

Introduction

This guide has been compiled to inform the Chebeague community about the first town meeting to establish the Town of Chebeague Island. It is intended to give the community information about how the meeting will be conducted and how the community (registered voters, residents and other interested individuals) can participate.

Getting Started

The first town meeting is governed by a combination of State Statute, enabling legislation (LD1735) and direction from the nine elected transition representatives. The nine representatives have relied on community volunteers, the legal counsel of Brann & Isaacson, documents from the Maine Municipal Association and the assistance of Town of Cumberland staff in planning the meeting and the election.

Two public meetings will be held to allow essential services to begin immediately for the new Town of Chebeague Island. Both meetings are open to the public (voters and non-voters). The first is a *public meeting* to elect town officials on June 24th 2007. The second, on July 1st 2007 convenes the first legislative body of the new town in a *special town meeting* in order to adopt necessary policy and authorizations so that the selectmen and school committee can begin to work. This document covers the first town meeting; the election is covered in a separate document.

It is important to remember these are not the only meetings at which the town can assemble to take action. Special town meetings can be called by the selectmen or citizen petition if issues need to be addressed throughout the year.

Town Meeting (a micro-course)

LD1735 states that the initial form for the government will be town meeting. The town meeting serves as the legislative body of the local government. Every town using this form of government is required to have one meeting called the *Annual Town Meeting* at which the town elects a moderator, selectmen and a school committee by ballot. The annual town meeting is usually held in the spring as determined by the selectmen or by other means. The Town of Chebeague's first annual town meeting will be in 2008.

Besides electing municipal and school officials the next most important order of business is to approve the budget that these officials will be required to honor. Another important area that may be addressed in town meeting is ordinances, especially those that pertain to public safety, land use, marine use and governmental structure.

Each town meeting must be '*warned*' or noticed seven days before the meeting. This is accomplished by posting the warrant in a public place. The warrant will have the date, time and place and will have each item of business identified in a separate article.

Warrant Posting Locations:

1. Doughty's Store
2. CTC ferry
3. Library
4. Chandler's Wharf

First Town Meeting

Place: **CRC Gymnasium**
Date: **July 1st, 2007**
Meeting Time: **8:00 am**
Registration: **6:30 am**

First Town Meeting

The first town meeting for the Town of Chebeague Island will be called by a notary or the selectmen and noticed seven days before the meeting.

The warrant at town meeting is normally prepared by the selectmen throughout the course of the year. LD1735 provided for nine transition representatives that were tasked with preparing for a smooth transition of government. In the course of their work most of the preparation for warrant articles was done. While the selectmen are legally responsible for the preparation of the warrant articles, the nine representatives have performed this function for the first meeting. They will play a role in presenting or answering questions related to the articles at the first meeting.

All voters are required to register. The doors open early to allow people to register in time for the beginning of the meeting. When you register you will be given a voting packet that includes a colored voting card. **Your vote won't count unless you use the voting card provided.**

1. A clerk, notary or selectman will open the meeting, preside over the election of a moderator for the meeting and swear in the moderator. The moderator for Town Meeting must be elected by written ballot. However, if a nominated candidate is uncontested then a minimum of three voters can and should cast ballots.
2. The moderator may appoint and swear in a deputy moderator who can preside if the moderator must leave or would like to speak on an upcoming article. The moderator may also appoint and swear in any additional clerks if required.
3. After any opening remarks and instructions the moderator may entertain procedural motions (see side bar) or proceed to the first article.
4. After any procedural matters are voted the moderator will take up the business articles in the order that they are presented in the warrant.
5. The moderator will read the article and open the floor for discussion.
 - a. The floor is opened for *discussion* (this may include *motions* to amend to the article).
 - b. The article is read again and a *vote* is taken to determine if the article is adopted.
6. Each article on the warrant must be addressed before adjourning the meeting.

A procedural motion can be used to change the way a Town Meeting operates for the duration of the meeting.

For example, only voters are allowed to participate in Town Meeting. A procedural motion could be made to allow non-voters to speak at the meeting.

Voting

Voting on most articles will be accomplished by a 'show of hands' (or voting card in our case). When the moderator asks for a vote you simply hold up the voting card high over your head and wait for a count. If a written ballot is required for an article the moderator will take you through the process.

Discussion

Once an article is read the moderator will open the floor for discussion. This, of course, is where all the action occurs and where things can get confusing. Discussion includes comments, observations, information, questions or answers and subsidiary or incidental motions. **In order to be allowed by the moderator any of these have to be germane to the discussion currently on the floor.**

Variations

Sometimes town officials or other individuals who assisted in the preparation of the article are given time to present relevant information to the meeting, usually just before the article.

