

Panel of Moderator's Common Set of Procedures for Conducting a Town Meeting Hebron, Connecticut

Purpose

These procedures establish a consistent framework for conducting Town Meetings in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes, applicable local ordinances, and the Town Charter. They are intended to promote fairness, transparency, orderly deliberation, and public participation.

1. Call to Order

The Moderator shall:

The Moderator appointed pursuant to Section 305 of the Charter shall call the meeting to order at the designated time and location. If the Moderator is absent or unable to serve, the Alternate Moderator appointed pursuant to that Section shall be Moderator at the meeting.

Announce that a legal notice of the meeting has been published.

Request that all attendees silence electronic devices.

2. Roll Call/Registration

Each participant will sign in when entering the meeting room (name and address).

Qualifications will be verified by Registrars of Voters and/or Town Clerk.

Determine and announce whether a quorum exists. (Quorum is equal to at least 0.5% (0.005) of the electors of the Town as determined from the latest official list of the Registrars of Voters.)

3. Reading of the Call

The Town Clerk shall read or summarize the official warning or call of the meeting, including each item of business to be considered.

Announce that only business contained in the published legal notice may be acted upon or discussed.

Review basic meeting procedures and expectations for decorum.

4. In Absence of Appointed Moderators

If the previously appointed Moderator (and Alternate Moderator) is absent:

In the event that no Town Moderator is available the Town Council may appoint a qualified elector to serve as Special Moderator at a particular meeting.

5. Rules of Order

Unless superseded by the Town Charter or Connecticut law:

Meetings shall be conducted under Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised as a guide. In the event of a conflict between Robert's Rules of Order and these procedures, these procedures shall control.

The Moderator may apply simplified parliamentary procedure when appropriate.

6. Presentation of Resolution/Motion

Each resolution/motion shall be considered separately.

For each resolution/motion:

Resolution/motion is presented.

Resolution/motion receives a second.

If appropriate, Staff, Board, Commission, or Committee presents the recommendation.

Questions of clarification.

Comment.

Vote.

7. Recognition to Speak

Any eligible voter recognized by the Moderator may speak.

Speakers shall:

- State their name and address for the record.
- Speak only after recognition.
- Confine remarks to the pending resolution/motion.
- Avoid personal attacks or disruptive behavior.

The Moderator may establish reasonable time limits (for example, three to five minutes per speaker).

8. Resolution/Motions

Only one main resolution/motion may be pending at a time.

Common resolution/motions include, but are not limited to:

- Main Resolution/Motion
- Postpone/Recess
- Table
- Previous Question (Close Comment)
- Recess
- Adjourn

9. Amendments

Amendments shall be allowed if the Moderator determines it is germane to the resolution/motion on the floor.

Shall be voted upon before the main resolution/motion.

The Moderator may request amendments in writing.

10. Discussion on Pending Motions

The Moderator shall:

- Alternate speakers when practical.
- Encourage balanced discussion.
- Ensure all remarks are directed through the Moderator.

The Moderator may:

- Rule remarks out of order.
- Require speakers to remain germane.
- Maintain civility.

11. Closing Comments

Comments may end by:

- Determination by the Moderator that no further discussion is required.
- A motion to close discussion/call the question is made and passed.

Once discussion is closed, the pending motion should be announced immediately prior to the vote.

12. Voting Methods

Unless otherwise required by law or Charter, votes may be taken by one of the following methods at the discretion of the Moderator or as selected by motion and decision by the body:

- Voice Vote
- Show of Hands
- Paper Ballot Vote - A Town Meeting vote on any matter on the call of the Town Meeting shall be by paper ballot if more than 20% of present and qualified voters vote to require that the matter on the call be decided by a paper ballot vote.

The Moderator announces the result.

If the result is unclear, the Moderator may order another vote.

13. Voting Eligibility

Only persons legally entitled to vote at Town Meeting under Connecticut law and the Town Charter may vote. Eligibility to Vote CGS 7-6

The Moderator or Registrars of Voters may request verification of eligibility.

14. Public Conduct

Persons shall:

- Maintain order.
- Avoid interrupting speakers.
- Refrain from abusive, threatening, or disruptive conduct.

The Moderator may:

- Issue warnings.
- Order removal of disruptive individuals when necessary to preserve order and summons the assistance of law enforcement necessary.
- Adjourn meeting.

15. Points of Order

Any voter may raise a Point of Order.

The Moderator shall rule immediately.

16. Adjournment

When all warned business has concluded:

- Motion to adjourn.
- Second.
- Vote.

Moderator declares the meeting adjourned.

Moderator's General Authority

The Moderator is responsible for:

Preserving order.

Ensuring equal opportunity for comment.

Determining recognition of speakers.

Ruling on parliamentary questions.

Declaring voting results.

Interpreting these procedures subject to applicable law.

Order of Business (Suggested)

Call to Order

Reading of the Call

Determination of Quorum

Explanation of Procedures

Consideration of Resolutions/Motions

Adjournment

Guiding Principles - These procedures are intended to ensure:

Fairness

Transparency

Civility

Equal participation

Compliance with Connecticut law

Efficient conduct of Town Meeting business

If any provision of these procedures conflicts with the Connecticut General Statutes, the Town Charter, or applicable law, the law shall control.

HEBRON TOWN CHARTER – Chapter 3

Section 301General.

The Town Meeting shall have authority for final approval of those actions of the Town as hereinafter enumerated, and when considering such actions said meeting shall be deemed to be the legislative body of the Town. The Town Meeting shall also have legislative authority for all other matters not specifically enumerated hereinafter or enumerated in Section 402. All persons deemed to be eligible to vote in Town Meetings as prescribed in the C.G.S. shall be eligible to vote in Town Meetings called pursuant to this Charter. Said voters shall be eligible to vote in special referenda called pursuant to this Charter. No Town Meeting shall be called except pursuant to Section 303 and 304 of this Charter.

