

Important information for every registered voter

A single vote can make the difference

Town Meeting...Every Vote Counts

Welcome to Weston!



Congratulations on being one of the approximately 7,600 registered voters in Weston. Voting is the most precious civic right and responsibility. In Weston, we have an institution that depends on your participation as a free and democratic citizen. It's called Town Meeting.

Town Meeting is the purest form of democratic governing and has been the local legislative institution since 1633. It is at Town Meeting where residents can voice their opinions and directly effect change in our community. It is also the legislative body for nearly 300 of the 351 communities in Massachusetts.



What is Town Meeting?

Town Meeting approves all spending, such as the annual operating budget that covers essential public services like police, fire, schools, and roads. Town Meeting also approves changes to our by-laws. No item of business can be discussed unless it has been included in the warrant (agenda). Articles in the warrant are set by the Board of Selectmen. The warrant may also include articles petitioned for inclusion by registered voters. Town Meeting attendees have the opportunity to discuss each article and then approve or reject them by voting on each one. The proceedings are run by the elected Moderator.



Why is my vote in Town Meeting so important?

Who knows better about your neighborhood or your ability to pay local taxes than you? Plus, it's YOUR town, too! Town Meeting provides a unique forum for you to share your concerns or insight with your neighbors. You can directly participate in and influence the debate and then witness the outcome of the vote. This is why your participation is essential and why, when a vote is taken in Town Meeting, every vote counts.



When does Town Meeting convene?

Weston's Annual Town Meeting takes place in May on the Monday after the Town Election. Fall Special Town Meeting is typically held after Thanksgiving. If there is urgent business or the required number of voters has petitioned the Board of Selectmen, an additional Town Meeting is called. Residents are informed of Town Meetings through the mailing of the warrant (the meeting agenda) to all households at least a week before Town Meeting. Electronic access to the approved warrant is also announced through the Town's various communication channels.



Do I have to be a public figure to speak at Town Meeting?

No. Residents who attend Town Meeting are important, and have a voice. The debate is the most critical piece to making Town Meeting work. If you have a particular expertise or experience that can help others make a decision on an issue, please share it as a volunteer on a Town committee, write an email or letter to the appropriate officials, or speak out at public hearings and at Town Meeting.



How do I prepare for Town Meeting?

Many of your neighbors volunteer to serve on town government committees that determine how much money is needed for projects, services or what by-laws changes are needed. These committee members are collecting information, learning about the issues, and holding public meetings.

In preparation of Town Meeting, the proponents of each article will have produced reports and recommendations and, in many cases, held public hearings to hear and address concerns. Committees are required to post their meeting agendas and minutes on the Town's website. Voters should take the time to attend these meetings or watch the recordings on Weston Media Center, read the minutes and reports, and attend public hearings in order to be prepared for the discussions and vote at Town Meeting. For those with time restrictions, the Town's website offers a reference page at Weston.org/TownMeeting, which is prepared about a month in advance of Town Meeting so residents can find the necessary information needed in order to better know the issues that will be discussed and voted upon.



What about the Town Election?

The Annual Town Election is an integral part of Town Meeting. Weston elects local leaders such as the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Planning Board, and Moderator, and votes on certain ballot questions, including the debt exclusion question. Candidates for elected office are decided at the Annual Town Caucus, held in March.



How can I get more involved in Weston Town Government?

Serving as an elected or appointed official is a great way to get involved. All of the Town's committees are listed on the Town's website at weston.org and notices of vacancies are posted through the Town's communication channels. All meetings of Town committees are open to the public and are listed on Meeting Calendar on the Town's website. Every resident has a voice as a public observer at committee meetings or during a resident comment period, public forums, Town Meeting, and at Town Election. At any time, feel free to speak with town officials to become educated in the issues of interest.

How to stay informed:

- Visit weston.org/stayinformed to subscribe to various email subscription lists on many topics of interest, including Latest Town News, the monthly Town Newsletter, and most Town committees
- Like and follow the Town of Weston on **Facebook and Twitter**
- Find current **Town Projects** on the Town's website and find out which committee is heading up the project
- Attend committee meetings or various information and public hearing sessions or watch those meetings on **Weston Media Center** on TV or online at westonmedia.org
- Visit the special weston.org/townMeeting reference web page ahead of Town Meeting for information on what will be discussed
- Read the print edition of the **Weston Town Crier** or read it online at wickedlocal.com/weston

Town Meeting and Election Calendar

March	The Town Caucus is held to nominate candidates for Elected Office
April	Deadline to register to vote in Town Election and Town Meeting
April/May	The Budget Hearing is held for the upcoming fiscal year operating budget for both Town and School
May	Annual Town Election for Town offices is held the 1st or 2nd Saturday in May. Annual Town Meeting is held the Monday following the Town Election.
November	Special Town Meeting is held after Thanksgiving

Who's Who

Moderator - is the presiding officer of Town Meeting, elected by voters to enforce orderly debate according to state law, Weston by-laws and customs, and to declare the vote. The Moderator also appoints the Finance Committee and some members of the Community Preservation Committee. Contact the Moderator at moderator@westonmass.org for advice on speaking at Town Meeting or to learn about appointments to certain committees.

Town Clerk - runs all elections and voting at Town Meeting, registers voters, processes changes in voter information, records all votes passed at Town Meeting, swears in newly elected or appointed officials, and posts meetings.

Town Manager - conducts the daily business of Town operations, including oversight of municipal departments and management of the budget as approved by Town Meeting. The Town Manager can be contacted at townmanager@westonmass.org

Board of Selectmen - is the executive leadership elected by the voters, makes policy, oversees the Town Manager's administration of Town business, sets the time and place for Town Meeting, and prepares and issue the warrant for it. The Selectmen can be contacted at selectmen@westonmass.org

School Committee - elected by the Town's voters to oversee the operations of the Weston Public Schools.

Finance Committee - appointed by the Moderator to advise the Town on financial matters.

Community Preservation Committee - oversees the Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds and studies the needs, possibilities and resources of the Town regarding the use of the fund and making recommendations to Town Meeting of the appropriation of those funds. More information on CPA-funded projects can be found at Weston.org.

Visit weston.org for additional information on Your Government, including Town Meeting, Departments and additional elected and appointed committees.