OPEN MEETING POLICY AND RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR TOWN BOARDS

A. PURPOSE.

To ensure that the Town of Marshfield complies with Vermont's Open Meeting Law (1 VSA §310-314).

B. APPLICATION.

This policy applies to all Boards, Commissions, Committees and Subcommittees of the Town of Marshfield, referred to below as "Board", unless the Board has adopted more specific Rules.

C. ORGANIZATION.

1. The Board shall annually hold an organizational meeting. At this meeting, the Board shall

   a. Elect a chair

   b. Designate a regular meeting schedule

   c. Appoint a clerk to prepare agendas, minutes, and comply with the posting requirements of this policy and the Open Meeting Law.

2. The chair shall preserve order in the meeting and shall regulate its proceedings by applying these rules and making determinations about all questions of order or procedure.

3. A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. A Board meeting cannot take place without a quorum present.

4. No single member of the Board shall have authority to represent or act on behalf of the Board unless, by majority vote, the Board has delegated such authority for a specific matter at a duly-noticed meeting and such delegation is recorded in the meeting minutes.

5. Motions made by members of the Board require a second. The chair of the Board may make motions and may vote on all questions before the Board. A motion will only pass if it receives the votes of a majority of the total membership of the Board.

6. Meetings may be recessed to a time and place certain upon passage of a motion to do so.

7. These rules may be amended by majority vote of the Board, and must be readopted whenever new members are elected or appointed to the Board.

D. AGENDAS.

1. Each regular and special meeting of the Board shall have an agenda. Those who wish to be added to the meeting agenda may contact the chair of the Board, or the person designated

by the Chair to prepare the agenda. The chair shall determine the final content of the agenda.

2. At least 48 hours prior to a regular meeting, and at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting, a meeting agenda shall be posted in the Old Schoolhouse Common outside the Town Clerk's Office, at the Marshfield Village Store, and at the Marshfield Post Office, and in the calendar section of the Town website. The agenda shall be made available to any person who requests such agenda prior to the meeting. The Town Clerk or Assistant Town Clerk will post paper copies of the agenda at the Town Clerk's Office, Marshfield Village Store, and Marshfield Post Office if they are emailed as ready-to-post documents. The Board must designate at least one Board member to post the agenda on the Town website, and to post the paper copies if the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk are not available. The Town Clerk will instruct the Board member on web site procedures.

3. All business shall be conducted in the same order as it appears on the noticed agenda, except that any addition to or deletion from the noticed agenda must be made as the first act of business at the meeting. Changes to the agenda will only be made if an issue arises which cannot wait for another meeting. Decisions made on an item that was added to the agenda will be warned and ratified at the Board's next meeting. No additions to or deletions from the agenda shall be considered once the first act of business at the meeting has commenced. Any other adjustment to the noticed agenda, for example, changing the order of business, postponing or tabling actions, may be made by majority vote of the Board.

E. MEETINGS.

1. Regular meetings do not need to be individually warned, as long as a regular schedule is followed and posted on the Town's website.

2. Special meetings shall be publicly announced at least 24 hours in advance by giving notice to all members of the Board unless previously waived; to the Times Argus and Hardwick Gazette (via email); and to any person who has requested notice of such meetings. In addition, notices shall be posted in the Old Schoolhouse Common outside the Town Clerk's Office, at the Marshfield Village Store, at the Marshfield Post Office, and in the calendar section of the Town's website. The meeting agenda must be posted at the same time and in the same location as the warning. The Town Clerk or Assistant Town Clerk will post paper copies of the warning and agenda at the Town Clerk's Office, Marshfield Village Store, and Marshfield Post Office if they are emailed as a ready-to-post attachment. The Board clerk should confirm with the Town Clerk that the attachment has been received.

3. Emergency meetings may be held without public announcement, without posting of notices, and without 24-hour notice to members, provided some public notice thereof is given as soon as possible before any such meeting. Emergency meetings may be held only when necessary to respond to an unforeseen occurrence or condition requiring immediate attention by the Board.

4. A member of the Board may attend a regular, special, or emergency meeting by electronic or other means without being physically present at a designated meeting location, so long as the member identifies him or herself when the meeting is convened, and is able to hear and be heard throughout the meeting. Whenever one or more members attend electronically, if a vote is not unanimous, voting must be done by roll call. If a quorum or more of the Board attend a meeting without being physically present at a designated meeting location, the following requirements shall be met:

    a. At least 24 hours prior to the meeting, or as soon as practicable prior to an emergency meeting, the Board shall publicly announce the meeting and post notice of the meeting in the Old Schoolhouse Common outside the Town Clerk's Office, at the Marshfield Village Store, and at the Marshfield Post Office, and in the calendar section of the Town website.

    b. The public announcement and posted notice of the meeting shall designate at least one physical location where a member of the public can attend and participate in the meeting. At least one member of the Board, or at least one staff or designee of the Board, shall be physically present at each designated meeting location.

F. CANCELLATION/RESCHEDULING

1. Members must notify the Chair if they will not be able to attend a meeting.

2. The Chair will determine whether or not a quorum will be present at the meeting.

3. If there will not be a quorum, or if all members of the Board agree, the meeting may be rescheduled or cancelled.

4. If a meeting is cancelled or rescheduled, every effort will be made to notify the public. A notice will be posted as soon as possible, in the same locations and manner that warnings and agendas are posted.

G. MINUTES

1. Minutes shall be taken at all Board meetings; however, minutes shall not be taken during executive sessions.

2. Minutes (in draft or final form) shall be available to the public within 5 calendar days. Minutes (in draft or final form) shall be sent to the Town Clerk via email, as either a Word or Text document.

3. Draft or final Minutes must be posted on the Town website within 5 calendar days. The Board must designate at least one Board member to post the minutes on the Town website

4. Minutes shall include:

a. The date, time, and location of the meeting
b. Board Members present (including first and last names)
c. Active participants (including first and last names)
d. Any changes made to the agenda
e. Items discussed with a brief description of the discussion
f. Motions made
g. Results of votes taken
h. Time adjourned

H. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. All meetings of the Board are meetings in the public, not of the public. Members of the public shall be afforded reasonable opportunity to express opinions about matters considered by the Board, so long as order is maintained according to these rules.

2. Members of the public must be acknowledged by the chair before speaking.

3. If a member of the public has already spoken on a topic, he or she may not be recognized again until others have first been given the opportunity to comment.

ADOPTED: _____

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_____ 6/21/2016

Signatures Date