

CLICK ON THE TOPIC YOU DESIRE



INFORMATION FOR ALL COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS FROM YOUR TOWN CLERK

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Thank you for volunteering to serve on one of Wenham’s boards and committees. Many of our municipal services simply could not be delivered without the efforts of people like you. Your dedication and willingness to serve your community is greatly appreciated.

The purpose of this handout is to assist you in understanding some of the laws, procedures and traditions associated with participating in municipal government in the Town of Wenham.

REQUIREMENTS

Per Chapter XXVII of our Town bylaw in order to participate on a Town board, the applicant must be a resident of the Town of Wenham.

All elected and appointed officials of any municipality are required to take an oath of office prior to participating in any committee action.

There are open meeting law and conflict of interest requirements as well. Once elected or appointed, the Town Clerk will notify you with those details.

COMPOSITION OF ANY TOWN BOARD

All Town boards shall annually elect a Chair and other necessary officers. Each Town board has the discretion to elect their officers. The organization of the committee needs to be communicated to the Town Administrator's office and be visible on the committee/board's page of the website.

MEETINGS

A public meeting occurs at any time a quorum of the Town board (or subcommittee) members get together to discuss or consider any public business or policy over which the board has some jurisdiction or advisory power. Unless otherwise stated, the Open Meeting Law requirements and procedures identified here apply to all types of meetings including: special meetings, workshops, emergency meetings, sub-committee meetings and public hearings.

No quorum of a Town board shall meet outside a properly posted meeting for the purpose of deciding on or deliberating toward a decision on any matter.

No votes taken in open session shall be by secret ballot.

All meetings of a Town board shall be open to the public and any person shall be permitted to attend any meeting except under those circumstances listed in section Executive Session.

All committee and board members need to be acquainted with the complete and often revised Open Meeting Law which can be found here <https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>

The MA Code can be read here;

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/09/25/New%20OML%20Regulations%20%28Clean%20version%29.pdf>

OPEN MEETING COMPLAINTS

Anyone can file an OML complaint via the process set forth by the Attorney General. Complainant must use the complaint form found here <https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>. Complainant must file complaint with the public body and the Town Clerk. The public body has 14 business days to respond to the complaint. The public body needs to meet to review the complaint and respond within that 14 business day period. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response by the public body, they can report it to the Attorney General who will then investigate and issue a declination or a determination.

RESIGNATIONS

A board member who is no longer able to serve for whatever reason, including a change in residency, should resign promptly so that the vacancy may be noticed and filled in a timely manner. A **written resignation** letter should be submitted to the chair of the board who should notify the Board of Selectmen and file it with the Town Clerk.

The Chair of any Town board shall notify the appointing authority in writing when a vacancy occurs on the Town board. Whenever possible, the appointing authority, usually the Board of Selectmen, shall fill the vacancy within sixty (60) days of receipt of the notice of vacancy.

POSTING MEETINGS

Prior to posting a meeting in Wenham, the boards must reserve space. Most meetings occur at Town Hall in either the Selectmen's Meeting Room on the first floor or in the 2nd Floor Conference Room which must be reserved in advance via the Town Administrator's office by calling 978-468-5520 x2 or by emailing Nicci Roebuck at nroebuck@wenhamma.gov. The Council on Aging and Library can also accommodate board meetings but should be contacted in advance as well.

COVID19 updates – all meetings are remote via zoom. To schedule a zoom meeting for your board, the chair needs to consult with Jackie jbresnahan@wenhamma.gov

As per the Open Meeting Law, a completed Meeting Notice form provided by the Town Clerk stating the board name, day, date, time, place of the meeting including street address and an agenda of the meeting must be submitted to the Town Clerk, dbucco@wenhamma.gov. Meeting Agendas must be posted at a minimum of 48 WORK WEEKDAY HOURS prior to the meeting. This does not include legal holidays, Saturday or Sunday. The Town Clerk will date the notice and post it on the Town website and file it in the Meeting Postings Book in the office.

In the event of an emergency meeting, a notice shall still be given to the Town Clerk as soon as possible, the 48 hour guideline does not apply in emergency situations.

