

Moderator's Guidelines and Helpful Tips for Powerpoint Presentations at Acton Town Meeting

In the recent past, Powerpoint presentations have been prepared and used for most, if not all, articles/motions presented at Town Meeting. Preparation of such presentations is a time consuming process that typically is done by staff. As a result, the Moderator requests that if a presenter wishes to use such a presentation at Town Meeting, it be submitted to the Moderator and Town Manager's office completed at least 10 days prior to the start of the Town Meeting and that the Moderator be notified by the presenter of the intent to use a presentation.

The Moderator believes such presentations should be limited to major budgetary articles or other issues of highly significant importance to town meeting members and will discourage the use of Powerpoint presentations in *all* other cases. Please consult with the Moderator if you wish to use a Powerpoint presentation and be prepared to rationalize its use. Many presentations are prepared that are not ultimately used and many that are used add little or nothing to the verbal presentation made by the presenter. Generally Powerpoint presentations should be used only for budget articles or highly complex issues.

The Moderator will have all presentations placed on the Town of Acton web site 10 days prior to the start of Town Meeting in order for town meeting members to review them prior to the meeting. In addition, all presentations will be loaded on the computer prior to the commencement of Town Meeting. Under no circumstances will Powerpoint presentations be allowed at Town Meeting if these rules have not been met.

The following guidelines are intended to streamline the presentations made at Town Meeting, to better inform the public, and improve the visibility of such presentations.

A presentation to Town Meeting whether in Powerpoint or as a short verbal presentation should answer the following basic questions:

1. What is the need or problem?
2. What is the proposed solution and why is it the best solution?
3. How much will it cost and how will it be funded (if applicable)?
4. What are the implications if this article does not pass?

Presentations will generally be limited to 8 minutes by the proponent. The Moderator generally holds a pre-Town Meeting meeting and this will be used in part to discuss any requests to exceed this time limitation. Do not try to anticipate all arguments against your presentation as you deliver it – these are likely to come up during the debate and the Moderator will allow the presenter to respond to questions as well as to any issues that are raised that are factual in nature.

If you are giving a Powerpoint presentation, assume the Town's residents will have read the warrant and likely reviewed the presentation ahead of time. DO NOT read the text

of the Powerpoint to the audience – the bullets on the slides should serve as a springboard for your remarks. In this vein it is important that you rehearse your presentation prior to Town Meeting to be sure it meets the time requirement.

Presentation slides should meet the following guidelines:

Text should be in Arial, Times Roman or Verdana, minimum 28 point font with titles at least 32 point font.

Do not exceed 6-7 lines per slide

Maximize the contrast between text and background for greatest clarity for the audience

Graphs, charts, maps and tables should have clearly visible titles and labels; detailed graphs and tables should be available in hard copy or be included in the warrant.

Since the presenter is allotted 8 minutes and a good rule of thumb is one minute per slide, most presentations should be less than 10 pages in length.