

How do I Address Town Meeting?

A Town Meeting member desiring to address Town Meeting shall raise his/her hand and wait for the Moderator to recognize him/her. The town helpers on the floor will bring the microphone to the Town Meeting member wishing to speak. Once the microphone is handed over, the speaker must state his/her full name and street address for the record. The speaker can then discuss the matter at hand, or ask for information. The speaker must yield the microphone back to the helper upon completion of his/her question or discussion.

Debate under the motion is limited to the subject matter at hand. If the speaker's comments or question are not within the bounds of the motion being discussed, the Moderator will indicate that the comments are not in order and ask the speaker to keep the comments on topic. During debate, the speaker is required to address the Moderator and not other members of Town Meeting. For example, do not say, "I have something to say to the Town Meeting," or "Mr. Smith, you said something as a Town Meeting Member that I want to respond to." Instead, say something like, "Madame Moderator, these are my thoughts on this article" or "I support this article because... ."

What is "A Motion to Move the Previous Question"?

A motion to "Move the Previous Question" is a request to end all debate and to move directly to a vote on the article.

Some Warrant articles are controversial and require considerable deliberation before being voted upon. Nevertheless, discussion may reach a point when little, if any, new light is being shed on the subject. When that appears to be the case, the Moderator will customarily remind Town Meeting of the length of time already devoted to the deliberation and will encourage those still wishing to be heard to limit their remarks to points not already made.

If a Town Meeting Member feels enough debate has been heard, the member can proceed to "Move the Previous Question." This motion may be made only by a person recognized by the Moderator, and may not interrupt a speaker who already has the floor. A motion to terminate debate must be seconded, and requires a 2/3 vote for passage. It may not be debated, amended, or reconsidered.

A voter who moves the question must do only that and no more. The mover may not first offer views on the substance of the main motion and then request the Motion to Move the Previous Question.

If the Moderator feels that fairness requires that proponents or opponents should have some additional time to make their case before debate ends, the Moderator has the right to rule that the Motion to Move the Question is out of order. This is a judgment call by the Moderator, made in the interest of fairness and a full presentation of the subject.

How do I Amend a Motion?

During discussion, Town Meeting Members can make a Motion to Amend on any main motion. The amendment may consist of adding, deleting or substituting words in the motion to be amended. This Motion may be made only by a person recognized by the Moderator. The amendment must be relevant to the motion currently under consideration and submitted in written form to the Moderator. The Moderator will then declare the Motion to Amend is in order and will call for a second on the Motion to Amend. If there is no second, the Motion to Amend fails. If a second is given, the Moderator will ask for a Motion to Stop Debate on the main article in order to discuss the amendment. Once discussion of the amendment is complete, the Moderator will ask for a vote on the amendment. A majority of Town Meeting is required to pass the amendment. If the amendment passes, Town Meeting will then resume discussion of the main motion *as amended*. If the amendment fails, discussion resumes on the main article.

What if I think that the Moderator did not decide correctly a vote by show of hands?

Stand immediately and say one of the following: “Madame Moderator, I doubt the vote,” or “I question it.” If at least six other voters stand with you, the Moderator will count votes more formally, pursuant to town by-laws.

What if I want a secret ballot?

Ordinarily, vote is taken by a show of hands unless the Moderator or the Bylaws of Granby specify otherwise. However, a Town Meeting Member may request a secret ballot at any time after a motion is presented by making a motion to “Fix the Method of Voting to Secret Ballot.” This motion may be made only by a person recognized by the Moderator. This motion must be seconded and requires a majority vote from Town Meeting for passage.