

Annual
Town Meeting

The ATM & the Clerk

Township Clerk & the ATM



The Annual Town Meeting

The Town Meeting has its roots in the centuries-old traditions of New England. It is the only ways voters can directly vote to exercise governmental powers when assembled as a group. Billed as the “last vestige” of true democracy in Illinois, the town meeting can range from a five-minute perfunctory session attended by a handful of stalwarts to a hours-long convention-like affair complete with court reporters, videotapers, news media, and hundreds of angry audience members.

Townships are different from other governmental bodies in that the elected board members are not the “corporate authorities.” The electors assembled at a town meeting are the corporate authorities. The board of trustees has only the particular powers given to it by state statutes. Similarly, the electors have only the particular powers given by state statute. This sometimes means that electors, and not the board, are given the opportunity to exercise obscure powers such as the power to permit disinterment of bodies from a private cemetery. Some powers which boards take from granted, such as the power to dispose of surplus office equipment, belong to the voters at the meeting, not to the board.

Pre-Meeting Basics

The NOTICE

- Notice of time and place of the Annual Town Meeting to be posted/published in three (3) public places, AND in an English language newspaper IF the newspaper is published in the township.
- Meeting cannot start before 6:00 p.m.
- Publish/post 15 days before the ATM

Pre-Meeting Basics

The AGENDA

- Township board adopts the agenda at a regular meeting. Agenda may include items presented by the electorate IF request is relevant to the powers granted to the electorate (and IF requested by the electorate with required signatures presented to the clerk by March 1).
- Adopt 15 days before the ATM

Note that additional items shall not be considered at the ATM that are not on the agenda other than advisory, noting that the matter may be considered at a special meeting.

Pre-Meeting Basics

The CLERK

- Provides notice of the Annual Town Meeting
- Post copy of supervisor's annual financial statements at the location of the Annual Town Meeting at least two (2) days prior to the Annual Town Meeting.
- Obtains list of current registered voters in township (available from County clerk).

Note that the township clerk may also help set up the room, copy resolutions and documents to be considered by the voters at the meeting, confer with township attorney, and handle other arrangements. The township clerk and staff will "check in" the voters attending the meeting to verify their identity and registration status.

Pre-Meeting Basics

The PLACE

- The place where the Annual Town Meeting will be held is to be a convenient place in the township, fixed by the town board.
- Leave the door open during the Town Meeting
- Non-voters may join the meeting at any time during; however, non-voters may not partake in voting during the Annual Town Meeting.
- Use of a Sergeant-at-Arms (either a policeman, an elected officer (elected during the first part of the Town meeting), or other person), is optional but may be employed to assist with keeping order, counting votes, keeping doors open, etc. Is usually posted at the back of the room.

Pre-Meeting Basics

The TOWN BOARD

- Town board members may attend the Annual Town Meeting.
- Attendance is as town voter.
- Has no direct authority during the ATM, but yields to the electorate.
- Town Clerk is only official acting in her or his capacity as an elected official during the meeting.

Note that the township clerk may introduce the elected officials present during a meeting, may ask for one to lead in the pledge of allegiance, or ask for assistance with other duties as needed.

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Meeting Basics

The CLERK

- Verifies registration status of voters
- Provides copies of
 - ATM agenda;
 - supervisor's financial statements;
 - previous year's ATM minutes;
 - annual reports of other officials, staff, departments, etc.; and
 - copies of resolutions, etc. that may be called during the meeting.
- Calls the meeting to order.
- Delegates or leads pledge, or welcomes honor guard to post colors.
- May make introductions of elected officials and others present.
- Solicits motion for a moderator for the meeting.
- Administers oath of office to moderator and turns the meeting over to him/her.
- Takes minutes during the meeting.

Meeting Basics

The MODERATOR

- May be any township voter.
- Must agree to be moderator when nominated.
- Completes the oath of office when the nomination carries.
- Takes over from the Clerk after receiving the oath.
- Follows the agenda, and makes sure people, when speaking, provide their name and address for the record.
- Solicits motions and seconds, opens for discussion, closes discussion and calls for a vote on the motions.
- Adjourns the meeting.

*The Key to the Annual
Town Meeting:
the Electorate*

We, the People

The ELECTORATE

1. Take all necessary measures and give direction for the exercise of their corporate powers.
2. Fix hour of town meetings.
3. Spend money for preparation of a Property Record System.
4. Make order for purchase, sale, conveyance, regulation or use of township property.
5. Declare property surplus for disposition.
6. Authorize appropriation of money to bring old graves to respectable condition.
7. Provide for decoration and maintenance of U.S. Military graves.
8. Provide space for court rooms and court offices in private facilities.
9. Authorize board to exercise zone powers.
10. Authorize board to induce planting and care of trees along highways.
11. Make rules to ascertain the sufficiency of fences and the lawfulness of such fences within the township.
12. Prohibit animals from running at large.

We, the People

The ELECTORATE

13. Establish/maintain pounds.
14. Impounding and sale of animals.
15. Determine number of poundmasters, their duties, and election or appointment of.
16. Authorize construction of public wells.
17. May authorize use of road funds for clearing, cleaning, collecting, etc. of brush.
18. May prevent deposit of night soil, garbage, etc. within township limits.
19. May adopt ordinance regulating standing or parking of recreational vehicles on township roads.
20. May adopt ordinance declaring nuisance of abandoned/inoperable vehicles on township roads, and ordinance for removal of same.
21. May authorize regulation of dealers in second hand articles within the township.
22. May regulate certain occupations (hawkers, peddler, pawnbrokers, itinerant merchants, etc.)

We, the People

The ELECTORATE

23. May authorize board to provide mental health services.
24. Authorize board to contract with incorporated municipalities wholly or partly within the township to furnish police protection in area of township not incorporated.
25. Authorize contracts with the county sheriff to furnish protection.
26. Authorize contracts for protection in unincorporated areas of the township.
27. Authorize fire protection for unincorporated areas of the township.
28. Authorize town board to contract for mosquito abatement services in the unincorporated areas of the township.
29. Authorize application to the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund.
30. Transfer funds from one or another fund or different fund (city or village).
31. Make bylaws, rules and regulations necessary to carry into effect power granted in article 60 ILCS 1/30.
32. Application of penalties collected in best interest of township.
33. Authorize that an advisory question be placed on the ballot.

We, the People

The ELECTORATE

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*Special Touches During the
Town Meeting*

Press Releases

Guest Speakers

Award Presentations

Video Presentation of Annual Reports

Cookies/Cake & Coffee

Keepsakes/History of the Township Booklets

Printed Annual Reports

Invite Village or City Officials

VFW Honor Guard to Post Colors

High School ROTC to Post Colors

Boy or Girl Scouts to Post Colors

High School and Middle School Civics Students

Participation

*Remaining Duties of the Clerk after the
Town Meeting*

*Prepare Minutes for Signature by the Moderator and
file in preparation of the following ATM.*

*Prepare Thank You Letter/Certificate for Moderator
and Sergeant-at-Arms*

*Collect copy of all documents distributed at this ATM
for Clerk's files; include lists of registered and non-
registered voter sign in lists.*

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Questions?