

UXBRIDGE

Glossary of Terms Town Meeting

Warrant: A list of items to be acted on by Town Meeting.

Warrant Article: Each of the individual items listed in a warrant for action by a Town Meeting

Consent Agenda: To facilitate town meeting this year the Board of Selectmen will propose that a number of articles be acted upon collectively, that is by a single vote. The articles included are legally required, but are generally routine and non-controversial. If a Town Meeting member opposes the inclusion of any proposed article on the consent agenda the article/motion will be removed from the list and the remaining motions will be put before Town Meeting for a vote.

MGL: Massachusetts General Law

Bylaw: A law made by a local authority (town) and which applies only in their area.

Quorum: The minimum number of voting members who must be present at a properly called meeting in order to conduct business in the name of the group

Motions: [Town Meeting Time]

Privileged Motions: *Privileged motions relate to the conduct of the meeting, regardless of whatever particular question, if any, may be pending, and so have priority over all other motions*

1. **Dissolve:** Dissolution ends the meeting
2. **Adjourn to a fixed time:** The motion should state fully and clearly the time and place
3. **Point of no quorum:** This motion questions if a quorum is in place
4. **Fix the time to (or at) which to adjourn:** When the meeting votes to adjourn, it will be to the date and place fixed, and not result in dissolution
5. **Question of privilege:** Questions of privilege relate first to the rights and privileges of the meeting collectively, its safety, dignity and the integrity of the proceedings; and second to the rights, reputation and conduct of the votes or town meeting members individually, in their capacity as voters or members.

Subsidiary Motions: *There are seven subsidiary motions, ranking among themselves, from highest to lowest, in the following order*

6. **Lay on the table:** The motion has lost its original purpose of temporarily deferring a debate and has come to be used as a motion to kill without further debate
7. **The previous question:** The phrase “I move the previous question” or “I move the question” means that the person has heard all the talk they want to hear and desires to vote on the question
8. **Limit or extend debate:** This motion may be made with respect to any debatable motion or series of debatable motions

9. **Postpone to a time certain:** The motion serves to postpone an article until a specified time
10. **Commit or refer:** The motion serves to commit or refer an article to a committee
11. **Amend or substitute:** The motion serves to alter, modify, rephrase a motion on the floor. As with main motions, the amendment must stay within the four corners of the article
12. **Postpone indefinitely:** The motion serves “consign a measure to the region of indefinite postponement”

Incidental Motions: *Incidental motions relate to the conduct of the meeting with respect to the pending business*

13. **Point of order:** A point of order is not a motion but a question
14. **Appeal:** In Massachusetts, the moderator, by statute [MGL Chapter 39, Section 15], “decides all questions of order”.
15. **Division of a question:** When, and only when, a question is susceptible of division, an motion to divide it and vote on the parts separately is in order
16. **Separate consideration:** A motion for separate consideration closely resembles a motion to divide the question, but differs in two respects 1) It may be applied to a proposition, such as a building code, which falls naturally into parts but which is so interrelated that the parts will not stand alone; and 2) The action, if any, taken on each part is not final until the action on the whole proposition at the end
17. **Fix method of voting:** Calls for a vote on the method a vote will be taken
18. **Nomination to committees:** A motion for individuals to service on a committee elected by the meeting
19. **Withdraw or modify a motion:** From time to time, one who has made the motion will wish to withdraw it
20. **Suspension of rules:** Rules relating to the conduct of the meeting, such as order of business, may be suspended but requires two-thirds vote unless there is unanimous consent. Rules protecting absentees may not be suspended at all. Rules protecting minorities may be suspended only by unanimous consent.

Main Motions: *All actions taken by town meeting is taken by votes upon motions*

21. **Main motion:** All actions taken by town meeting is taken by votes upon motions. The first motion made on an article is the main motion.
22. **Reconsider or rescind:**
 - Reconsideration is a vote to give “further reflection, renewed attention, and more careful consideration” to the action to be reconsidered” “It involves temporary postponement of final action” and “a new vote on the original question after more mature deliberation”
 - Rescission is a combination of a vote to reconsider and a vote to annul the previous action
23. **Take from the table:** A motion to take up an article than has been previously laid on the table [#6 Lay on the table]
24. **Advance an article:** In the absence of a by-law to the contrary, the meeting has the power to change the order of articles