

GUILFORD MEETING RULES OF PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

The select board, other Boards, Commissions and Committees of the Town of Guilford of is required by law to. conduct its meetings following the Vermont Open Meeting Law. 1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314. A “meeting” is defined as a gathering of a quorum of the members of a public body for the purpose of discussing the. business of the public body or for the purpose of taking action. 1V.S.A. § 310(3)(A).

Meetings of the select board, other Boards, Commissions and Committees of the Town of Guilford must always be open to the public, except as provided in 1V.S.A. § 313 for executive session. The purpose of these meetings is to conduct the business of the public body efficiently and effectively, while still allowing a reasonable opportunity for public comment.

APPLICATION

This policy setting forth rules of procedure applies to the select board, other Boards, Commissions and Committees of the Town of Guilford, referred to below as “the body.” These rules apply to all regular, special, and emergency meetings of the body.

ORGANIZATION

1. The body must annually elect a chair and a vice-chair, who will serve until the body’s next annual meeting, unless otherwise removed. Vacancies in the offices of chair or vice-chair will be filled by majority vote of the body.
2. The body may vote to remove the chair or vice-chair at any time and elect a new chair or vice-chair by majority vote.
3. The chair of the body or, in the chair’s absence, the vice-chair will preside over all meetings. If both the chair and the vice-chair are absent, a member selected by the body will act as presiding officer for that meeting.
4. A majority of the total membership of the body constitutes a quorum. If a quorum of the members of the body is not present at a meeting, no meeting will take place.
4. No single member of the body has the authority to represent or act on behalf of the body unless either by statute or by majority vote, the body has delegated such
5. authority as recorded in its meeting minutes.
6. All members, including the chair and vice-chair of the body, are entitled to full participation in its proceedings, including the right to attend, speak, make motions, and vote.
7. Meetings of the body may be recessed (i.e., a brief break), or adjourned (i.e., postponed) and continued at a later date, time, and place certain. A motion stating the time and place that a meeting is either recessed or adjourned to must be made in public before the meeting is recessed or adjourned and such motion recorded in the meeting minutes.
8. A majority of the total membership of the body constitutes a quorum. If a quorum of the

- members of the body is not present at a meeting, no meeting will take place
9. These rules may be amended by a majority vote of the body and must be reviewed annually.

AGENDAS

1. Each regular and special meeting of the body must have an agenda with time allotted for each item of business to be considered by the body. The Chair and Town Administrator will create and manage the body's agenda. Notwithstanding the Chair's and Town Administrator's authority over the agenda, the body, in its discretion, may amend the final content of the agenda before or, to some extent, during the body's next meeting. Those who wish to add an item(s) to the meeting agenda need to contact the Town Administrator no later than the Wednesday, 5:00pm prior to the next scheduled meeting to request its inclusion on the agenda.
2. At least 48 hours prior to a regular meeting, and at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting, a meeting agenda shall be posted in or near the Guilford Town Office and at the following designated public places in the municipality: Green River Covered Bridge and the Guilford Country Store. At least 48 hours prior to a regular meeting, and at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting, a meeting agenda shall be posted on www.guilfordvt.gov. The agenda must also be made available to any person who requests such agenda prior to the meeting.
3. All business will be conducted in the same order as it appears on the noticed agenda, unless voted otherwise, except that any addition to or deletion from the noticed agenda may be made as the first act of business at the meeting. No additions to or deletions from the agenda will be considered once the first act of business at the meeting has commenced. Any other adjustment to the noticed agenda, for example, changing the order of business, or postponing or tabling actions, may be made by a majority vote of the body.
4. No binding action can be taken on matters not appearing on the agenda, unless when necessary to respond to an unforeseen occurrence or condition requiring immediate attention by the body. Nor can the agenda item entitled "other business" be used for taking binding action.
5. There is no allowance for voting by proxy. A member must be either physically present or, if applicable, present using electronic or other means in order to vote.

