

ARTICLE 1--TOWN MEETINGS

SECTION 1. The Annual Town Meeting shall be held on the second Saturday in May at the Becket Town Hall, or elsewhere as determined by the Board of Selectmen. (Amended 9/28/73, 6/13/81, 5/21/83, 1/20/96)

SECTION 1A. The Annual Town Meeting for the election of officers and the determination of such matters as are required by law to be determined by ballot, shall be considered at an adjournment of such meeting to be held on the third Saturday in May. The polls shall be opened during the hours prescribed by the Board of Selectmen and in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws. (Amended 6/15/82, 5/21/83)

SECTION 2. Special Town Meeting[s] may be called by the Selectmen, as needed from time to time to facilitate Town government. (Amended 6/13/81)

SECTION 2A. The Board of Selectmen shall ascertain the availability of the Moderator and Town Clerk before scheduling a Special Town Meeting.

SECTION 3. No Town Board, Committee, Commission, Department, or Officer shall hold a meeting outside of Town Meeting while a Town Meeting is in session.

SECTION 4. Notice of every Town meeting shall be given by posting an attested copy of the Warrant, calling the same in the Post Office in Becket, the Main Entrance to Sherwood Forest, Mountain Grove Club, Town Offices bulletin board, Becket Center Guild Hall, Becket Transfer Station, and other locations as designated by the Selectmen. This posting shall occur not less than seven days before the day appointed for the Annual Town Meeting, or not less than fourteen days for a Special Town Meeting. (Amended 9/28/73, 5/11/91, 1/20/96, 5/13/06 & effective 7/29/06)

SECTION 4A. No less than seven days before the Annual or any Special Town Meeting the Board of Selectmen shall post on the Town website and mail to all full-time and part-time households copies of the warrant. In all cases the Board of Selectmen shall provide an explanation in plain language

to accompany each article and line item in the warrant. Monies for this mailing shall be set aside by means of a separate line item in the Town's budget. No less than seven days before the Annual Town Meeting the Board of Selectmen shall mail a post card to all residents as a reminder that the town report is on the website and to request in writing if one would like a town report mailed to him or her. Warrants for the Annual Town Meeting and reminders of the availability of town reports may be contained in the same mailing. The Board of Selectmen shall issue a press release notifying voters of each Town Meeting to be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the Town. The requirements provided in this subsection shall not be deemed to be a part of the legal notification of such meeting or the legal service of such warrant and the failure to comply with the provisions of this subsection shall not serve to invalidate the proceedings of any Town Meeting.

SECTION 4B. The Constable or other person duly appointed to serve the warrant for a Town Meeting or Election shall, within twenty-four (24) hours, deliver to the Town Clerk the original warrant with his return endorsed thereon stating fully the manner in which he served the same.

SECTION 5. The Selectmen shall insert in the warrant for the annual Town Meeting all subjects the insertion of which shall be requested of them in writing by ten or more registered voters of the Town and in the warrant for every Special Town Meeting by one hundred registered voters or by ten percent of the total number of registered voters of the Town, whichever number is the lesser. The Selectmen shall call a Special Town Meeting upon request in writing, of two hundred registered voters or twenty percent of the total registered voters of the Town, whichever number is the lesser; Such meeting to be held not later than forty- five days after the receipt of such request, and shall insert in the warrant therefore all subjects the insertion of which shall be requested by said petition. (MGL Chapter 39, Section 10) (Adopted 6/13/81) (Amended 1/20/96)

SECTION 5A. The Town Clerk shall prepare forms for petitions to call a Special Town Meeting or to insert a

subject in the warrant for any Annual or Special Town Meeting which form shall meet the following requirements:

(1) The subject to be inserted in the Warrant shall be prepared by the petitioner(s) and shall appear on the front page of each petition. If space is insufficient the text shall begin on the front page of each petition and be continued on the back page of each petition before signatures are gathered.

(2) Each petition shall include boxes for the gathering of signatures, with residence, street and number, of registered voters of the Town on the front and/or the back of the petition. Separate signature pages shall not be accepted for filing, nor shall they be stapled or otherwise attached to a petition. All signatures submitted for certification must appear on the petition with the text of the subject to be inserted in the warrant. The petitioner(s) may submit as many petitions as necessary to meet the required number of signatures.

SECTION 5B. All petitioned articles, when received by the Board of Selectmen, shall be filed with the Board of Registrars for certification of signatures.

SECTION 5C. Each article submitted to the Town Meeting for vote shall at the conclusion thereof state the identity of its sponsor. In the case of a town board or committee: its name shall be so stated, in the case of a town official: his or her name and title or position shall be so stated, in the case of a private petition on behalf of a firm, organization or other entity: its name shall be stated: and in all other cases, the first signatory to the petition shall be considered the sponsor thereof.

SECTION 5D. The warrant for that part of the Annual Town Meeting for the transaction of business shall close for the acceptance of petitioned Articles on April 1, and for all other articles as determined by the Board of Selectmen.

