

Rules of Procedure for Lynnfield Town Meeting

The purpose of Town Meeting is to establish and update the by-laws, operational policies, budgets and land use rules that govern our Town. Lynnfield's Open Town Meeting has been in force as our form of government since 1782. It represents the purest form of democracy in that every vote truly counts. Each registered voter is guaranteed an equal voice in the decisions made by the Meeting. These rules are historically based on the traditions established by generations of Lynnfield citizens and by other New England communities, acting as legislators of their local governments.

Specific parliamentary rulings and conduct are governed by the Moderator, using Massachusetts General Laws, the Lynnfield Charter, Lynnfield By-Laws, Robert's Rules of Order and local tradition. The passing of each Town Meeting adds to the rich history – and changes – to that practice and tradition that helps guide future Moderators and meetings.

Town Meetings across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are similar, but not identical, in the manner in which they are conducted. Local traditions can significantly affect a town's proceedings and help define the role and latitude of the Moderator. At Lynnfield Town Meetings we will endeavor to present all necessary information in an efficient and timely manner so that the most clarity can be afforded to voters, enabling them to make informed decisions. Voters, in turn, have a unique responsibility. Not only must they express, by vote, the decisions made based upon their own judgment and perspective, but also be cognizant of the effect their vote and/or decision has on all citizens of Lynnfield.

Last day to register to vote for this Town Meeting is **October 2nd**.

For the last several years, Lynnfield has been using Electronic Check – in as you arrive for Town Meeting. Five poll pads are used and each one has the same identical “voters list” which allows you to check in at any station. The voter's name is checked off by using the address and last name. You also have the option of presenting your driver's license but not required. The list is live on all poll pads which prevent someone else from checking in under your name.

Resolution: There are ten simple rules of procedure for Lynnfield Town Meeting

1. The first action required after the announcement of any Article on the Meeting's Warrant is that a main motion be proposed. The citizen sponsor of an article, Town Board sponsor, or Town Board with an affirmative recommendation, are likely movers of a main motion. The initial motion for the Town budget will be made by the Board of Selectmen. Any Town Board or voter may amend the motion for consideration and deliberation of the meeting. All motions must be seconded by a voter other than the person offering the motion and only then can discussion and debate begin.
2. Any voter wishing to address the meeting must first gain the attention of the Moderator when no other speaker has the floor. Public microphones are to be utilized, where a speaker seeking to be recognized, being courteous to others and those next in line, will raise their hand to inform the Moderator. Speakers must introduce themselves using their full name and street address each time speaking at a session of Town Meeting.
3. Once recognized by the Moderator, a speaker is given a turn to speak for up to three (3) minutes, (Article IV, § 45-6 of Chapter 45), and must address the meeting on only the article currently under discussion. Voters not doing so or speaking in a disrespectful fashion may be suspended from speaking on the matter at the discretion of the Moderator. Additional time can be granted by assent of the meeting. Questions are welcome, as well as statements endorsing or opposing a position.

4. All remarks should be addressed to and through the Moderator, for the benefit of all attendees. Direct questioning of others is not permitted. Questions may be directed, through the Moderator, to any petitioner, speaker or official and, if determined germane by the Moderator, the person asked will have the immediate opportunity to answer should they choose.
5. Please refrain from inappropriate applause or negative responses during discussions.
6. Keeping remarks brief and relevant shows respect for the value of your neighbors' time. The most persuasive statements at Town Meeting are often those succinctly stated, disclosing new facts or arguments in an effort to advance a position while retaining the audience's full attention.
7. An amendment changing or limiting the main motion can be offered during the course of debate. The Moderator may rule an amendment out of order if it is beyond the scope of the warrant article. The Moderator will redirect the discussion to consider the proposed amendment once it is properly before the meeting. The party proposing such motion shall concisely state, to the meeting, the consequence of the amendment on the existing main motion and/or article being considered. Should further reference or context be necessary to provide the meeting with full understanding of the amendment, then this shall be allowed at the Moderator's discretion.
8. Votes are recorded by electronic clicker. The two buttons that are utilized on the clicker are #1 and #2. To Vote YES press #1. To Vote NO press #2. The last vote that is entered will be registered as your vote. Voting is open for 20 seconds upon the Moderator calling for a vote.
9. There may be no distribution of handouts, signage or other collateral within the confines of the meeting place at any time, whether while gathering together or during conduct of the Town Meeting. Handouts or other illustrative materials may be distributed, outside the meeting hall, upon the permission of the Moderator for informational purposes only.

For anyone who has submitted a citizen's petition that is included on the meeting warrant, Lynnfield's by-laws allows for presentations – in favor of and opposed to the article. For anyone wishing to make a presentation, you first must contact the Moderator for permission. Please also refer to Lynnfield's bylaw Article IV, Section 45- 5 of Chapter 45.

10. Any person who has a **personal financial interest** in an article under discussion shall make a disclosure of that interest before speaking. The employment, whether paid or unpaid, of any person acting as an attorney, engineer, architect, land surveyor, broker, consultant, agent or in any other capacity by a person interested in the article under discussion, shall be disclosed before that person speaks. Being an **abutter** to a project constitutes having a financial interest in an article before town meeting. Violations of such disclosure, or refusal to disclose the required information, is on the honor system, but it may result in revocation of the speaker's right to be heard on the matter then before Town Meeting. Disclosure is not generally required of voters who are utilizing and/or are beneficiaries of Town services such as, for example, public safety, public works and public utilities, or parents of children in public schools. However, if the speaker has a personal financial interest beyond what is reasonably available to all eligible citizens, disclosure is required.
 - a. Definitions:
 - i. **Personal Financial Interest:** A benefit of gaining or losing personal monetary value from a decision on an article.
 - ii. **Abutter:** An abutter is defined as a property directly adjacent to the subject property, and a property directly across the road to the subject property.