

CIVIC EDUCATION SERIES

Class #9: Civic Engagement & Advocacy

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the importance of civic engagement and public advocacy.
2. Learn how Rindge residents can participate in town governance.
3. Gain insight into public meeting procedures, warrant articles, and petition processes.
4. Discover effective strategies for advocating on key issues.

INTRO TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

(10 MIN)

- What is civic engagement, and why is it important?
 - The role of active citizens in shaping local policies and priorities.
 - How participation directly influences town services, taxes, and development.
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- Key Message: *"Your involvement is the cornerstone of effective governance."*

WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH RINDGE'S GOVERNMENT (20 MIN)

- Attending Public Meetings:
 - Understanding Select Board, Planning Board, and ZBA meetings.
 - How public comment sessions work.
 - Tips for presenting ideas clearly and respectfully.
- Joining Boards & Committees:
 - Overview of available volunteer opportunities.
 - Steps to apply for open positions.
- Participating in Town Elections:
 - Understanding warrant articles and their impact.
 - How residents can submit a warrant article.

UNDERSTANDING WARRANT ARTICLES & THE PETITION PROCESS (20 MIN)

- What Are Warrant Articles? Explaining their role in approving budget items, ordinances, and policy decisions.
- Steps to Submit a Petition Warrant Article:
 - Drafting a clear, actionable proposal.
 - Gathering the required number of signatures.
 - Presenting the article at Town Meeting for public discussion.
- Visual Aid: A sample Warrant Article Timeline showing key submission deadlines and steps to follow.

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

(20 MIN)

- Communicating with Town Officials:
 - How to write persuasive letters and emails.
 - Tips for meeting with local leaders to present concerns.
- Building Community Support:
 - Organizing like-minded residents to build momentum for important issues.
 - Using social media and public events to inform the community.
- Staying Informed: Resources like the town website, meeting minutes, and newsletters.

ENCOURAGING VOLUNTEERISM & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (15 MIN)

- Volunteer opportunities with town committees, service organizations, and civic groups.
- How volunteer work connects residents with town leaders and decision-making processes.
- The benefits of building relationships with elected officials and town staff.
- Engagement: Highlight local success stories where resident involvement positively influenced town policies or improvements.

CLOSING REMARKS AND Q&A (10 MIN)

- Recap of key points.
- Open floor for participant questions.
- Distribute handouts with civic engagement resources, advocacy tips, and volunteer opportunities.