MEETINGS

1. Regular Selectboard meetings shall take place on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at 6:30 PM in the Guilford Town Office, unless it falls on a holiday; then the meeting will be the Wednesday immediately following at 6:30pm. Other Board, Committee, and Commission meetings are called by the Chair as necessitated.
2. Special meetings shall be publicly announced at least 24 hours in advance by giving notice to all members of the body unless previously waived; to an editor, publisher or news director, or radio station serving the area; and to any person who has requested notice of such meetings. In addition, notices shall be posted in the Guilford Town Office and at the following designated places in the municipality: Green River Covered Bridge and the Guilford Country Store.
3. Emergency meetings may be held without public announcement, without posting of notices, and without 24-hour notice to members, provided some public notice thereof is given as soon as

possible before any such meeting. Emergency meetings may be held only when necessary to respond to an unforeseen occurrence or condition requiring immediate attention by the public body

4. A member of the body may attend a regular, special, or emergency meeting by electronic or other means without being physically present at a designated meeting location, so long as the member identifies him or herself when the meeting is convened, and is able to hear and be heard throughout the meeting.
5. Whenever one or more members attend electronically, voting must be done by roll call. If a quorum or more of the body attend a meeting without being physically present at a designated meeting location, the following requirements shall be met:
 - a. At least 24 hours prior to the meeting, or as soon as practicable prior to an emergency meeting, the body shall publicly announce the meeting and post notice of the meeting in the Guilford Town Office and at the following designated places in the municipality: Green River Covered Bridge and the Guilford Country Store.
 - b. The public announcement and posted notice of the meeting shall designate at least one physical location where a member of the public can attend and participate in the meeting. At least one member of the body, or at least one staff or designee of the body, shall be physically present at each designated meeting location.
6. In recognition of those required times of executive sessions, all members of the body shall respect the confidentiality of discussions during such sessions, and shall refrain from publicly discussing such outside of those sessions, realizing that such violations are subject to the penalties set forth in 1 V.S.A. § 314.

MOTIONS AND VOTING

1. Any member of the body may make a motion.
2. A member of the body may speak or make a motion only after being recognized by the presiding officer.
3. Members of the body are not limited by the type of motions they may make (e.g., motion to amend, table, reconsider, object to consideration of the question, etc.), though all members should be aware of the consequences of the motion they make and/or approve.
 - a. Only members of the select board may make a motion of point of order. A select board meeting is not like a town meeting, where residents are the public body at a town meeting. The difference stems from the fact that the deliberative assembly at Town Meeting is the registered voters of the Town, while the deliberative assembly at a Selectboard meeting is the Selectboard itself. While members of the public are afforded the right under VT's Open Meeting Law to attend and comment at Selectboard meetings, they are not afforded the same privileges as the assembly (Selectboard) itself.
 - b. A member of the body may call a point of order at any time, without being recognized, to bring attention to a potential rule violation. A point of order does not require [a second or] a vote
4. Motions made by members of the body require a second to proceed with discussion and/or action, if any.

5. The maker of a motion has the right to speak first in debate once the motion has been restated by the presiding officer, and the member is recognized by the presiding officer.
6. Members must limit their comments and motions to the meeting agenda item under consideration.
7. All motions must be phrased in the affirmative.
8. All motions must be restated by the presiding officer prior to a vote.
9. Responses to voice votes, when provided, must be expressed as either “aye” or “nay.” Members may also abstain or recuse themselves from voting.
10. A member may change their vote up until such time as the vote is announced by the presiding officer.
11. Any member of the body may request a roll call vote. Whenever one or more members attend a meeting electronically, a roll call vote is required for votes that are not unanimous.
12. The presiding officer must announce the result of all votes and what action, if any, the body has taken.
13. A motion to end or limit debate may be made at any time after a member has been recognized by the presiding officer. Motions to end or limit debate require a vote by the total membership of the body.
14. No member can speak more than once on any agenda item or motion until every other member choosing to speak thereon has been given the opportunity to
15. do so.
16. Only a member of the body may call a point of order at any time, without being recognized, to bring attention to a potential rule violation. A point of order does not require a second or a vote.
17. The presiding officer will rule on all points of order and state their justification.
18. Any member may appeal the presiding officer’s ruling on a point of order, without being recognized. An appeal does not require a second. If appealed, the ruling of the presiding officer may be overruled by a majority of the total membership of the body.
19. The failure of the body to strictly adhere to any provision of this section will not invalidate any action taken, unless such action was taken by less than a majority of the total membership of the body or some other standard as specified by state law.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. All meetings of the body are meetings in the public, not of the public. Members of the public shall be afforded reasonable opportunity to express opinions about matters considered by the body, so long as order is maintained according to these rules.
2. It is the responsibility and role of the Chair to manage public comment or the attendance of a disruptive individual. Participants/Individuals who attend a meeting by Zoom will be required to:
 - a. Show their full name on the screen
 - b. Mute their audio/microphone
 - c. Keep their video off until called upon.
 - d. Chat function during select board meetings via Zoom will be off.

