

**MODERATOR'S RULES OF PROCEDURE**  
**2023 GOFFSTOWN TOWN DELIBERATIVE SESSION**

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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. These Rules of Procedure are how the moderator will manage the meeting, in the absence of any challenges to these rules, to ensure a fair and orderly process.

**1. Registered Voters and Voting Cards**

- 1.1. Registered Voters must check-in with the Supervisors of the Checklist.
- 1.2. Voters have been given a voting card at the checklist tables. Please make sure you sign your card. If you leave before the meeting ends, you will be asked to return these cards.
- 1.3. Voting cards must be displayed during a standing vote.
- 1.4. If we have a written ballot, you need to show your voting card.

**2. Speaking and Asking Questions During the Deliberative Session**

- 2.1. Anyone wishing to speak must do so at one of the microphones.
- 2.2. All speakers at the microphone must display their voting card. 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.
- 2.3. Participants must address questions or comments to the moderator, not individual officials, committee members, or audience members.
- 2.4. Except for presenters explaining proposed articles, speakers have a three-minute time limit. If the speaker asks a question, one follow-up question is allowed before stepping away from the microphone. A speaker may make additional questions or comments on the article after all the other speakers in line have spoken.
- 2.5. All speakers must be courteous and must address the issues, not the individuals who raise them. The moderator will not allow personal attacks or inappropriate language.

**3. Amendments**

- 3.1. The purpose of the Annual Warrant is to place the "subject matter" before the voters. This Deliberative Session allows the same range of possible amendments which voters have always had under the traditional town meeting system.
- 3.2. Proposed amendments must be moved to the floor and seconded before any discussion of the proposed amendment will be allowed.
- 3.3. All amendments must be presented to the moderator in writing. Forms are available for this purpose.
- 3.4. Amendments must relate to the general subject matter of the article. Substantive amendments not relating to the article's subject matter will be ruled out of order and will not be accepted by the moderator.
  - 3.4.1. Voters may propose an amendment to an article's dollar amount.
  - 3.4.2. Voters proposing a change to an article's language must submit the text in writing.
    - 3.4.2.1. The operating budget article's text may not be changed except for the proposed dollar amount (RSA 40:13).
    - 3.4.2.2. The language of a collective bargaining agreement article, including the dollar amounts of the proposed agreement, may not be changed (RSA 40:13).
- 3.5. We will discuss and vote on one amendment at a time.
- 3.6. Following the discussion on the proposed amendment, a vote will be taken on the amendment. Following the vote on the amendment, discussion will resume on the main article.

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**4. Voting**

- 4.1. **Standing Vote** - a voting card which must be displayed during a standing vote.
- 4.2. **Request for Written Secret Ballot** – Forms are available for this purpose.
  - 4.2.1. Prior to a voice or standing vote on a proposed amendment, five (5) registered voters may make a request, in writing, for a written secret ballot. These five voters must be present at the meeting when the vote is taken. (RSA 40:4-a)
  - 4.2.2. Once a voice vote has been taken or a standing vote is underway, a written request for a secret written ballot may be made. This request must be made by seven (7) registered voters who are present at the meeting, before any other business is begun. (RSA 40:4-b)
  - 4.2.3. If we have a written ballot, you need to show your voting card. The card will be initialed by the ballot clerk as you are handed your ballot.
  - 4.2.4. All written ballots which are cast must be whole. If a cast ballot is torn, ripped, or crumpled up, it will not be counted. You may fold your ballot if you wish, but please do no more.
  - 4.2.5. Once the results of a secret ballot have been announced, five (5) registered voters may request a recount of any secret “yes-no” ballot vote. This request must be made immediately after the results are announced. Providing that the vote margin is not more than 10 percent of the total votes cast, the Moderator will order a recount (RSA 40:4-a).
- 4.3. **Tie Vote** - In the case of a tie vote, it is recognized by voting authorities, most notably Roberts Rules of Order, that the Moderator protects his impartial position by exercising his voting right only when the vote would affect the outcome, in which case he can either vote, and thereby change the result, or he can abstain. Since a majority is necessary to pass a motion, the motion fails if the result of the vote is a tie.

**5. “The Previous Question”**

- 5.1. A parliamentary procedure which will apply to the conduct of this meeting. After an article, or a proposed amendment to an article, has been discussed, a voter may “move the previous question”.
- 5.2. This motion is not debatable. A "yes" vote on a motion to “move the previous question” means there will be no further discussion on the question. A simple majority vote is required to pass the previous question and thus end the debate.

**6. Motion for Reconsideration**

- 6.1. A motion for reconsideration can only be made by a person who voted with the prevailing side. It may be seconded by anyone.
- 6.2. The motion for reconsideration can be made on any article previously acted upon while the session is still in progress. (see Motion to Restrict Reconsideration below)
- 6.3. This motion is debatable and requires a simple majority for passage.

**7. Motion to Restrict Reconsideration**

- 7.1. A motion to restrict reconsideration may be made with respect to any vote taken at this meeting, or any warrant article previously considered at the meeting.
- 7.2. This motion is not debatable and requires a simple majority for passage.
- 7.3. A vote at the deliberative session to restrict reconsideration is deemed to prohibit further action on the restricted article at the deliberative session.

**8. Voters may overturn any of these Rules by a simple majority vote.**

(signed) Rodney L. Stark  
Town Moderator