DALTON TOWN MEETING
MODERATOR'S RULES of PROCEDURE

As provided by RSA 40:4, the Moderator may establish the rules to be used at Town Meetings. The general rules or any specific rule, or ruling made by the Moderator during the meeting, may be overruled by a vote of the townspeople. A voter may raise such a request by calling a <u>Point of Order</u>. A <u>Point of Order</u> takes precedence over all other discussion and <u>may be called at any time</u>.

Robert's Rules will not be used; rather the following rules are established for the Town of Dalton Town Meetings. The main objective is to avoid getting bogged down in procedural quagmires and to encourage free, open and adequate debate.

The Articles will be considered as follows:

- Articles will be considered in the order that they appear on the Warrant. The Moderator or the voters may elect to change the order if doing so will make good sense in the discussion.
- The Article number will be announced and the text will be presented in full.
- The Moderator will seek a person to move and second the consideration of the Article.
- Upon being properly moved and seconded, a person, usually a Selectman or the Petitioner will be recognized to explain and defend the Article. Presentation should be to the point and as short as possible to convey the required information.
- The Article will be placed on the floor for debate and final vote.

The following rules will apply to all speakers:

1. No one shall speak unless recognized by the Moderator. Only one speaker will be recognized at a time. Dalton voters and those who have not spoken on the Article will be given preference.
2. Each speaker shall have 3 minutes to speak, will use the microphone and begin by providing his/her name and address and Town of residence. Persons with physical limitations will not be required to use the microphone.
3. All speakers are expected to direct their comments to the Moderator; to be courteous, respectful and to speak to the issue under discussion not to individuals. Conversation between individuals, personal attacks and inappropriate language will not be tolerated. The Moderator <u>may</u> choose to allow a person to respond to a question raised from the floor.
4. Speakers should be concise and not repeat information already presented. A speaker may speak only with respect to the Article on the floor, except
   a) a motion to amend the Article on the floor may be made, or
   b) a motion to Call the Question may be made.
   Speakers who are repeating points previously made in the discussion or who are taking excessive time will be asked to end their presentation
5. Motions made to amend an Article must be made in writing before the end of debate. Only one motion to amend will be allowed on the floor at a time. Motions must be worded in a positive sense. Motions which require a "NO" vote to take a positive action will not be allowed. For example: "I move that the budget not be adopted." is unacceptable.
6. Call for Question motions to limit debate shall require 2/3 or more of those voting to pass. A motion to end debate is subject to the following limitations:

a) persons standing in wait at the microphone or those who have been recognized as in line to speak will be allowed to speak before the Call for Question vote is taken or
b) if the Moderator is of the opinion that the voters have not had adequate opportunity to discuss an issue, a Call for Question may be refused.

7. The audience shall maintain decorum so that the speaker may be heard by all. If any person behaves in a disorderly manner or willfully violates any procedural rule and, after notice from the Moderator, persists in such behavior, that person shall be removed from the meeting. (RSA 40:8)

The following rules shall apply to voting:

1. Colored voter cards will be provided to each registered Dalton voter when they sign in with the Supervisors of the Checklist. Voters will signify their vote by raising their card until they have been counted by the Moderator. Each voter may only raise one card. Votes will be registered either by a clear plurality or by counting each vote card. A majority of those voting is required to pass an article; a tie vote fails.

2. Secret Ballot: Prior to voting with cards, any five voters present may request in writing that the vote be made by secret written "yes-no" ballot (RSA 40:4-a). A majority of those voting is required to pass an article; a tie vote fails.

3. Questioning a Vote: Immediately after voting with cards, any seven voters present may may request (verbally or in writing) that the vote be retaken by secret "yes-no" ballot (RSA 40:4-b).

4. Motions to reconsider an Article may only be made <u>immediately</u> following the vote on the Article. The following limitations apply to reconsideration:
   a) Mandatory Reconsideration (RSA 33:8-a): If a motion to reconsider a vote on a bond issue for $100,000 or more passes, the Article may not be reconsidered until a reconvened Town Meeting for this purpose is held. The reconvened Town Meeting must be held not less than seven days after the original vote. This provision is automatic without the need for voter approval.
   b) Optional Reconsideration: Voters may postpone reconsideration of any Article by voting to restrict reconsideration in accordance with RSA 40:10. If the voters pass such a motion, then the Article may not be reconsidered until a reconvened Town Meeting for this purpose is held. The reconvened Town Meeting must be held not less than seven days after the original vote.
   c) Reminder: Any rule of the Moderator or a decision made by the voters may be modified at any time prior to the end of the Town Meeting. Therefore, it is not possible to absolutely prevent reconsideration of an Article.

5. The Moderator may vote on all Articles. However, the Moderator plans to vote only if it is necessary to break a tie or to force a tie vote on an Article that passes by one vote and which the Moderator opposes.