3. The Open Meeting Law contemplates that the Board will utilize Roberts Rules of Order - meaning the public may speak only when recognized by the chair or as part of a public comment period. The chat function allowing the public to make statements during the course of the meeting without being recognized and identified does not comply with Open Meeting Law procedures.
4. All meetings of the body are open to the public.
5. Meetings of the body are a limited public forum.
6. At the conclusion of the business portion of the meeting, there may be 15 minutes afforded for public comment. By majority vote, the body may increase the time for public comment.
7. No member of the public may speak longer than 5 minutes without the consent of the presiding officer.
8. Speakers will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis, though the presiding officer may suspend this rule to protect against repetitive or irrelevant comments and to ensure that varied, especially opposing viewpoints, are heard.
9. Speakers will be asked and compelled to state their name and the road they live on.
10. Members of the public must be acknowledged by the presiding officer before speaking.
11. Members of the public must wait their turn to speak and may not interrupt others.
12. A member of the public can only speak more than once on the same agenda item, time permitting, with the consent of the presiding officer and only after every other member of the public has been given an opportunity to speak.
13. The balance of time not used by a speaker will expire and cannot be reserved or yielded to another.
14. Members of the public do not have the right to vote on meeting agenda items.

ORDER

1. Order must be observed by all persons attending the meeting, whether in person or electronically.
2. No signs or posters are permitted inside the meeting room.
3. Comment by the public must be addressed to the chair or to the body as a whole, and not to any individual member of the body or public. Board members may direct comments to the chair or to the public. While there is no Vermont Statute that mandates or requires a board member comment be directed to the chair - having the chair work as a conduit, may facilitate and simplify a discussion involving public comments and board member response.
4. No person may disrupt, disturb, or otherwise impede the orderly conduct of the meeting or interrupt any person while they're speaking.
5. The only people who may interrupt another from speaking are:
 - a. A member of the body for a point of order directed towards the presiding officer
 - b. The presiding officer themselves, to enforce a rule.
 - c. Speakers must refrain from repetitious speech or speech that is irrelevant to the business of the body.
 - d. Members of both the body and the public must obey all orders and rulings of the presiding officer.

- e. Members of both the body and the public must obey all orders and rulings of the presiding officer. The presiding officer should adhere to the following process to address any disruption to a meeting and as needed to restore order, but may bypass any or all steps when they determine, in their sole discretion, that deviation from the process is warranted:
 - i. Call the meeting to order and remind the member of the body or the public of the applicable rules of procedure.
 - ii. Declare a recess or table the issue under consideration.
 - iii. Adjourn (i.e., postpone) and continue the meeting until a place and time certain or close (end) the meeting.
 - iv. Ask disorderly person(s) to leave the meeting room for the remainder of that meeting.
 - v. Request law enforcement assistance in removing a disorderly person(s) from the meeting, when their conduct substantially impairs the effective conduct of the meeting, for the remainder of that meeting.

MEETING MINUTES

Minutes must give a "true indication of the business of the meeting," which may require supplementing the following statutorily required elements: members present; active participants at the meeting; motions, proposals, and resolutions made, offered, and considered and what disposition is made of the same; the result of any votes taken; and a record of individual votes if a roll call is taken.

Minutes must be taken of every meeting of the body.

Minutes must be available for inspection five calendar days after the meeting.

Minutes must be posted no later than five calendar days after the meeting to an official website, if one exists, that is maintained or has been designated as the official website of the body.

Minutes must be approved by a majority of the total membership of the body.

Minutes can be amended by concurrence of a majority of the total membership of the body.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This policy will become effective immediately upon its adoption by the Select board of the Town of Guilford

Adopted 10 June, 2024:

Zon Eastes, Chair

Zon Eastes

Michael Becker

Michael Becker

Tara Cheney

Tara Cheney

Chip Carter

Chip Carter

Verandah Porche

Verandah Porche