

## **BELMONT TOWN MEETING MODERATORS' RULES OF PROCEDURE**

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 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 and read it. The text of the Article will be available at the Meeting.
  - b. The Moderator will recognize a member of the Board of Selectmen/School Board or the petitioner to explain the Article.
  - c. Once an amendment is approved and/or discussion is complete the Moderator will move on to the next 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. Except for Points of Order, the Moderator will not recognize speakers unless they are standing at or holding one of the microphones.
  - c. Each speaker must provide his/her name and address.

- d. 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 limit debate and require a majority 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 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. Any voter who doubts the accuracy of any non-counted vote may require the Moderator determine a vote by a counted show of hands or counted standing vote.
17. 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. 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.

Alvin E. Nix, Jr., Belmont Town Moderator