

Procedures for Ashland Special Town Meeting, January 23, 2021

A meeting with the subject matter that is being discussed at this Special Town Meeting would normally be expected to draw 750 or more residents. While attempting to hold such a meeting in the time of COVID-19 would be a significant public health risk, the business of the Town must be addressed. To allow as many registered voters as possible to participate in Special Town Meeting while also minimizing the health risks of doing so, a non-traditional arrangement has been devised for this Special Town Meeting.

Special Town Meeting on January 23rd will be held in the high school gym consistent with the Special Town Meeting in December and the Annual Town meeting in June. The proceedings will be broadcast and streamed live by WACA to allow the greatest number of voters as possible to watch the meeting without being in attendance. Those present will be able to vote on the articles at the end of the “regular” portion of the Meeting. After this, there will be a “voting period” of approximately 2 ½ hours during which voters who choose not to attend the regular portion of the meeting may go to the high school, check in, vote, and then leave.

The following procedures will be in place to allow this to happen:

- Special Town Meeting will be called to order at 10:00am in the Ashland High School Gym
- After the normal preliminaries and the Moderator’s Motions, Article 1 (public safety building) will be introduced, followed by the presentation of the Article, a motion on the Article and discussion
- Upon conclusion of discussion, I will entertain a motion to table Article 1 for the sole purpose of bringing the article back from the table later in the meeting for a vote.
- Article 2 (Mindess school) will be introduced, followed by the presentation of the Article, a motion on the Article and discussion.
- Upon conclusion of discussion, I will entertain a motion to table Article 2 for the sole purpose of bringing the article back from the table later in the meeting for a vote.
- I will entertain a motion to re-open Articles 1 and 2 solely for the purpose of voting.
- I will call for a vote on Article 1 by public display of colored index cards. Yes vote cards will be collected by volunteers and deposited into the Article 1-Yes box. No vote cards will be collected by volunteers and deposited into the Article 1-No box.
- I will call for a vote on Article 2 by public display of colored index cards. Yes vote cards will be collected by volunteers and deposited into the Article 2-Yes box. No vote cards will be collected by volunteers and deposited into the Article 2-No box.
- I will announce that following a 15-minute recess during which those present may leave the gym, voting will remain open for approximately 2½ hours (I will determine the exact time prior to calling for the recess) during which time registered voters who have yet to vote may come to the high school, check in, vote by public declaration, and then leave.
- At the appointed time I will announce the close of voting, then tally and announce the results.
- I will entertain a motion to dissolve the meeting.

Using these procedures means that **it will not be necessary to be present during the normal discussion portion of the meeting in order to vote on the articles.** Please note that while any registered voter is

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welcome during the “normal” portion of the meeting, I would strongly encourage voters to opt for following the proceedings in the comfort of your own home (or other chosen location) and then come out to vote during the designated voting period. The one thing “lost” by watching remotely is the ability to ask questions or make a statement during discussion of the articles. To minimize the impact of this, I will allow voters to submit questions via email ahead of the meeting (see procedures for doing so below).

To minimize the public health risk of attending Special Town Meeting:

- The Meeting will be held in the high school gymnasium with overflow seating available in the cafeteria. Seats will be placed in a socially distanced fashion.
- Anyone wishing to speak must do so in the gym where there will be aisles that allow those waiting to speak to do so while still socially distanced from those seated in the gym.
- Masks are required to be properly worn ***at all times*** inside the high school including while speaking at a microphone or addressing the meeting. Shared microphones will be disinfected after each speaker.

Adam B. Shuster
Moderator, Town of Ashland
January 12, 2021

Procedures for Asking Questions Prior to Special Town Meeting

- Questions may be emailed to townmoderator@ashlandmass.com and must include the name and address of the voter asking the question.
- Questions may be sent at any time (the earlier the better) but must be received by 1:00pm on Friday January 22nd.
- Questions submitted by e-mail will be presented to the Meeting by the Moderator after all questions of those present have been asked.
- The Moderator reserves the right to combine similar questions, not present to the meeting questions that have already been asked by someone present at the meeting, limit the number of questions asked, and provide questions to the proponents of the Articles ahead of the meeting if they require information that the Moderator believes may not be otherwise available to the proponents at Special Town Meeting.