

# Plainville Town Meeting

## Overview

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### What is Town Meeting?

Town Meeting is a gathering of town citizens called to meet and conduct the legislative business of the town.

Town meeting can be **open** – where all registered voters are empowered to participate, or **representative** – where registered voters are elected to represent their constituents at the meeting.

The Annual Town Meeting is called each year by towns to conduct the necessary business of the town. Additional town meetings can be called by the town's leaders to conduct any additional business as need; these are called Special Town Meetings.

To conduct meetings fairly and record the decisions properly, each town adopts some parliamentary laws by which the meetings are managed.

### History

Today's Town Meeting is loosely based on the custom established in Athens around 400 B.C. of assembling decision-makers in an open air forum. Continuing the tradition over 700 years ago, Switzerland began conducting open air town meetings called Landsgemeinde.

New England towns adopted the town meeting tradition over 300 years ago, which continues to this day.

### Importance

The town's business cannot be conducted without the actions taken at Town Meeting. Among the several important decisions that are made at every Town Meeting are:

- The salaries for elected officials
- Appropriation of money to run the town ("the town budget")
- Amendments to the town's local statutes ("the town by-laws")

### For Plainville

Plainville practices an open Town Meeting. All properly registered voters can participate in discussion and vote on issues during the meeting.

The Annual Town Meeting is usually scheduled to begin the last Monday in April, but the board of selectmen can change that to a later date. A Special Town Meeting can be called by the board of selectmen at any time, as the need arises.

Plainville conducts its town meeting using the rules and practices contained in Town Meeting Time. Consult the "Town Meeting Procedural Guide" for how Plainville puts these rules into practice.