

POLICY ON TOWN MEETING WARRANT PREPARATION

**Adopted by the Board of Selectmen
November 18, 2008**

Pursuant to its duty under section 3-2(b)3 of the Town Charter to develop and promulgate policy guidelines designed to bring all Town Agencies into harmony, the Board of Selectmen adopts this policy with regard to the preparation and review of town meeting warrants. This policy is designed to coordinate the submission of petitions for warrant articles from town officers and multiple member bodies, and to ensure that such articles have been fully reviewed prior to publication in a warrant and accurately reflect their sponsor's intentions.

I. Annual Town Meeting Warrant

The Annual Town Meeting (ATM) is held the first Monday in May, pursuant to section 47-2 of the Town Bylaws. The ATM warrant will include articles regarding the current and upcoming fiscal year, general and zoning bylaw amendments, the annual town election, and any other matters of town business. The Board of Selectmen will no longer automatically schedule a Special Town Meeting (STM) to coincide with the ATM. All matters that have traditionally been addressed during the May STM should be submitted to the Board as petitions for inclusion in the ATM warrant.

To ensure that all ATM warrant articles have been fully reviewed prior to publication and accurately reflect their sponsor's intentions, the Board of Selectmen will adhere to the following procedures in compiling the ATM warrant:

A. ATM Planning Meeting

The Town Manager will convene a planning meeting 150 days before the ATM (approximately the first week in December) including all department heads and chairs of all multiple member bodies, to discuss any issues associated with preparing and reviewing proposed ATM warrant articles.

B. Review of Conceptual Warrant Articles by Town Counsel

Town officers and multiple member bodies may submit any conceptual or draft ATM warrant articles for review and comment by Town Counsel no later than 120 days before the ATM (approximately the first week in January).

C. Review of Proposed Warrant Articles by Town Counsel

Town officers and multiple member bodies will submit all proposed ATM warrant articles to Town Counsel no later than 90 days before the ATM (approximately the first week in February). Proposed ATM warrant articles should be submitted to Town Counsel in as close to their final form as possible, and should not be submitted as drafts, incomplete ideas, or placeholders. Town Counsel will review each proposed ATM warrant article and submit to each article's sponsor an approval or disapproval as to the form of the proposed article.

D. Petitions for ATM Warrant Articles

Pursuant to section 2-6(c) of the Town Charter and section 28-2 of the Town Bylaws, the Board of Selectmen will include in the ATM warrant the subject matter of a petition addressed to it by a town officer, multiple member body, or group of ten voters, if the Board has received the petition 60 days or more before the ATM.

With respect to town officers and multiple member bodies, the Board of Selectmen will accept any petition for an ATM warrant article that meets the following requirements:

1. The petition is accompanied by a completed ATM Warrant Article Petition Form;
2. The petition includes the specific language of the proposed warrant article, rather than incomplete or placeholder language;
3. The petition has been previously approved as to form by Town Counsel;
4. If the proposed warrant article involves a “capital expenditure,” as defined in section 5-21 of the Town Bylaws, the proposed capital expenditure has been previously submitted to the Capital Improvement Committee.

The Board of Selectmen will not recognize any petitions, submitted by Town officers and multiple member bodies that do not comply with these requirements.

E. Review of the ATM Warrant

Following the deadline for submission of petitions, the Town Manager will prepare a draft ATM warrant for final review by Town Counsel. Town Counsel will return a final ATM warrant to the Town Manger no later than 21 days before the ATM, to be included in the Town Report as required by section 28-2 of the Town Bylaws.

F. ATM Motions

No later than 10 days before the ATM, and prior to the Town Moderator’s Meeting, Town Counsel will submit to the Town Manager draft motions to be read by each article’s sponsor during the ATM. The Town Manager will circulate the draft motions for review by the Town Moderator and all warrant article sponsors. After receipt of any comments from the Town Moderator and warrant article sponsors, and no later than 5 days before the ATM, Town Counsel will submit the final ATM motions to the Town Manager.

G. Waiver

The Board of Selectmen reserves the right to waive some or all of these requirements at the Board’s sole discretion.

H. ATM Warrant Schedule

The Board sets forth the following schedule to facilitate the preparation and review of the ATM warrant, in compliance with the Town Charter, the Town Bylaws and this policy:

