

## Town Meeting Information

### **What is an Open Town Meeting?**

In an Open Town Meeting form of government, every registered voter may attend, speak and vote. Under state law, attendance must be in person; **no absentee voting is permitted in a Massachusetts Town Meeting**. State law also requires the Town to hold at least one Town Meeting each year in the spring. This is the Annual Town Meeting, and its principal business is to appropriate money to fund Town expenses for the fiscal year which starts the following July 1st. Money can be provided by appropriation directly against the municipal tax rate levied on real and personal property, or money may be borrowed within limits set by the State. Any additional Town Meetings that are called (at the Select Board's order) are considered "Special Town Meetings".

### **Town Meeting Process**

The Moderator, who presides at the Meeting, is elected each year at the annual Town Election. The Moderator will be on the podium, to the left will be Town Clerk. The Select Board, along with the Town Administrator and Town Council, will be seated at table to the right of the Moderator.

The Moderator will call each Article and its sponsor will make a motion. After the motion has been seconded, a debate will start according to Town Meeting rules of order as set forth in the book, Town Meeting Time, which is available at the Town libraries. The Moderator will recognize the speakers, rule on motions and amendments with respect to conformance to parliamentary procedure, and call for votes. The recommendations of Town Finance Committee will be listed with each warrant article for Annual Town Meetings.

Town Meeting is an important democratic institution open to all New

Marlborough registered voters and is New Marlborough's legislative body. The procedures are simple, and all have a right to attend and be heard. On each Article you will hear a formal presentation and recommendations from either the Select Board, Finance Committee, other any other department/committee. You may speak on the issues if you wish and then cast your vote. By this process, the decisions made are based on the collective will and wisdom of the Meeting. We encourage your active participation, particularly for those Articles that are of greatest importance to you.