Section 302Town Meeting Procedure.

A.

All Town Meetings shall be called pursuant to C.G.S. § 7-3 by resolution of the Town Council, fixing the time and place of said meeting, notice of which shall be given at least five (5) days in advance by publication in a newspaper having a general circulation in the Town, and by posting a notice in a public place. All Town Meetings shall be called to order by the moderator selected to moderate said Town Meeting and all business shall be conducted pursuant to Section 305 of this Charter. The Town Clerk shall serve as clerk of all Town Meetings, but in the absence of the Town Clerk, the moderator shall appoint a clerk of the meeting. Any Town Meeting may be recessed from time to time as the interests of the Town may require, and the moderator may entertain a motion to recess such meeting.

B.

All actions taken at Town Meetings shall be by a majority vote of those present and qualified to vote providing that a quorum is present equal to at least 0.5% (0.005) of the electors of the Town as determined from the latest official list of the Registrars of Voters. Immediately upon calling the meeting to order, the moderator shall ascertain if a quorum is in attendance. If a quorum is present the meeting shall proceed. If a quorum is not present, the moderator shall recess the meeting to the same day of the next following week. If a quorum is present at the recessed meeting, the meeting shall proceed. If a quorum is not present at the subsequent Town Meeting, all matters on the call of the Town Meeting shall revert to the Town Council who shall have final authority over such matters.

A Town Meeting vote on any matter on the call of the Town Meeting shall be by paper ballot if more than 20% of present and qualified voters vote to require that the matter on the call be decided by a paper ballot vote.

Section 303 **Special Town Meetings.**

Special Town Meetings shall be called by the Town Council and shall follow Section 302 of this Charter for consideration of the following:

A.

The issuance of bonds and all other forms of financing (Refer to Section 910, Borrowing), the terms of which are in excess of one (1) year;

B.

Any supplemental appropriation which exceeds 2% (0.02) of the current year's Town and HBOE Budget limit set forth in Section 905B;

C.

With the exception of the acquisition of open space contained within a plan of subdivision approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission in accordance with Chapter 126 of the C.G.S., the acquisition or disposition of the fee title to real estate by the Town;

D.

The creation, consolidation, modification or abolition of any permanent Town Agency or department not otherwise provided for in this Charter, provided however, any newly created Town Agency or department shall come under the provisions contained in this Charter;

E.

Leases and lease options to which the Town, including the local Board of Education, is a party which involve a term or obligation in excess of one (1) year, excluding leases of personal property;

F.

Any appropriation from the Capital and Non-Recurring Expense Fund, not included in the annual budget, which exceeds 1% (0.01) of the current year's Town Government Budget, as defined in Section 105;

G.

The acceptance of any federal, state or private grant which participation shall require the Town to contribute funds in excess of 2% (0.02) of the current year's Town Government Budget, as defined in Section 105;

H.

The discontinuance of Town roads;

I.

The establishment of or changes to the geographical boundaries of voting districts;

J.

Such other matters or proposals as the Town Council, in their discretion, shall deem of sufficient importance to be submitted to a Special Town Meeting, including recommendations by the Town Council for the adoption, modification or repeal of any ordinance.

Section 304**Petitioned Town Meetings.**

A.

Two percent (0.02) of the electors of the Town, as determined by the latest official registry lists of the Registrars of Voters, may, at any time, petition over their signature for a Special Town Meeting concerning such matters provided for in Section 303C (except for a petition to purchase property), Section 303D and Section 303H of this Charter. Any such proposal may be examined by the Town Attorney before being submitted to a Special Town Meeting. The Town Attorney shall be authorized to correct the proposal for repetitions, illegalities and unconstitutional provisions, but may not materially change its meaning or intent.

B.

The Town Clerk shall, within seven (7) days of the receipt of the petition, report to the Town Council whether the petition yields sufficient valid signatures. If sufficient valid signatures are not found, the Clerk shall so notify the Town Council who shall declare the petition invalid. If sufficient signatures are found, the Town Council shall call a Special Town Meeting within thirty (30) days of such certification. The same procedures and requirements shall govern Petitioned Town Meetings as govern Special Town Meetings.

Section 305**Panel of Moderators.**

A.

There shall be a panel of Town Moderators, consisting of not more than four (4) members, no more than two (2) of whom shall be members of the same political party. The Panel of Moderators shall be appointed by the Town Council for a two-year term beginning on the first day of December of each Town election year. Each moderator shall be an elector of the Town and shall have a working knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order as well as Chapter III of the Hebron Town Charter. Following their appointment, the Moderators shall meet to draft a common set of procedures to be used at all Town Meetings, using Robert's Rules of Order as a guideline. Periodically, the Panel of Moderators may meet to discuss, and as necessary, revise, add or delete provisions to the common set of procedures.

B.

Not less than five (5) days prior to any Town Meeting, the Town Council shall appoint one of the members of the Panel of Moderators to preside as moderator of the forthcoming Town Meeting and one to serve as an alternate moderator. The Town Council shall exercise reasonable care in the selection of the moderators to avoid any conflict of interest. Prior to the Town Meeting the moderators may meet with the person or persons designated by the Town Manager to discuss procedures and conduct of the upcoming meeting. The Town Council shall appoint members of the Panel of Moderators on a rotational basis so that each shall act as moderator as nearly equal a number of times as possible. In the event that no Town Moderator is available the Town Council may appoint a qualified elector to serve as Special Moderator at a particular meeting.

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