Please remember that all necessary information on posting meetings, agendas and executive sessions etc. is located in the Open Meeting Law Guide which can always be found <https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>

According to the OML, all meetings must be posted at least 48 WORK WEEKDAY hours in advance, excluding Saturdays, Sundays & holidays. **Please remember that we close at 1 on Friday and to take into account any weekend and HOLIDAYS when figuring out posting deadlines.** Email your meeting posting to treid@wenhamma.gov allowing for sufficient time to get the meeting posted within the 48 work hours deadline. See time chart:

<mailto:treid@wenhamma.gov>

Meeting Time:	Must be RECEIVED by the Clerk by:
Monday AM	Thursday am
Monday PM	Thursday 3:30
Tuesday AM	Thursday 3:30
Tuesday PM	Friday 12:00
Wednesday AM	Friday 12:00
Wednesday PM	Monday 3:30
Thursday AM	Monday 3:30
Thursday PM	Tuesday 3:30
Friday AM	Tuesday 3:30
Friday PM	Wednesday 3:30

Meeting notices must contain **day** & date, time & place of the meeting including a physical address as well as a list of topics that are sufficiently specific to reasonably inform the public of the issues to be discussed. **Please use the attached and current Town of Wenham Template and send it electronically to the clerk, treid@wenhamma.gov. Please do not include your committee/board members on this email.**

Once your meeting is posted, please go online to check that it is correct and let the Clerk know if there are any discrepancies or changes to your meeting.

AMENDING A MEETING POSTING

A public body can amend a notice within 48 hours of a meeting but only to include a topic that was not reasonably anticipated by the chair. That topic does not necessarily have to be an emergency but could be an issue that arises, for example, the day of the meeting that the public body wishes to address. Although a public body may consider a topic that was not listed on the meeting notice if unanticipated, the Attorney General encourages public bodies to postpone discussion and action on topics that are controversial or may be of particular interest to the public if those topics were not listed in the meeting notice.

If you indeed to post an amended agenda be sure to notate that it is an AMENDED agenda on the posting. Best practice also suggests that the change is highlighted on the agenda.

FYI: If a meeting topic is proposed after the meeting notice is posted, the public body is encouraged to update its posting to provide the public with as much notice as possible of what subjects will be discussed during a meeting. Although a public body may consider a topic that was not listed in the meeting notice if unanticipated, the Attorney General strongly encourages

public bodies to postpone discussion and action on topics that are controversial or may be of particular interest to the public if those topics were not listed in the meeting notice.



Town of Wenham Meeting Posting

*Email postings to treid@wenhamma.gov or bring to the clerk's office.
Notice of Public Meeting – (As required by M.G.L.Ch.30A §18-28)*

Board/Committee:

Day & Date:

Time:

Location:

Signature:

AGENDA

138 Main Street, Wenham, MA 01984 - (978) 468-5520 - www.wenhamma.gov

Minutes

Every town board is required to maintain accurate records of its meetings referred to as “minutes”. These minutes are public records as soon as the meeting has concluded. Draft minutes may be requested. Minutes should be approved by the committee ASAP, ideally at the next scheduled meeting.

Each set of minutes must include the following: day, date, time and location of the meeting, name(s) of members who were present and those absent, summary of the discussions on which subjects, “exact wording” of motions, votes and official actions taken, and an additional materials that were presented/discussed.

Approved minutes need to be easily accessible, ideally on the board/committee’s page of the website.

The Town Clerk in Wenham should be kept abreast of where any board/committee/commission’s minutes are being held.

APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Openings and vacancies on any and all Town boards are posted on the website and announced at the televised Board of Selectmen’s meetings which usually are held on the first and third Tuesday of each month.

Interested applicants must submit a letter of interest to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) via the Town Administrator’s office. The letter of interest should include a resume and/or background documentation illustrating any related experience and a brief explanation for their interest in the open position. Appointments are made at the sole discretion of the BOS, who may request input from other boards or commissions. The candidates may be asked for an interview by one or more members of the BOS before the full Board of Selectmen takes action to appoint.

RE-APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Reappointments are not automatically issued. Prior to the expiration of all appointments, the Town Administrator’s office will notify board members with expiring terms and request letters of interest for reappointment. Board members must submit their letter of interest to the Board of Selectmen via the Town Administrator’s office to be considered. Failure to respond to these inquiries may result in non-reappointment.

APPOINTED? NOW WHAT?

The Board of Selectmen will make appointment decisions at one of their televised meetings and will then sign an appointment certificate for each appointee. The certificate will be delivered to the Town Clerk who notifies the appointee of all that is required of them, including information about taking one’s oath of office and all Open Meeting Law and State Ethics requirements. The appointee shall be responsible to appear at the Office of the Town Clerk within 14 days of receiving notification of their appointment to sign the certificate and be sworn in to their duties. Appointments should be made with the Town Clerk to ensure that she is available.