

RSU No. 5 Budget Adoption Process

2010-2011 Budget

State law requires all regional school unit budgets to be approved in a two- step voter approval process. The first step is the budget meeting, which is conducted at a single location in much the same manner as the tradition New England style town meeting. At the budget meeting, the budget is presented to the region voters in various articles for their consideration. Voters may discuss and act upon each of the budget articles. The budget expenditures are presented at this meeting in 11 separate articles called "cost centers." After acting upon the expenditure articles, the voters then act upon articles that raise funds for the schools, as well as a budget summary article. If the articles to raise funds are voted in at an amount lower than the expenditure articles, voters must go back and vote to adjust the expenditure articles. Thus, it is important for voters to participate in the entire meeting.

A more detailed explanation entitled "Abbreviated Summary of Town Meeting Procedure" provided by Jim Boyles is attached.

The second voter approval step is the budget validation referendum. This referendum is conducted at separate voting locations for each town of the regional school unit. Voters will vote in voting booths on a single "Yes/No" question -whether they approve the budget previously adopted by the voters at the budget meeting. If a combined majority of the voters at the referendum ratify the budget adopted at the budget meeting, the annual budget is approved. If they do not ratify the budget previously adopted, state law requires that the school board submit a new budget to this two step voter approval process, which will continue until a budget is enacted. If this occurs after July 1, the last budget adopted by the Board of Directors is the operating budget until a final budget is approved and validated.

The timeline for the continued development of the RSU No. 5 2010-2011 budget is as follows:

May 26, 2010	Annual Budget Meeting at 6:30 p.m. Please note: you must register to vote prior to the meeting to be eligible to vote at this meeting.
June 8, 2010	Budget validation referendum held in each town

Town Clerks will certify the results of the vote and send the totals to the District within 24 hours of determination of the results of the referendum. After all results have been returned, the Board declares whether the voters approved the budget and sends certification to the towns. The budget is approved by a simple majority of the combined voters from the three towns.

If voters do not validate budget that was approved at the Budget Meeting, the Board will hold another Budget Meeting, at least 10 days after the vote, to repeat the process. If after July 1, the last budget approved by the Board of Directors will become the operational budget until a budget is approved and validated.

Abbreviated Summary of Town Meeting Procedure

A Town Meeting is based on a duly posted Warrant that contains specific Articles to be acted upon. It is NOT an information meeting, a debate, or a hearing. The meeting is confined to action on the Articles presented. Further, nothing can occur related to an Article until a motion related to it (called a Main Motion) is moved, seconded, and thereby is before the house for discussion and action. Only registered voters in the towns involved may propose action relevant to an Article or vote at any time.

General Procedure:

1. The presiding officer calls the meeting to order; confirms that the warrant containing the articles has been duly posted to the public; opens nominations from the floor for a moderator; conducts the vote for a moderator (simple majority); and swears in the moderator-- after which the moderator takes over proceedings.

NOTE: The main duties of the moderator are to keep the meeting orderly and to move it along to resolution of each Article in timely fashion. Maine Statutory Requirements state that (a.) A person may not speak before being recognized by the Moderator; (b.) A person shall be silent at the Moderator's command; (c.) When a vote declared by a moderator is questioned by at least seven voters, he or she is required to make it certain by polling the voters (i.e. if the result of a voice vote is thus challenged, a hand vote would have to be held); and (d.) A non-voter may not speak without the consent of 2/3 of the voters present.

2. (The following applies to each Article): The Moderator asks for a Motion and Second on the Article to put it before the house. Usually, this Motion is made as recommended by the sponsors.
3. The Moderator declares this Main Motion duly before the house, and opens the floor for discussion and possible Amendments. Usually, the sponsors are recognized to speak first.
4. Discussion and Amendments are limited to the specific current Main Motion before the house. Amendments (duly made through a motion and a second) are in order (one at a time), and may involve word and/or dollar changes. Each proposed Amendment may be discussed and must eventually be brought to a vote. If the Amendment fails, consideration of the original Main Motion continues. If the Amendment passes, further consideration of the new current Main Motion continues (this is the original Main Motion modified by the passed Amendment). And so it goes through each proposed Amendment -- an original Main Motion may be amended multiple times.
5. When no further Amendments are proposed, the Moderator calls for a vote on the current Main Motion, amended or not as the case may be.
6. So the meeting goes from Article to Article.
7. When all Articles have been voted upon, the Moderator asks for a Motion and Second to adjourn - vote is taken - meeting adjourned.

Prepared by: James G. Boyles (a town meeting moderator for 19 consecutive years)

Resource: Maine Municipal Association, "Town Meeting & Elections Manual", Revised January 1994.