

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT TOWN OF NORTHFIELD SELECT BOARD MEETINGS

Approved by the Select Board 10/2/18

Updated by the Select Board 12/5/23

The Northfield Select Board welcomes everyone to its meetings and all other public meetings of the Town of Northfield. All regular and special meetings of the boards and committees of the Town of Northfield shall be open to the public and shall conform to the Open Meeting Law, Executive Sessions are closed to the public and will be held only as prescribed by the statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is important to recognize that the Open Meeting Law affords the opportunity to listen to the proceedings but not necessarily participate.

During meetings of the Select Board an attempt will be made to find a balance between hearing from members of the community and conducting required business. In order to achieve this objective, these procedures are established for the Select Board:

1. The Chair shall preside over the meeting and may acknowledge speakers from the public. The Chair shall determine the length of time (subject to the Citizens Concerns Protocol) and ensure that comments are appropriate. All remarks will be addressed to the Chair rather than directly to individual Board members present.
2. During each regularly scheduled meeting a time will be designated for the public where individuals, or group representatives may be invited to address the meeting during the Citizens Concerns period. This period is a time to bring up something not already on the agenda. In general, it is a time to listen to or acknowledge concerns. It is not a time for discussion. The time for this Public Comment period is set in the Citizens Concerns Protocol Policy. The Chair, with advice from the Board members, may determine an appropriate time to revisit any of the concerns/issues raised by the public.
3. Comments made by anyone at the meeting should at all times be respectful. Defamatory, abusive or threatening remarks are always out of order.
4. Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of town operations and programs but may at no time threaten the Board or Town personnel, nor can the Board discuss personal complaints about Town personnel. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving Town employees.
5. The Select Board will insure that the agenda is posted in conformity with the statutes and where practical supporting material will appear on the Town website. Minutes of the meetings shall be maintained as required and available to the public from the Town Clerk's office or on the website.