Moderator's Rules of Procedure

2024 Town Deliberative Session

New Hampshire law authorizes the moderator to establish the deliberative session's Rules of Procedure and gives the voters the power to overrule the moderator's procedures.

The Moderator will manage the meeting according to these Rules to ensure a fair and orderly process.

1. Voters must check in with the clerk. Voters will receive a sticker to wear in the hall and a voting card.

2. Voters must hold up their cards to vote on motions. Except for a secret ballot, the moderator will only vote to break or create a tie.

3. Anyone wishing to speak must do so at the microphone in the center aisle. A "Point of order" may be called out, but the voter must ask their question at the microphone.

4. State your name and street address the first time you approach the microphone. For subsequent trips to the microphone, simply saying your name is sufficient.

5. Non-residents will be allowed to address the meeting after a favorable vote on a motion to enable them to speak.

6. Participants must address questions or comments to the moderator, not individual officials, committee members, or audience members.

7. The Moderator will take articles in the order they appear on the warrant unless a simple majority of the voters decide to change the order.

8. Except for presenters explaining proposed articles, speakers have a three-minute time limit. A speaker may make additional questions or comments on the article after all the other speakers in line have spoken.

9. We will discuss and vote on one amendment at a time.

10. Affirmative motions to "Call the question" limit debate and require a second and a two-thirds majority vote to pass. Anyone wishing to call the question must do so from the microphone. Speakers may not call the question immediately after addressing the issue.

11. Voters who are already in line and members of the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Advisory Committee who have already indicated their desire to speak will be permitted to address the meeting after the question is called.

12. The meeting may restrict subsequent reconsideration of a vote on an article-by-article basis. The motion to restrict reconsideration may be made any time after the original vote. After a successful vote to restrict its reconsideration, voters may not act on the article.

13. The motions to call the question and restrict a warrant article's reconsideration are not debatable. Upon a second, the moderator will ask for a vote by the meeting.

14. Voters may verbally propose an amendment to an article's dollar amount.

15. Voters proposing a change to an article's language must submit the text in writing.

    i. The operating budget article's text may not be changed except for the proposed dollar amount (RSA 40:13).

    ii. The language of a collective bargaining agreement article, including the dollar amounts of the proposed agreement, may not be changed (RSA 40:13).

16. A petition for a secret ballot on an article must be submitted to the moderator by at least five voters who are present. The request must come before the vote (RSA 40:4-a).

17. The moderator shall take a secret yes/no ballot vote when seven or more voters question any non-secret ballot vote immediately after the moderator declares the result and before any other business begins (RSA 40:4-b).

18. Five voters may request a recount of any secret yes/no ballot vote if the request is made immediately after the results are announced. Further, the moderator will order a recount immediately if the secret yes/no vote margin is less than 10% (RSA 40:4-a).

19. All speakers must be courteous and address the issues rather than the individuals who raise them. The moderator will not allow a speaker to engage in personal attacks, impugn an opponent's motives, or use inappropriate language.

20. The moderator may command a police officer or legal voter to remove from the meeting and detain any person conducting themselves in a disorderly manner (RSA 40:9).

21. Voters may overturn these Rules by a simple majority vote.

Peter R. Basiliere

Town Moderator