

## Rules of Procedure for Pittsfield Town Meeting

By state law (RSA 40:4, I) the Moderator sets the rules and procedures of the meeting. We will not follow Robert's Rules of Order or any other complicated rules of parliamentary procedure. Instead, we will follow my rules in order to create a pleasant, productive, and efficient meeting. I cannot promise to run a perfect meeting, but I will do my best to run a fair meeting. Ultimately, though, this is your meeting. By majority vote, you can change my rules, or overrule any decision I make. That will take the form of a motion, a second, debate and a card vote. Such a motion will only be entertained in the first 15 minutes of the meeting on floor rules. A motion to override or amend a particular ruling must be made right after the ruling is made.

1. Only registered voters may speak unless a majority of the voters present decide otherwise. That will require a motion, second, debate and card vote.
2. Those wishing to be recognized should step up to the microphone and state your name and address. The only exception is for a voter calling a point of order, or a motion to overrule.
3. Only one person – the one recognized by the Moderator – may speak at any one time. Exception; see rule 2.
4. All speakers are expected to direct the debate to the Moderator, and no conversations directed to others on the floor will be allowed.
5. When you have the floor to speak, you should address only the issue under consideration or you may be ruled out of order
6. Comments should be limited to 3 minutes.
7. Second trips to the microphone cannot be made until everyone who wants to comment has had a turn.
8. The Moderator will not accept motions to “call the question” until, in his judgment, all have had a fair opportunity to express their views. Motions to Call the Question limit debate and require a 2/3 vote. If passed, these motions stop debate on a motion. However, all those voters who are standing at 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
9. The Moderator will not accept motions to “table” or “indefinitely postpone” an article. If citizens want to dispose of an article, they should simply vote the article down. This prevents the confusion of people having to vote positively to dispose of an article.
10. The Moderator will only accept motions to “pass over” an article if more than one article on the warrant addresses the same question, and then only for the purpose of not confusing a decision reached by the meeting.
11. Only one reconsideration of an article will be recognized.
12. Seven voters are required to question my ruling on the outcome of a vote. If a voice vote is questioned, we will have a card vote. If the vote remains in question, we will have a secret ballot. This must happen before any other business occurs.
13. 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.”
14. Any five (5) voters may require that the vote on any Article or question be by secret ballot. To do so: All five (5) voters must be present and identified. A legible written request for a secret ballot on a particular warrant article or other vote, must be submitted prior to

beginning the vote. Requests for a secret ballot may not be submitted prior to the beginning of the meeting.

15. Any vote on a bond issue of over \$100,000 must be voted on by secret ballot. Per statute, the polls must remain open for one(1) hour.
16. 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 on the article to be reconsidered.
17. 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.
18. In the event of a close vote, the Moderator may call for a count by the Supervisors of the Checklist. A voice vote will be allowed on a seconded motion to adjourn.
19. Breaking the rules will elicit a warning. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave or escorted from the meeting by a Police Officer.
20. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Criminal charges of Disorderly Behavior may be considered in egregious cases.

Fred Okrent, March 2017, with thanks to Art Morse and the moderators of Bow and Brookfield.