

# **HUDSON TOWN AND SCHOOL DISTRICT MODERATOR'S RULES OF PROCEDURE AND ORDER**

This deliberative session of the Town and School District Meetings acts as a legislative body for the purpose of determining the final form of the articles to be voted on at the March Ballot. The Moderator's purpose is to preside over the meeting and to assist those present in conducting the business of Town and School District.

To assure an orderly process during the meeting, the Moderator establishes the following rules and procedures. Rulings made by the Moderator can be overruled by a simple majority vote. Also, the members of the meeting may vote to set any rule they wish and modify that rule by a simple majority vote.

## **PROCEDURES**

1. Each article will be read by the Moderator and he will then recognize a Selectman/School Board Member or Petitioner to present the article. The Operating Budget article will be presented by the Chair of the Budget Committee.
2. The Moderator will then open the article to the floor for questions, comments, or amendments. The articles on this warrant, by law, must appear on the ballot for voting in March. The meeting can amend the wording, change the intent, or dollar amounts of the articles, however, the subject matter of the article cannot be changed significantly from what was warned to the public. Some article wording is prescribed by NH laws and cannot be amended.
3. Motions to amend articles require a second. The Moderator will deal with only one amendment at a time.
4. When there are no more amendments, questions, or statements on a particular article, the Moderator will declare the article closed and moved to the ballot. Once an article has been closed to debate, it will take a motion to reconsider with a majority vote, to bring the article up for discussion again.
5. Under RSA 40:10 the meeting can move to Restrict Reconsideration of an article. If passed, the article cannot be brought up again at the deliberative session. The motion to Restrict Reconsideration can only be made after discussion on an article has been closed. Restriction of Reconsideration can be applied to any number of articles that have been discussed and closed to debate prior to the motion to restrict.

## **DEBATE**

1. Only registered voters of Hudson may speak at the Deliberative Session. Registered voters must have a TOWN or HUDSON SCHOOL DISTRICT VOTER card, which is given out by the Supervisors of the Checklist. An exception is made for those staff and administrative personnel who may be called on to answer questions or provide information about the matter before the Meeting.
2. A voter may request that a non-voter be allowed to address the Meeting. If there is no objection, the Moderator will allow the non-voter to speak. If there is an objection, the decision will be put to a vote of the Meeting.
3. The Moderator must first recognize anyone who wishes to address the meeting for any purpose.
4. The speaker must state his/her name and address for the record and announce the purpose for which he/she wishes to address the meeting (examples: to speak on the article; ask a question;

make an amendment or motion). The same speaker may not speak to an article and make a motion in the same trip to the microphone.

5. The Moderator will recognize speakers in the order at the microphone. Exception: Anyone raising a Point of Order may interrupt the speaker and will be recognized for the Point of Order. A Point of Order is made to call to the Moderator's attention some matter that is interfering with the conduct of the meeting.
6. **Decorum**: Speakers should not refer to individuals by name, but use "the previous speaker" or "the School Board member". This will help keep the debate on the issues and avoid personalities. Also, cheers, catcalls, and applause are inappropriate. Every issue is important and each speaker's opinion deserves respect and consideration.
7. All comments and questions are to be directed through the Moderator. Lengthy amendments or motions should be put in writing so they can be accurately repeated. If there are any questions concerning procedure, members should ask the Moderator by calling for a "Point of Order".
8. A motion to "Move the Question", if passed, will end debate on an article or motion. Moving the question is not debatable and requires a 2/3 vote. The Moderator will not accept a motion to move the question if there hasn't been any discussion or if only one side of a question has been presented.

### **VOTING**

1. Votes will be taken using the TOWN or HUDSON SCHOOL DISTRICT VOTER cards that are issued to each registered voter who goes through the voter checklist. **DO NOT LOSE YOUR VOTER CARD.** You will not be issued another one. Every registered voter should have only one voter card. If you need to leave the meeting and return later, take the card with you and bring it back when you return.
2. When debate on a motion is finished, the Moderator will ask that those in favor of the motion to raise their voter cards, and then he will ask those opposed to raise theirs. The vote will be declared based on the Moderator's visual assessment of the count.
3. If there is a question as to the majority, the Moderator will then ask for an actual count of the voter cards in favor and opposed.
4. The only voice vote taken will be for a motion to adjourn.

### **SECRET BALLOT VOTING (RSA 40:4-a, b)**

1. A secret ballot may be requested in writing by five voters before a vote is taken on any question or motion. The Moderator will provide signature forms for requesting a secret ballot.
2. Numbered, YES/NO Ballots will be issued to each registered voter if a secret ballot is requested. The Moderator will designate which number ballot will be used for a vote.
3. A secret ballot vote may also be requested after the Moderator has declared a result of a vote taken by voter cards. The request must be made in writing by seven voters and must be called for immediately after the Moderator has declared a vote and before any other business is begun.