

RULES TO REGULATE
THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING
OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD

The following shall be the rules to regulate the proceedings of the Representative Town Meeting for the current session and all subsequent sessions, as amended.

The Moderator

1. The Moderator shall assume the podium on each meeting day, usually the fourth Monday of each month at the hour to which the Meeting stands adjourned. The Moderator shall, thereupon, call the Meeting to order and after the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence, if a quorum is present, proceed to business.
2. In the absence of a quorum, the Moderator may adjourn the Meeting to the next month or impose rule number 36. At all other times, an adjournment shall be pronounced by the Moderator on motion, excepting rule number 26, which shall be considered a recess.
3. The Moderator shall preserve order and decorum and shall decide all questions of order, upon which no debate shall be allowed except at the Moderator's request; but the Moderator's decision shall be subject to an appeal to the Meeting, which must be seconded and upon which no member shall speak more than once. No other business shall be in order until such appeal is disposed of.
4. If there is any disturbance, disorderly conduct or other activity in or about the Meeting Hall which, in the opinion of the Moderator may impede the orderly transaction of the business of the Meeting, the Moderator may take such action as the Moderator deems necessary to preserve and restore order.
5. At each annual organizational meeting, the duly elected Moderator shall, during the introductory comments, forewarn the members of their obligations to:
 - a) ethics
 - b) conduct
 - c) Freedom of Information Act matters
 - d) conflicts of interest

The Clerk

6. The Town Clerk, or his or her designee, shall be the clerk of the Meeting and shall maintain accurate minutes, but not verbatim transcripts, of each meeting and distribute such to each member by mail, with the Warning of the next meeting.
7. Regarding attendance at Town Meetings, any member appearing after the roll has been called shall make such fact known to the Clerk. The Clerk shall preserve a permanent record of attendance. Any Representative who leaves the Meeting prior to adjournment shall notify the Clerk.
8. All items to be included in the Warning of a regular monthly Meeting must be received in the Clerk's office at or before 10:00 A.M. on the fourteenth day preceding the meeting. Supplemental Warnings are permitted at the discretion of the Clerk. Upon direction of the Moderator, resolutions shall be assigned to the appropriate standing or special committees.

The Warning shall be sent by mail at least five days before the meeting and a copy of such notice shall be published in a newspaper having circulation in the Town. Committees to which each item is referred shall be included, along with the sponsors of each resolution, ordinance or other item (except honorary resolutions).

Members

9. If any member transgresses the rules of order, the Moderator shall, and any member may, call the transgressor to order and, if speaking, the transgressor shall sit down unless permitted to explain.
10. Each member, having been elected to a position of trust, is obligated to represent the constituents to the best of the member's ability, but shall not vote on a question which the member or member's spouse, or any relative of the member whether living in the same household or not, has a direct personal interest or any pecuniary interest not common to the other members of this body, and the member alone has the right to determine whether this obligation can be fulfilled by participating in or abstaining from a vote on any question before this body.

Committees and Members

11. There shall be five standing committees, each of which shall consist of one-fifth of the body, equal in number, and each Representative shall serve on one committee but not more than two standing committees. The membership of each committee shall, as closely as practical, reflect the proportional representation of the minority and majority of the meeting as a whole. Notwithstanding, the foregoing minority representation shall be at least two members on each committee. The standing committees shall be as follows:
- a) A committee on Education and Recreation shall have cognizance of and report to the Meeting on all matters relating to elementary, secondary, and adult-education items, libraries and recreation.
 - b) A committee on Finance which shall have cognizance of and report to the Meeting on all matters relating to finance and issuance of notes and bonds.
 - c) A committee on Public Health and Safety which shall have cognizance of and report to the Meeting on all matters relating to public health, social services, police and fire safety.
 - d) A committee on Legislation and Administration which shall have cognizance of and report to the Meeting on all matters relating to labor settlements, property conveyances, leases, legal matters, ordinances, contractual items and board, commission, and committee appointments.
 - e) A committee on Public Works and Planning which shall have cognizance of and report to the Meeting on all matters relating to public works, parks, marinas, utilities and town planning, including those in which the town is regionally involved.

