

Quick Start Guide to Carlisle Town Meeting

These guidelines exist to facilitate an orderly, dignified, respectful and fair discussion of issues leading to informed votes and good decisions. We all deserve the respect and courtesy of our neighbors, and we owe them the same. The Moderator will politely, but firmly enforce these guidelines, in appropriate circumstances for the benefit of all. This “Quick Start Guide” is just a summary. See [Carlisle Town Meeting Introduction and Procedures](#) for further details.

Warrant Articles and Motions

The agenda for the meeting is established in the Warrant, published beforehand. Each specific item in the Warrant is described in an “article.” As each article is taken up, the Moderator will ask someone to make a motion, which is a more precise statement of the action to be taken by Town Meeting.

Addressing the Meeting

- Wait to be recognized (given the floor) by the Moderator. *Exception:* You may rise from your seat and loudly call “Point of Order” if you wish immediately to challenge the appropriateness of the procedure then being followed.
- ***The usual time limit for comments from the floor is three (3) minutes, but your neighbors will appreciate if you limit yourself to two minutes*** (and you’ll likely be more persuasive too).
- Begin by stating your name and address (or board/committee you represent).
- Speak only to the motion before the Meeting at the moment.
- Address your remarks to the Moderator. No personal speech- you may reference or respond to a prior speaker’s comments, but do not engage in personal commentary, e.g., about the person, his or her character, *etc.*
- Rude or disrespectful speech will not be tolerated.
- While all may speak on a motion more than once, no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to has spoken once. Repetitive or redundant comments should be avoided.

Questions

Speakers may ask a question of another person in the hall (typically, a prior speaker or Town official), but that question must be addressed through the Moderator. For example, “Mr. Moderator, I have a question for the Finance Committee Chairman.” The Moderator will determine whether and when to have the question answered. Dialogue between two persons is not allowed.

Moving/Calling the Question (Ending Debate)

A speaker may not participate in debate and then finish their comments with a motion to move/call the question. Such a motion must be the only thing the speaker says on that trip to the microphone. The Moderator may exercise his discretion not to entertain such motions if, in his judgement, the motion is premature.

Amendments

Simple amendments to a motion that change only a few words or numbers can be moved verbally. All other amendments must be presented to the Moderator in writing. All amendments must be “within the scope” of the article under consideration, i.e., broadly consistent with the issue as described in the article.

Voting

The Moderator will generally call for a voice vote. When a count is required, the Moderator will ask for a show of hands. Please follow instructions given at these times. After voting by any method, the Moderator will declare the outcome. Any seven (7) voters may challenge the Moderator’s call of the vote and demand a formal count (or re-count). Such a challenge must be made immediately after the Moderator declares the outcome. The challenger should immediately call out, “I question the vote!” and then the Moderator will ask whether six additional voters also wish to challenge the declared outcome.