

**TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, NH**  
**TOWN MEETING OVERVIEW**

*June 4, 2021*

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING STRUCTURE**

The Town of Bethlehem's annual meeting of registered voters follows the *Official Ballot Referendum System*, called SB2 (which refers to the Senate bill #2 that enacted it). This means our Town Meeting is conducted in two sessions:

**1. First Session -- the Deliberative Session** (on Friday, June 4, 2021 at Profile HS)

Shall consist of explanation, discussion, and amendment of the annual town warrant. The warrant is the agenda for the meeting and lists all business to be acted upon at the meeting in the form of warrant articles. The purpose of the warrant is to assure Bethlehem registered voters have an opportunity to know in advance and discuss the upcoming year's proposed budget and items that will be placed on the town election day ballot in March.

Registered voters participating at the deliberative session are considered legislators.

**2. Second Session -- the Election** (on Tuesday, July 13, 2021 at Town Hall)

Consists of official ballot voting for: (a) the election of Town officers and (b) warrant articles.

**DELIBERATIVE SESSION PROCESS**

Our Deliberative Session involves reviewing, discussing, and possibly amending the articles in the Town Warrant. We will consider each article and, within the limits of the law, determine the final wording of articles placed on the official ballot for the second session (election).

**PRIOR TO THE MEETING, please...**

- Registered voters of Bethlehem who wish to participate in this meeting (to speak and/or vote) should check-in with the Supervisors of the Checklist to receive a voting card
- Turn off your cell phones
- Read the Rules of Procedure which follow

**DELIBERATIVE SESSION**  
**RULES OF PROCEDURE**

following State of New Hampshire laws (which are called RSAs or *revised statutes annotated*)

**I. SPEAKING AT THE MEETING**

1. Voters wishing to speak must first be recognized by the Moderator.\*
2. Each speaker must use a microphone and provide his/her name and address.
3. Voters will be allowed to speak for up to two (2) minutes.
4. All speakers must be courteous and address their comments to the Moderator.  
*If any person behaves in a disorderly manner the Moderator may have that person removed from the meeting (RSA 40:8).*
5. All questions and comments shall be addressed to the Moderator who will direct questions to the appropriate person.

\* Persons not registered to vote in Bethlehem, regardless of whether they own property or pay taxes, will not be allowed to speak. An exception will be made by the Moderator for Town department heads, legal counsel, or proponents of a petitioned article to provide pertinent information.

**II. WARRANT ARTICLE DISCUSSION**

Articles will be considered in order and will be acted on as follows:

1. The Moderator will announce the article number and introduce the proponent of the warrant article to present the article (up to 5 minutes)
2. Voters may then discuss/debate the article (or pass on to the next article)
3. To speak voters must be recognized by the Moderator
4. Warrant articles may be amended from the floor. The Moderator may ask that an amendment be submitted in written form.
  - Amendments must be made by motion and require a second to be considered
  - A carried amendment will be placed on the ballot in place of the original warrant
  - If an amendment does not carry, the original article will be placed on the ballot
5. Warrant articles do not require a motion to be passed on to voters (if they are not amended they are automatically placed on the ballot as written)

**IIa. AMENDMENT MOTIONS**

- To the **budget** may only change the bottom line figure, although discussion may address specific line items to advise the Select Board (RSA 32:10).
- May not be made to **planning or zoning articles** as they have already held meetings to allow for public input.
- May change the intent or impact of an article, but it may not “eliminate the subject matter of the original article” (RSA 40:13, IV c).
- That require a “no” vote to vote in the affirmative are not acceptable (e.g. I move that we *not* adopt the budget) (RSA 40:13, IV c).

### III. OTHER PROCEDURES

1. *Motions to Restrict Reconsideration* may be made after any vote passes at the meeting. This motion prevents reconsideration of the article later in the meeting (RSA 40:10 II).
2. A voter may speak from the floor to raise a *Point of Order* (request an explanation regarding meeting procedure).
3. *Motions to Call the Question* require a 2/3 vote and thereby end discussion regarding an article. However, voters who are standing at a microphone or holding a microphone, and anyone seated at the head table who has previously told the Moderator that he/she wishes to speak on the motion, will be allowed to speak. In addition, the Moderator shall have the right to refuse to recognize a *Motion to Call the Question* if, in the Moderator's opinion, the voters have not yet had an adequate opportunity to discuss a pending motion.
4. A secret ballot will be conducted when requested by five (5) registered voters in writing prior to a hand vote. Such requests must be for a specific article (not all articles). If you wish to request a secret ballot, wait to be recognized and make the request. Then pass the written request with voter names and signatures to the Moderator (RSA 40:4-a I).
5. Five (5) registered voters may request a recount of a ballot vote "providing that the vote margin is not more than 10% of the total vote cast". In this case, "the recount shall take place immediately following the public announcement" of that vote (RSA 40:4-a II).
6. If the meeting is not finished by 10:00 PM, the Moderator will decide whether to adjourn the meeting to reconvene (RSA 39:14). The meeting would reconvene on Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 6:00 PM at the Bethlehem Town Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Meeting Room.
7. The role of the Moderator is to fairly organize and regulate the meeting according to the laws of New Hampshire. Rulings of the Moderator are subject to appeal by any registered voter. An appeal must be made immediately following the ruling, and a second is required. Then a vote will be taken to either sustain or reverse the ruling.

*Respectfully submitted by Mary Lou Krambeer, Bethlehem Moderator  
Donald Lavoie, Deputy Moderator; Moderator Pro Tempore  
June 4, 2021*