ATM Warrant Preparation and Review Schedule	
<u>Deadline:</u>	<u>Task:</u>
October 1 st	Town Manager issues budget schedule (Charter, §6-2a)
October 21 st	BoS issues budget policy statement (Charter, §6-2c)
3 rd Monday in November	Recommendations for Capital Improvement Program submitted to Capital Improvement Committee (Bylaws, §5-22)
150 days before ATM (1 st week in December)	ATM Planning Meeting of department heads and committee chairs (BoS Policy)
January 1 st	Department heads submit budget requests to Town Manager (Charter, §6-2d)
120 days before ATM (1 st week in January)	All conceptual and draft warrant articles submitted for review by Town Counsel (BoS Policy)
January 15	Town Manager submits Capital Improvement Program to BoS and Appropriations Committee (Charter, §6-3)
February 1	School Committee submits draft budget to Town Manager (Charter, §6-2d)
90 days before ATM (1 st week in February)	All proposed warrant articles submitted for approval by Town Counsel (BoS Policy)
March 1	Town Manager submits draft budget to BoS (Charter, §6-2e)
60 days before ATM (1 st week in March)	All petitions for warrant articles submitted to BoS (Charter, §2-6; Bylaws, §28-2; BoS refers all appropriation articles to Appropriations Committee (Bylaws, §5-5); Town Manager compiles and submits draft ATM warrant to Town Counsel (BoS Policy)
March 15	BoS adopts budget and submits to Appropriations Committee (Charter §6-2g)
21 days before ATM	Final ATM warrant prepared by Town Counsel and submitted to Town Manager (BoS Policy)
14 days before ATM	Town Report published (Charter, §2-3) including final ATM warrant (Bylaws, §28-2)
10 days before ATM, and prior to the Town Moderator's Meeting	Town Counsel submits draft ATM motions to the Town Manager; Town Manager circulates motions to Town Moderator and warrant article sponsors (BoS Policy)
10 days before ATM	Appropriations Committee issues town meeting recommendations (Charter, §6-2h)
8 days before ATM	ATM warrant posted (Bylaws, §47-1)
5 days before ATM	Town Counsel submits final ATM motions to the Town Manager (BoS Policy)
ATM: 1 st Monday in May	Bylaws, §47-2

II. Special Town Meeting Warrants

A Special Town Meeting (STM) may be called at any time by the Board of Selectmen or by a petition of 200 voters, pursuant to section 2-4 of the Town Charter.

A. Petitions for STM Warrant Articles

Pursuant to §2-6(d) of the Town Charter, the Board of Selectmen will include in the STM warrant the subject matter of a petition addressed to it by a town officer, multiple member body, or group of 200 voters, if the Board has received the petition on or before the close of the 10th business day following the Board's publication of its intention to hold a STM.

With respect to town officers and multiple member bodies, the Board of Selectmen will accept any petition for a STM warrant article that meets the following requirements:

1. The petition is accompanied by a completed STM Warrant Article Petition Form;
2. The petition includes the specific language of the proposed warrant article, rather than incomplete or placeholder language;
3. The petition has been previously approved as to form by Town Counsel;
4. If the proposed warrant article involves a "capital expenditure," as defined in section 5-21 of the Town Bylaws, the proposed capital expenditure has been previously submitted to the Capital Improvement Committee.

The Board of Selectmen will not recognize any petitions, submitted by Town officers and multiple member bodies that do not comply with these requirements.

Due to the short period of time between the Board of Selectmen's publication of its intention to call a STM and the deadline for the submission of petitions, article sponsors are encouraged to submit any proposed STM warrant articles to Town Counsel as soon as possible.

B. Review of the STM Warrant

Following the deadline for submission of petitions, the Town Manager will prepare a draft STM warrant for final review by Town Counsel. Town Counsel will return a final STM warrant to the Town Manger in a timely fashion to permit the posting of the warrant 14 days before the STM, pursuant to section 47-1 of the Town Bylaws.

C. STM Motions

No later than 10 days before the STM, and prior to the Town Moderator's Meeting, Town Counsel will submit to the Town Manager draft motions to be read by each article's sponsor during the STM. The Town Manager will circulate the draft motions for review by the Town Moderator and all warrant article sponsors. After receipt of any comments from the Town Moderator and warrant article

sponsors, and no later than 5 days before the STM, Town Counsel will submit the final STM motions to the Town Manager.

D. Waiver

The Board of Selectmen reserves the right to waive some or all of these requirements at the Board’s sole discretion.

E. STM Warrant Schedule

The Board sets forth the following schedule to facilitate the preparation and review of the STM warrant, in compliance with the Town Charter, the Town Bylaws and this policy:

STM Warrant Preparation and Review Schedule	
<u>Deadline:</u>	<u>Task:</u>
10 days after BoS publishes intention to call STM	All petitions for warrant articles submitted to the Board of Selectmen (Charter, §2-6(d))
14 days before STM	Final STM Warrant prepared by Town Counsel and submitted to the Town Manager (BoS Policy)
14 days before STM	STM Warrant posted (Bylaws, §47-1)
10 days before STM, and prior to the town Moderator’s Meeting	Town Counsel submits draft STM motions to the Town Manager; Town Manager circulates motions to Town Moderator and warrant article sponsors (BoS Policy)
5 days before STM	Town Counsel submits final STM motions to the Town Manager (BoS Policy)
STM	