

Glossary of Open Town Meeting Terms

Article – An item of business for Town Meeting to discuss and decide on. Per Dover By-Laws, articles are taken up in the order they are printed in the warrant unless Town Meeting wishes to change the order which can be accomplished with a motion made, seconded, and approved by a 2/3 vote.

Budget - Financial plan for the fiscal year of proposed expenditures and proposed means of financing them.

Cherry Sheet - Details the estimated State aid to be received by the Town. It is named for the color of the paper traditionally printed on, though the information is now provided to the Town electronically.

Debt Exclusion - A referendum procedure in which the Town can vote to collect property taxes in excess of its levy limit to pay for a specific expenditure (usually for a specific time period).

Fiscal Year - The town fiscal year for the proposed budget begins on July 1 and ends on June 30.

Free Cash - The amount of surplus revenue not spent from previous fiscal year over and above uncollected taxes that is certified by the State. It is available for appropriation by Town Meeting.

Levy Limit - Under Proposition 2½ the maximum amount that the town can raise in property taxes is 2½% more than the maximum it was allowed to raise for the prior fiscal year plus adjustment for growth.

Majority Vote - A vote of one half plus one of the Town Meeting Members present to pass an article.

Moderator – The Moderator's job is to preside over and regulate the proceedings of Town Meeting. They declare the outcome of all votes. It is also the Moderator's duty to rule on all points of order. In Dover, the Moderator is elected during the town election and serves a term of three years.

Glossary of Open Town Meeting Terms (continued)

Motion – There are many different types of motions however what they all have in common is proposing some sort of action at Town Meeting. The most common, the “Main Motion”, is used to open a warrant article for debate. Another common one is the motion to “amend” which allows a Town Meeting member to make changes or additions to a pending motion.

Move the Question - A motion to vote to end debate on a pending motion. It may not be preceded by an opinion on the motion by the maker, is not debatable, and requires a 2/3 vote to pass.

Point of Order – When a member of Town Meeting has a question as to Town Meeting procedure, that member should rise and state “Point of Order”. That member should not interrupt another speaker unless allowing that speaker to continue would cause a furthering of procedural error. After stating your point of order it will be ruled on by the Moderator.

Reconsideration – To bring a previously discussed article back on the table for renewed attention and a new vote on the original question after further debate.

Reserve Fund - The fund established by Town Meeting for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures. Transfers from fund need to be approved by the Finance Committee.

Warrant – Published at least 7 days prior to Town Meeting at the hands of the Board of Selectmen, the warrant lists a meeting’s time, place, and agenda. A warrant is also known as a warning. A Town Meeting’s action is not valid unless the subject was listed on the warrant. The selectmen will insert into the warrant all subjects which are requested of them by 10 or more registered voters in the town.

2½ Override - A referendum procedure in which the Town can vote to permanently increase its levy limit.

2/3 Majority Vote – Requests to authorize the use of debt to pay for a capital item or project and certain Zoning Articles require a 2/3 vote at Town Meeting.