior, or shall in any way disturb the meeting, or willfully violate any rule of proceeding, the Moderator may have a police officer, or any legal voter of the town, remove such person from the meeting. (RSA 40:8).
13. All questions and comments should be addressed to the Moderator. The Moderator will choose who responds to the questions.
14. With the exception of initial presentations on Articles which the Moderator requests be limited to ten (10) minutes, all speakers in debate will be limited to three (3) minutes.
15. Each speaker may only speak once until everyone has spoken.

16. The Moderator may determine the method of voting except as determined by law. However, any voter who doubts the accuracy of any non-counted vote may require the Moderator to determine a vote by a counted show of hands or counted standing vote.
17. Any vote on a bond issue of over \$100,000 must be voted on by secret ballot. In addition, any five (5) voters may require that the vote on any Article or question be by secret ballot. To do so:
 - a. All five (5) voters must be present and identified, and
 - b. The request must be presented in writing to the Moderator prior to the end of debate on the Article or question.
18. Motions to reconsider an Article may only be made immediately after the vote on the Article and may only be made by a voter who voted on the prevailing side of the vote to be reconsidered. However, the following limits may apply to the reconsideration of an Article:
 - a. **Mandatory Restriction:** In accordance with RSA 33:8-a, if a motion to reconsider a ballot vote on a bond issue of over \$100,000 passes, the Article cannot be reconsidered until a reconvened Meeting that is at least seven (7) days after the original vote. With respect to bond votes, the restriction on reconsideration automatically applies without the need for the Meeting to vote for it.
 - b. **Optional Restriction:** Voters may postpone reconsideration of any Article at this Meeting by voting to restrict reconsideration of the Article in accordance with RSA 40:10. If the Meeting passes such a motion, then the Article cannot be reconsidered until a reconvened meeting held at least seven (7) days after the date of the original vote.
 - c. **Reminder:** Since any rule of the Moderator or decision of the Meeting can be reversed or changed at any time prior to the end of the meeting by a majority vote of the Meeting, there is no rule that can be adopted that can absolutely prevent the reconsideration of an Article.
19. The Moderator may vote on all Articles. However, the Moderator plans to vote only in two (2) instances:
 - a. To break a tie
 - b. To make a vote a tie vote if a motion the Moderator opposes would otherwise carry by one (1) vote.
20. If the Meeting is not finished at 11:00, the Moderator reserves the right to recess the Meeting to a future date.

Derek D. Lick, Town Moderator