In addition to the above responsibilities, at the Meeting immediately preceding the annual Budget Meeting, each committee shall present a report on the budget items for which it is responsible.

12. The RTM shall have the power to appoint special committees as it shall determine necessary. The membership of standing committees and special committees shall be chosen by a special legislative management committee (Committee on Committees) to consist of two members of the minority party and three members from the majority party. In the event that no majority or minority party exists as composed, the Committee on Committees shall consist of two members from each of the two parties with the highest number of members and one member as selected by the first selectman. Terms of assignment shall coincide with the Members' terms of office as Meeting members. Special committees shall report to the body as a whole, as appropriate.

13. A quorum of a committee is a simple majority. A committee shall take no action unless a quorum is present. Members of the public may speak on each item upon such terms and conditions as the chairman shall impose.
14. A Standing Committee may hold an item in committee by a vote of two-thirds of the members present. At any subsequent Meeting the item may be taken from the committee by a vote of two-thirds of the members present. Any item taken from the Committee shall be immediately placed before the meeting.
15. Standing committee reports to referred items on the Warning or elsewhere, shall be in writing and include only the votes of those members attending the committee meeting. Committee reports shall recognize by name those members present and absent. No report of a committee vote shall be changed once a committee meeting has been adjourned. The absence of a committee report shall not delete the item on the Warning. Reports and filing thereof shall be in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Minority reports may be filed immediately following the respective majority report.

Regular Order of Business

16. The regular order of business shall be as follows:
 - a) Roll Call
 - b) Pledge of Allegiance - Moment of Silence
 - c) Approval of Minutes of the previous meeting
 - d) Honorary Resolutions
 - e) Consent Calendar (Rule No. 22)
 - f) Business on the Warning
 - g) Old Business
 - h) Committee Reports (not related to the Warning)
 - i) New Business
 - j) Adjournment

Within the above listing and concerning the order of Business on the Warning, the Clerk of the Meeting shall list Commission appointment resolutions first followed by other resolutions received by the Clerk in the order received at the Clerk's office.

17. Special meetings may be held whenever the First Selectman, Chairman of the Board of Finance or Moderator shall deem them necessary and a special meeting shall also be held within ten days after the submission to the Town Clerk of a written application signed by one percent of the electors of the Town or upon petition by ten members of the body.
18. This body shall, with all proper decorum, receive the First Selectman or designee for the purpose of hearing the State of the Town message at the regularly scheduled meeting in January. This item shall immediately follow the moment of silence.

19. When so established by a higher body, no resolution or ordinance that conflicts with the laws of the nation, the state, or the town's Charter shall become effective. Ordinances approved by this Meeting shall either be absent of conflict with existing ordinances or shall include repeal of the existing ordinance. This body may not alter the regulations of any other town body duly constituted under the town Charter unless authorized by the Charter or State Statutes.
20. When the meeting place permits, Meeting members shall be seated in the center section of the assembly. Town officials, Board and Commission members shall be seated to the Moderator's right side. Members of the general public shall be seated to the Moderator's left side.
21. Members of the public may speak once on each item upon such terms and conditions as the Moderator shall impose. Speakers addressing a resolution properly before the body shall identify themselves and use one of the microphones available.

Parliamentary Practice

22. With the unanimous approval of each committee having a quorum present, resolutions before that committee or committees will be placed on a Consent Calendar for concurrent voting at the Meeting without debate. Within Committee a resolution may be amended but when put, must also receive unanimous approval if it is to be placed on the Consent Calendar. The Consent Calendar shall be in the possession of the Meeting, upon pronouncement by the Moderator that the Resolution Numbers ___ and ___, meeting the above requirements, have been received from the Committees without amendment or as amended. The Moderator shall read the resolution(s) as amended. Proposed ordinances shall not be placed on the Consent Calendar.

