

# How to Submit a “Citizens Petition” Warrant Article for Town Meeting

A Message from the Town Administrator

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Several times a year we get asked how a citizen can submit a question/warrant article to the Town to be placed on an upcoming town meeting warrant. Here is a quick summary to help clarify the process:

The Board of Selectmen is the body responsible for developing the “warrant”, or the list of articles, that is presented to the voters at town meeting for consideration and vote. Most articles are developed and submitted by the various town officials, but citizens are able to submit an article to be placed on the warrant.

The petitioner(s) should write the question that they wish to bring to Town Meeting. While we cannot provide legal guidance to you, we *may* be able to help with the basic formatting of your article. The petition itself is typically a sheet that includes the written article/question language at the top, and has spaces for petitioners to sign below. A copy of this form is available through the Town Clerk's office. If you want to see some sample language of an older petition voted at town meeting, look at previous years' town reports (in person at the town offices, or on-line on the Town's website).

A petition to add an article to an *Annual* Town meeting warrant must be signed by at least 10 registered voters of the town. To submit an article to be added to the warrant for a *Special* Town Meeting, the citizen's petition must be signed by at least 100 registered voters, or 10% of the total number of voters, whichever is less. If you are requesting that a Special Town Meeting *be called*, the citizen's petition must be signed by 200 registered voters, or 20% of the total number of voters, whichever is less. When you are going out to collect the signatures, please note that every copied petition page **MUST** have the exact verbiage in the article so the citizens know what they are signing. (M.G.L Ch.39 sec 10)

The signed petition must first go to the Town Clerk's office to check to be sure it has the required number of registered voter signatures. The petition is then forwarded to the Selectmen's office. The Selectmen must then place the article on the next town meeting warrant.

Please be mindful that any article dealing with a zoning bylaw change must be reviewed by the Planning board at a public hearing, so it is important to contact that office regarding your proposed article as early as possible. Money articles require that the source of the funds be identified in the article.

For each town meeting, there is a deadline by which both town officials and citizens must submit their articles. For the May 20, 2019 town meeting, the deadline for submitting articles is April 3rd. At the town meeting, it is the lead petitioner's responsibility to "move" (read) the question when prompted by the Moderator.

[Click here for signature form](#)

For more details, feel free to call 774-261-4012 or 774-261-4021.