

**Excerpts from Norfolk Bylaw ARTICLE I: TOWN MEETINGS and ELECTIONS  
SECTION 7: Town Meeting Procedure.**

**D. Regulations for Addressing Town Meeting.**

**1. Conduct of Speakers.** Every person when about to speak shall rise, respectfully address the Moderator and wait until recognized by the Moderator, and in speaking shall address all comments to the Moderator, shall confine him/herself to the question under consideration and avoid personal attacks, inappropriate language, or uncivil conduct of any type. The Moderator may cut off any speaker who fails to adhere to this code of conduct. No person shall address the meeting without first being recognized by the Moderator and all persons shall, at the request of the Moderator, be silent.

**2. Equal Opportunity for Debate.** Unless otherwise approved by the Moderator, (a) no person shall speak more than twice on any motion except to correct a mistake or misstatement, or to answer a question, or to raise a Point of Order; (b) no person shall speak more than five minutes the first time they speak on any article and more than three minutes the second or subsequent time they speak on that article; (c) no person may yield their speaking time to another person; and (d) except to answer a question or to raise a Point of Order, no person shall speak for a second time on any motion until all persons wishing to speak for a first time on that motion have been recognized. Any persons who desire to make lengthy presentations or use audio-visual aids are strongly encouraged to attend the Organizational Meeting and disclose such intentions to the Moderator

**3. Speaking by Non-Voters.** Unless approved by the Moderator, non-voters shall not address Town Meeting except as follows:

a. A full-time employee who is a Department Head or who is the designated spokesman of a Department Head may address the Town Meeting prior to any action on any article which has been sponsored by or directly affects his/her department notwithstanding his or her domicile or citizenship.

b. A consultant or other expert retained by a department, board, commission, committee or elected official may address the Town Meeting prior to any action on any article related to the service performed by said consultant or other expert notwithstanding his/her domicile or citizenship.

c. Any appointed commission, board or committee member, may address the Town Meeting prior to any action on any article which has been

sponsored by or directly affects his/her commission, board or committee, notwithstanding his/her domicile or citizenship. ( 5/27/97)

#### **4. Limiting Debate.**

Any motion to move the question or cut off debate shall require a two-thirds vote and is not debatable or amendable. Acceptance of this motion is in the sole discretion of the Moderator, except the Moderator shall refuse to accept a motion to move the question or cut off debate (a) when made by a speaker after said speaker has made any remarks concerning the merits of the question then pending or (b) if the Moderator deems the motion to be premature.

#### **E. Voting Procedures at Town Meeting.**

When a two-thirds (2/3) vote of town meeting is required by statute, the Moderator shall make public declaration of the vote and a count need not be taken. The Moderator will count the vote any time it appears that a voice vote is too close to call. If any vote declared is immediately questioned by seven (7) or more voters, the Moderator shall verify it by polling the voters.

#### **F. Motions.**

The Advisory Committee shall provide the Town Clerk all main motions in writing, or electronically, 24 hours before any Annual or Special Town Meeting, excepting only motions that are still under review or pending advice from Town Counsel. All other motions, including, but not limited to, Motions to Amend a previous Motion, shall be submitted in writing, unless otherwise allowed by the Moderator. A motion may be withdrawn by the mover. No motion to dissolve a Town Meeting shall be in order until every article in the Warrant has been duly acted upon at the meeting.

#### **G. Motions to Reconsider.**

At any Annual or Special Town Meeting or any adjournment thereof, a motion to reconsider any article on the Warrant may be made only once and must be made within two articles and at the same session on which the article was voted. (5/8/81/ Amended 5/3089)

#### **H. Committee Reports.**

Committee Reports shall be limited to five minutes unless otherwise approved by the Moderator at the Organizational Meeting.

*(Compiled by Daniel B. Winslow, Town Moderator)*