Voters have the ability to direct the discussion to a particular article. For example, a voter may make a motion to reconsider a previous article after it has been voted on, or make a motion to take an article that has not been acted upon out of order. A voter may also make a motion to take up several articles with one vote. These motions require a second, discussion and a vote. If passed the moderator is bound to proceed accordingly.

Limitations

Negative motions such as “I move we not pass Article 8” are usually ruled out of order. Motions that change the intent of the article usually are ruled out of order. Ordinances cannot be amended from the floor. Capped articles (having a dollar amount specified in the wording of an article) can only be amended so that the specified amount is lower than that in the text. Only business identified in the posted warrant can be taken up.

Terms

Warrant - The agenda for town meeting. It is legally the document of the selectmen and must be posted seven days before the meeting (see posting locations side bar on page 1).

Ordinances
Each ordinance is briefly described by a separate article in the warrant. The entire text is available at the library or at http://www.chebeague.org .

Articles – The warrant is made of numbered articles that clearly describe an action or issue on which the town is required to vote. Articles often are in one of three forms: (1) ordinances, (2) simple articles, or (3) resolutions. Ordinances are local law and require a formal process of hearings; they are typically in effect until repealed or amended (see side bar). Articles that are not presented as an ordinance will usually remain in effect only until the next town meeting. Resolutions are used to recognize individuals or express opinions as a community. Everything else, like budgets, direction and authorization to town officials and boards is done by simple article.

Parliamentary Procedure - While Maine does not dictate what procedure should be followed at town meeting there are several accepted standards such as Robert’s Rules or Order and the Maine Municipal Association Moderators Guide. The moderator will usually indicate in the introductory remarks which procedures will guide the meeting. The procedures followed to take action should be consistent, fair and protect the rights of the minority to be heard. A respect for the process will help when issues spark a lot of disagreement.

Motion – a motion is a request by any registered voter for the assembled voters to take some action. In order to make a motion a voter must raise their hand and be recognized by the

moderator. Once recognized the voter may say something like: “I move to amend article number 10 to strike the word ‘recommended’ and replace it with the words ‘limited to’”. The moderator will make a determination if the motion is in order and then proceed.

Incidental motions are used to change the method of voting, withdrawing a motion or appeal. For example any voter can request a written ballot for an article. A voter may also use a motion to appeal any ruling the moderator makes.

A subsidiary motion can be used to change (or amend) the main motion, postpone the article until later in the same meeting, limit debate (the amount of time each speaker can use) or end debate.

Type	Second Required	Debatable	Amend-able	Pass on Vote
Main Motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
End Debate	Yes	No	No	2/3
Limit Debate	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Take out of order	Yes	Yes	No	2/3
Postpone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Reconsider	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Adjourn	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Appeal	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Voting Method	Yes	No	No	Majority
Withdraw	No	No	No	Majority

Voting – votes can be cast in several ways. The method of voting is usually determined by the moderator or town officials. It can be changed by a motion from the floor. For most articles at the first meeting voting will be done by raising voting cards given to voters at the time of registration. A vote declared by the moderator may be challenged by at least 7 voters. The moderator may recount votes or change the voting method to satisfy the challenge.

Roles at Town Meeting

Moderator	The moderator keeps the meeting moving and informs voters of the proper procedures to follow to fully participate. The moderator elected need not be a registered voter or resident of the Town. The only criteria are residency in Maine, at least 18 years old and a U.S. citizen.
Clerk	Records votes, may assist in counting
Ballot Clerk	Assists in counting ballots
Selectmen	Prepare the warrant, answer questions and provide additional information
Town Administrative Assistant	May provide additional information to voters
School Committee	May provide additional information to voters
Superintendent	Answer questions and provide additional information especially relating to school budget.
Transition Representatives	The term of the Transition Representatives ends on July 1, 2007. Given the considerable amount of work the representatives bring to the first town meeting they are likely to be capable of providing answers and information just as the selectmen.
Voter	The most important role at town meeting is the voter. The body of voters at town meeting are the final decision makers subject only to higher law.

THE VOTER AT TOWN MEETING

If you are confused or unclear about how or when to make a motion, simply raise your hand and when you are recognized to speak make your intent known to the moderator in plain language. He or she will let you know the best way to proceed.

Each voter has the right to cast a vote of every article on the warrant. The voter has a right to speak to the assembly within constraints imposed by State law, the moderator and the will of the town meeting.