



Information for Town Meeting Members Regarding the October 2022 Special Town Meeting

From Town Moderator: Michael K. Fee

Greetings Town Meeting Members! Special Town Meeting will follow the same model we employed at our successful Annual Town Meeting in May. We will convene in James Hugh Powers Hall on Monday, October 24, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. We have made great progress emerging from the public health emergency and it still feels special to be able to convene in our traditional meeting place.

Safety Precautions

While we have made tremendous strides in our battle against COVID-19, the virus is still around, so safety remains of paramount concern. You all know the commonsense procedures one should employ to minimize the spread of a virus. As we did in May, we have instituted several precautions to protect the health and wellness of all who will attend Town Meeting indoors at Town Hall. Specifically, we are taking the following steps:

- 1) Face Masks: Face masks are not required but they may of course be worn at the option of the individual;
- 2) Reduced Capacity: We are reducing the number of people in Powers Hall by once asking Town of Needham employees (such as department heads) who typically attend Town Meeting, watch proceedings remotely from elsewhere in the building. If necessary, they may be summoned to the meeting space to respond to a Town Meeting Member's question;
- 3) Spacing: We will maintain our revised seating plan to allow for more spacing throughout the first floor of the hall for Members, directing non-member registered

Important Information for Town Meeting Members

October 2022 Special Town Meeting

- voters who attend Town Meeting to observe and if desired, address Town Meeting from the balcony; and
- 4) Microphones: For the time being, we will continue our use of standing microphones rather than hand-held mics that are passed from Member-to-Member.

The Town's Building Maintenance Division has inspected the ventilation system that serves Powers Hall and installed MERV-13 filters to maximize the indoor air quality. The HVAC system is operating optimally, bringing fresh air into the building meeting the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) standards. Windows may be cracked to allow additional outside air to circulate, but they cannot be opened wide, or it will defeat the efficiency of the HVAC system. Depending on the outside temperature, the airflow from the slightly open windows may impact the indoor temperature.

As a reminder, please do not attend Special Town Meeting if you have received a positive COVID-19 test in the five days preceding Special Town Meeting. If you tested positive for COVID between six and 10 days before Special Town Meeting, then you must wear a mask and have decreasing symptoms to safely attend Town Meeting. If you were exposed to COVID-19 and are not up to date with your vaccines please follow the guidance for exposure found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-isolation-and-quarantine-guidance-for-the-general-public>

As always, please stay home if you are feeling unwell or have any of the following symptoms:

- Cough;
- shortness of breath;
- fever; or
- loss of taste or smell.

If you are feeling sick or even just a little "under the weather," please prioritize the health and wellness of yourself and the community and do not attend Town Meeting.

The Warrant, Warrant Articles, Presentations

The Special Town Meeting Warrant contains 14 Articles.

We are continuing our efforts to keep our meeting more streamlined than in the pre-COVID past in an effort to minimize the length of time we are gathered indoors as a large group. Our experience during the last two years has generated innovations that help promote this goal. One is viewing the presentations from proponents of Articles and the Finance Committee's commentary on each Article in advance of the meeting. For the upcoming Special Town Meeting, we will continue this practice. Members are encouraged to view the video presentations. Supporting materials will also be posted in advance. Please use this link to view the video presentations and other information. <https://www.needhamma.gov/5255/October-2022-Fall-Town-Meeting> No hard copy materials will be distributed at the meeting and the table full of documents that was customarily situated at the rear of the hall will not exist.

Important Information for Town Meeting Members

October 2022 Special Town Meeting

While the advance videos have proven to be very popular with many Members, I have mentioned in the past that my review of the actual number of “Views” each presentation received in advance of our last couple of meetings revealed that nowhere near the total number of Town Meeting Members accessed the videos in advance. One advantage to in-person presentations is that everyone sees and hears the same thing, at the same time. As Moderator, I want to see the largest possible number of people informed about the matters before Special Town Meeting. The more informed you are as a Town Meeting Member, the more effective you can be as a representative.

For these reasons, as we did in the spring, Proponents and the Finance Committee will make live, in-person remarks at Special Town Meeting that last no longer than FIVE MINUTES. This is not intended to replace or repeat the content of the videos, or the documents made available in advance. Rather, the intent is for the speakers to remind Town Meeting Members of the subject matter of an Article and then provide a fresh summary of the proponents’ and Finance Committee’s views. After these brief remarks, we will turn immediately to discussion. I will seek your concurrence with this approach at the start of the meeting.

Questions may be posed in advance of Special Town Meeting. The Town has created a dedicated email address where Members and the public may submit questions to the proponents or the Finance Committee in advance for Special Town Meeting: questions may be emailed to townmeeting@needhamma.gov.

Participating in Town Meeting

Standing microphones will be placed around the seating areas. Members who choose to address Special Town Meeting must use the closest microphone. Members should not attempt to touch the microphones and should remain at a distance from the microphone. The Marshal will help direct you to a microphone and if necessary, adjust it for you.

If a member cannot walk to or stand at a microphone, they should contact the Town Manager’s office in advance for an accommodation. Please contact TownMeeting@needhamma.gov or call 781-455-7500 extension 0.

Congregation at Town Meeting

Town Meeting has always provided an enjoyable opportunity to see familiar faces and socialize. Please use common sense and avoid gathering in large groups. We may have a brief recess this during the meeting, but if you need to use the restroom while we are in session, please feel free to do so to avoid the creation of long lines at a recess.

Conclusion

Thank you for your participation, patience and understanding. I look forward to seeing you all on October 24!