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# What Is A Town Council?

## COMPOSITION

Suggested - 13 members comprised of 9 representatives elected by wards (each ward would currently be Precincts but wards can be modified when Precincts changed by redistricting) and 4 members elected at-large.

Fewer seats means greater competition.

Elections held in November.

Term limits can be imposed.

Town Councilors run in a ward or Town-wide (at large) providing lesser expense for qualified people to run than Select Board.

Governed by State Ethics Rules.

Town employees cannot be Town Councilors.

Conduct of Meetings

Meets 22x per year.

Deliberates 44-66 hours per year.

Special Meetings held on 48 hours' notice; Emergency Meetings can be held immediately.

## LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

Proposals may be submitted at any time for discussion and consideration. Matter may be considered after public comment. Further study can be ordered, matter can be referred to a Town board or committee for review, and matter may be reconsidered at any further Council meeting.

Public can speak at any regularly scheduled meeting on any matter of public interest or concern.

Council can call for vote at any time on a proposal after at least one meeting where there has been an opportunity for public comment.

Deliberates at least 2x per proposal.

Can approve a budget in whole or in part, or can modify a line item up or down.

Single Town Councilor can delay a vote once for further discussion or investigation.

## BUDGET PREPARATION

Town Council and School Committee meet jointly at a time to be determined to develop joint initiatives as part of budget submissions.

Proposed budget must be published and public hearings held.

Budget must be submitted no less than 30 days before a vote.

## PERSONNEL ISSUES

Town Manager negotiates all contracts except School contracts per State law.

Town Manager can be hired/terminated by 2/3 Town Council Members.

Union contracts approved by Town Council at any meeting, allowing for unlimited time for negotiation.

## Representative Town Meeting

*(Current Form)*

## COMPOSITION

162 Town Meeting members (9 per precinct) and 5 Select Board members.

Many seats already uncontested, and in some instances not enough candidates to fill seats.

Elections must be held in Spring.

No term limits (impractical to add to Town Meeting given inability to fill all Town Meeting seats).

All Select Board candidates run Town-wide, a significant expense *(last successful candidate spent almost \$30,000)*.

Not subject to State Ethics Rules.

Town employees can be Town Meeting Members.

Meets 2x per year.

Deliberates 12 hours per year.

Special or Emergency Meetings:  
Per State law requires 14 days to mail warrant and 30 days preparation.



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## LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

*(Articles/Warrants)*

Warrants for consideration must be submitted in proper form approximately 4 months before each Town Meeting. Any matter not approved at a Town Meeting cannot be reconsidered until the next Town Meeting. If any further study or information is needed, is likely to not be addressed for a full year.

Public can speak only at Town Meeting with the agreement of the Town Moderator and only on a warrant before Town Meeting.

All Articles, Warrants, and supporting documentation provided to Town Meeting members 3 weeks before vote with no further time for additional investigation.

Deliberates only 1x per proposal.

Can only decrease a budget line item, cannot increase one. Budget must be approved in total, cannot be approved in part.

Single Select Board Member cannot delay a vote for further discussion.

## BUDGET PREPARATION

Superintendent/School Committee prepare school budget, Town Manager/Select Board prepare Town budget.

Finance Committee reviews budget and makes recommendations.

Budget and Supplementary Budget, provided 3 weeks before vote.

### Personnel Issues

Town Manager negotiates all contracts except School contracts per State law.

Town Manager can be hired/terminated by 4 Select Board Members.

Union contracts approved by Town Meeting at designated meeting, limiting time for negotiation.

*PlymouthFirst, Inc. is a community organization that encourages the informed and active participation of Plymouth citizens in local government, works to increase understanding of municipal public policy issues and promotes these ideals through education and advocacy.*

Building a Better Future - TOGETHER!