SECTION 5E. The Finance Committee shall prepare for each Annual Town Meeting a report, to be delivered orally or in writing, that shall provide a succinct summary of the

financial condition of the Town, including the amount available in free cash and the status of the stabilization funds, the anticipated impact of the budget on the tax rate, reasons for its budget recommendations in the context of its fiscal policy, and an updated capital plan detailing estimated future major purchases and expenditures and the anticipated sources of funding for those purchases and expenditures.

SECTION 6. At all Town Meetings, the Town Clerk shall be directed to use a checklist of registered voters for admission of all persons to said meeting.

Upon check in, voters shall be issued a voting card for that meeting which must be held up for all hand votes on articles, whenever a hand count is required. Only those voters holding cards shall be included in the count.

It shall be the duty of every official body, by a member thereof, to be in attendance at all Town Meetings for the information thereof while any subject matter is under consideration affecting such official body.

SECTION 6A. Twenty voters shall constitute a Quorum. This section shall not apply to such parts of meetings as are devoted to the election of Town officers.
(Amended 6/15/82)

SECTION 7. All informational materials relating to articles on the warrant and other information of interest to voters shall be placed on a table or other suitable location outside of the meeting hall. Copies of the warrants and town reports may be placed at the registration table, however the provisions of this section may be waived if the physical layout of the meeting space makes such arrangements difficult to obtain.

SECTION 8. The Moderator shall preserve decorum and order and, per Massachusetts General Law Chapter 39 Section 15, shall decide all questions of order and make any ruling of parliamentary law without appeal. Parliamentary motions shall be regulated by the then-current edition of Town Meeting Time, A Handbook of Parliamentary Law. It shall

prevail in such matters not covered by law or in Section 8A of these Bylaws.

Voters and non-voters may speak at a town meeting only by permission of the Moderator. Every motion, comment and question asked of any person shall be directed to the Moderator. The Moderator may impose limits on the number of times a person may speak and the length of remarks.

SECTION 8A.

1-A motion to "take no action" on an article contained in the warrant shall not be entertained until a motion incorporating the substance of said article is before the meeting and at least one voter has spoken in favor thereof, unless, after a reasonable opportunity to do so, no voter makes such motion or speaks in favor thereof. A motion to "take no action" shall be debatable as to its merits, but not to the merits of the article itself. Such a motion shall require a two-thirds vote.

2- Any motion to increase an appropriation more than five percent of the Finance Committee's recommendation shall be out of order.

3- A motion to reconsider any prior votes at a town meeting shall not be accepted, except when, in the best judgment of the Moderator, a significant error or omission occurred in the language or process of the original action on the article, or a significant change of circumstances has occurred, such that there is a substantial likelihood that the outcome could change upon reconsideration or that reconsideration would be in the Town's best interest. Such error, omission or change of circumstances shall be brought to the Moderator's attention as soon as it is known and the Moderator shall determine if and when the matter will be taken up. The Moderator shall announce this decision to the Town Meeting. If the Moderator determines that the matter may be taken up pursuant to this Section, a two-thirds vote shall be necessary in order to proceed with reconsideration. No motion shall be reconsidered more than once.

SECTION 9. When a question is put, the sense of the meeting shall be determined by a show of voter cards, and the Moderator shall declare the vote as it appears to him.

No person's vote shall be counted unless the voter occupies a seat, provided that the tellers, under the direction of the Moderator, may count the voters of those who are unable to obtain seats.

On matters requiring a two-thirds vote by statute, a count need not be taken unless the vote so declared is immediately questioned by seven or more voters as provided in General Laws Chapter 39, Section 15 or as otherwise provided in the Town of Becket By-laws. (Adopted 8/2/05; effective 10/20/05)

SECTION 10. Any report, resolution or motion, shall be reduced to writing if the Moderator so directs. (Adopted 6/13/81)

SECTION 11. All committees shall be appointed by the Moderator unless the Town otherwise directs, and shall report as directed to the Town. If a committee does not report as directed by the Town or at the Annual Town Meeting, it shall be deemed discharged, unless an extension of time be granted by the Town.
(Adopted 6/13/81)

SECTION 12. The Moderator shall hold no other elective or appointive Town office except for serving as an ex-officio, non-voting member of any committee or board.

Any person having a monetary or equitable interest in any matter under discussion at any Town Meeting and any person employed by another having such an interest shall disclose the fact of his interest or employment before speaking thereon

SECTION 13. No Annual or Special Town Meeting shall be dissolved until all of the Articles contained in the warrant for such meeting shall be considered.

Town meetings may be adjourned to a date certain from time to time without the presence of a quorum.

SECTION 14. It shall be the duty of the Town Clerk within 30 days after every Town Meeting to furnish the Town Administrator, Treasurer, Accountant, Board of Assessors, Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee with a certified copy of the minutes of the Town Meeting noting the funds appropriated by the Town at such meeting, and of the purposes for which monies were respectively appropriated.

The Town Clerk shall prepare minutes of each Town Meeting and these minutes shall be published in the next annual town report.