

2016 TOWN MEETING TUNE UP: OPENING REMARKS

Good morning. It is 10:00 AM, and I call the 2015 annual meetings of the Town of Northfield and the Northfield School District to order.

The selectboard has requested that we start the meeting with the pledge of allegiance. Please stand.

Thank you. I'm Steve Jeffrey. It has been my honor and privilege to serve as your town and school district moderator for the past year and will continue serving until my successor is chosen which may be as soon as article 1 of the warnings are acted upon.

The town meeting is governed by state law and by Robert's Rules of Order unless we adopt some other procedure. Some of the more commonly used rules appear on page three of the town report. I would only add that you are allowed two opportunities to speak at the microphone on each pending question, first when you are recognized by the moderator and second after everyone who wishes to speak a first time has had their opportunity and you are recognized. You may be allowed to speak a third time if the voters agree to suspend the rules by a two-thirds vote or through unanimous consent. Each time you will have up to five minutes before you have to yield the floor, not counting the time you yield the floor temporarily to someone else to respond to a question you pose.

Unless we amend our rules to otherwise allow, Robert's Rules states that non-voters may only speak if the voters agree to allow it through either by suspending our rules through a two-thirds vote or unanimous consent. I ask you now to amend

the rules to allow the school superintendent, town manager and any other school district or town employee not a legal voter of the town of whom a question is asked to be able to respond to such question without requiring a suspension. Is there any objection to amending our rules so? The amendment to our rules is adopted.

I would like to remind the voters that General Roberts has several rules for decorum during debate. Let me just quote some of them (pages 379 through 382).

State law states that

public discussion of Australian ballot issues and all other issues appearing in the warning, other than election of candidates, shall be permitted on that day at the annual meeting, regardless of the location of the polling place.

So, for example, Article 6 of the town meeting is warned to be conducted by Australian ballot in the cafeteria down the hall. This year, we will allow discussion of that article when we come to it, if people feel the need to do so.

The business we are here to conduct appears on pages 1 and 2 of the town report and the fourth page 2 of the school district annual meeting publication.

If there is no objection we will move to article one of warnings and elect a school district and town moderator. It is my intention if you return me to my position to then recess the town meeting to be reconvened immediately upon adjournment of the school meeting.

Article 1: To elect a Town and School District Moderator. Are there any nominations?

After the nomination: There is a 1914 Vermont Supreme Court decision that allows the moderator to not step down during his or her election if he or she is the only candidate, so are there any other nominations?

Thank you. Now, unless there is objection we will now recess the town meeting and conduct the very limited business required of this meeting for the school district.