

Our selectboard meets once a month and a lot happens between our meetings. What is the best practice for setting the agenda for the next selectboard meeting when issues arise between meetings?

A selectboard can use a variety of methods for setting its next meeting agenda. The process should be detailed in the selectboard's rules of procedure and adopted at the annual organizational meeting after Town Meeting Day. Including the selectboard's process for creating its meeting agenda puts the public on notice for how to get on an agenda and clarifies who is responsible for compiling it.

The initial discussion of what to include on an agenda for a subsequent meeting may occur as part of the public comment period of a preceding meeting. Residents may offer issues of concern during this period. Depending on the topic's importance and resources and time required to address it, the board may request additional information and decide to include the issue on a future agenda before it takes any action.

When an issue of concern arises in between meetings, good rules of procedure outline a process for getting it on an agenda, which may include contacting a town manager, selectboard chair or other municipal official to discuss the issue and request time at the next meeting. Another option is to allow individuals to put their names and issues of concern on a sign-up sheet located in the town offices. The chair or other responsible official, on a set day before the meeting, will take the requests into consideration when compiling the final agenda.

At the meeting, the agenda could be further altered by a vote of the selectboard. VLCT suggests that adjustments to time or additions to address emerging issues be done at the beginning of the meeting. Whatever method the selectboard uses to create its agenda should be codified in the board's rules of procedure. You can download VLCT's Model Selectboard Rules of Procedure from our Resource Library, <http://resources.vlct.org/u/VLCT%20MODEL%20SELECTBOARD%20RULES%20OF%20PROCEDURE%2003-6-09.doc>

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