

RTM Caucus Procedures Information.

1/9/2007

The RTM Coordinating Committee may conduct a meeting of their own body or of the members of the RTM Precinct(s) as they may determine. Election of RTM Members to fill vacancies may only be done during a meeting (caucus) called by the Town Clerk with that election identified as one of the items to be on the meeting's agenda. (RTM Act, Section 5). The Clerk will reserve rooms to be used for each precinct caucus and a list of those assignments will be posted at the Check-In Desk.

All meetings are subject to the Open meeting Law. The precinct chairman shall be the presiding officer, minutes should be taken, and public participation is to be allowed unless Executive Session requirements are in effect. Candidates are permitted to attend the meeting as are all members of the public. See last paragraph of Open Meeting Law Handout for Public Participation guidelines.

The opportunity to fill a vacancy in a precinct shall first be offered to the candidate for RTM from that precinct who received the most votes among the candidates who were not elected at the previous election. Failing that, the vacancy shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining members of that precinct. The Clerk is required to advertise the RTM membership openings and accept written applications for appointment prior to the Caucus. No one may appear at a Precinct Caucus and be appointed to fill a vacancy without first having applied in writing to the Clerk's office.

The Clerk's office will provide each precinct with the Election Envelope Packet to be used in the election to fill a vacancy in the precinct. It is usually placed on the desk in the room assigned to the precinct for its caucus.

The envelope will have the following printed on its face:

- Date and Town Meeting identification.
- Precinct Number and classroom number reserved for that precinct to meet in.
- Number of Openings to be filled - when they will serve until – number of candidates who have applied
- Names of the candidates will be listed with a line beside each upon which will be written the number of votes each received in the election.
- The Quorum required to conduct the meeting. The quorum is made up of existing RTM members from the precinct only. Applicants/candidates are not to be counted in determining the presence of a quorum nor should they be allowed to participate in the vote.
- A blank line(s) upon which should be written the name(s) of the Precinct Chairman and/or Vice Chairman elected as called for at the Annual Town meeting in May of each year.
- The envelope will contain one ballot to be used by each current member of the precinct. It will contain the precinct number, the number of candidates to vote for, the names of the candidates and the instruction 'mark an x' to vote for a candidate.

The chairman should issue ballots to the voting members, reminding them to vote for no more than the number of vacancies to be filled. There is no standard requirement that a candidate be present at the caucus to be considered.

In the case of a tie, the chairman should issue new ballots to be used to break the tie. Blank paper may be used. The new ballot must contain the date, the identification that it is a ballot to break a tie, which ballot it is (the 1st tie breaker, the 2nd tie breaker, etc.) and the number of candidates to be voted for and their names. The members should be asked to vote only for candidates tied with one another. The vote count of candidates not involved in the tie should not change. The original members eligible to vote should be the only members voting to break a tie. Ballots are official records - **Legibility** is important.

The chairman should retrieve all ballots and cause them to be counted by him and at least two witnesses where possible. The ballots should be open to inspection but should not be allowed to be out of the chairman's care and keeping. The results of the vote should be announced at the meeting. The number of votes received by each candidate should be written in the appropriate space on the face of the envelope. Do NOT cross off the names of candidates who were not elected.

The number of members voting should be noted on the face of the envelope.

All ballots should be placed in the envelope (including ballots not used) and the envelope should be delivered to the Town Clerk or his assistant. The Clerk must certify the results of the election, by re-count of the ballots, before the election is declared official.

Newly appointed RTM members should be directed to sign the Sign-In Sheet at the check-in desk. They must take an Oath of Office and sign the Oath Log before being qualified to participate as an RTM member. The Clerk will conduct a swearing in prior to the start of the scheduled meeting. If a new appointee is not present or can not stay for the meeting he should be directed to contact the Clerk and arrange to take the oath of office at a later time.

The Town Clerk will usually be present in the meeting place and available to answer questions or assist as needed. If he is not immediately visible, ask the Moderator to page him, and/or leave word at the check-in desk that he is needed in your meeting room.