Any member may have the Consent Calendar divided for purposes of debating and/or voting.

23. No debate shall be allowed after an item is put to a vote by the Moderator and while it remains undecided.
24. For all resolutions on the Warning and subsequent amendments thereto, excepting unanimous votes, the Moderator and the Clerk shall record for the minutes individual member votes as yea (yes), nay (no) or abstention as imposed by Connecticut General Statutes. At the discretion of the Moderator or in the event that one third of the members present and voting request a roll call vote, it shall be so taken. The Clerk will ask on a positive vote who are the members voting in the negative, and shall so record their names.

25. No member may change his vote on a roll call after the vote has been announced by the Moderator.
26. During any Meeting, the majority and minority leader may each call for one 10 minute recess, without the need for a vote, for the purpose of holding a political caucus.

Rules and Motions

27. Unless an item is initiated by the electors of the Town pursuant to Article IV Section 4.3C of the Charter adopted by the electors on November 7, 2006, all business conducted at any Meeting shall be initiated by the a resolution which shall be in writing by a Meeting member, including ex-officio members, signed by the sponsor and seconded by a non-ex-officio Meeting member.
28. Before any resolution is received by the body, a brief statement of its objective shall be made by the sponsor.
29. When a motion is made, it shall be restated to the Meeting by the Moderator before any debate is held thereon, and every motion shall be reduced to writing if the Moderator so directs or any members requests it.
30. When a motion is restated by the Moderator it shall be deemed to be in the possession of the Meeting. It may, however, be withdrawn by the mover at any time prior to decision or amendment.
31. If any question under debate consists of two or more independent propositions any Member may have the same divided.
32. All proposed ordinances shall initially be referred to the Committee on Legislation and Administration and thereafter to any appropriate standing or special committee as referred by the Moderator for consideration. All proposed ordinances subsequently shall be formally listed on the Warning for two Meetings and discussed by appropriate committees prior to each Meeting as provided herein.
33. Any matter not on the Warning for a meeting except: a) honorary resolutions and b) matters previously held in committee, may be discussed at such meeting but shall not be acted or voted upon until the resolution stands over one meeting. The body may, by a majority vote, limit the time to be allotted for such discussion.

34. When an item is before the Meeting, no motion shall be received except:

- a) To adjourn.
- b) To recess.
- c) To lay on the table.
- d) To call the previous question if the public has had a chance to speak to it.
- e) To close the debate at a specified time but permitting public comment.
- f) To postpone to a specific time.
- g) To commit to a committee.
- h) To amend.
- i) To postpone indefinitely.

35. The rules of parliamentary practice found in the latest edition of General Robert's Rules of Order shall govern procedures and protocol of the Meeting except as otherwise specifically provided by any rules or Freedom of Information Act now governing the conduct of the RTM or hereafter adopted. The same rules shall apply to standing committee meetings, however, a quorum need not be present to review, receive public comment, and debate an item.

Suspension of the Rules

36. In order to give all items on the Meeting agenda equal and proper consideration, the Moderator of the Meeting will not start any item after 11:00 PM. No agenda item or any matter which may be presented to said Meeting, and which may be properly acted upon under the rules of the Meeting shall be discussed after 11:30 PM. If not waived, any item not completed or voted upon at any scheduled meeting shall be continued to the next day at the same place and starting time.

37. These rules shall not be amended except by the concurrent vote of at least two-thirds of the members present. No amendment to these rules however, shall be acted upon which shall not have been laid over for at least one meeting or which shall not have been specifically in the Warning as part of the business to be transacted at such meeting.

38. Motions to suspend the rules shall be in order during any meeting. Suspensions of the rules shall be for a specified purpose. The Freedom of Information Act shall be adhered to during suspension.

Sense of the Meeting

39. An advisory resolution is defined as any "sense of the meeting" resolution or any other resolution which does not exercise a power conferred on the Meeting by the Charter or State Law. No advisory resolution shall pass except upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of those present.