



Lex-Wiki.Org is a local Wikipedia for Lexington, MA. Lex-wiki.Org covers Arts and Entertainment, Local Flora and Fauna, Local History, City Life as well as Town Government and other issues of public interest in Lexington.

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Town Meeting Operation

The Town Meeting moderator is elected every year for a one year term, which means many residents know Deborah Brown very well. She has been Town Meeting moderator since 2009. Yet other residents may be learning for the first time about her, about the office of Town Meeting moderator, and how it functions.

For more questions and answers with Deborah Brown, readers are invited to refer back to past Lex-Wiki questionnaires she has kindly responded to in previous years.

1. *What does the Town Meeting Moderator do, and how do you see your role as Moderator?*

The Moderator has several roles:

As **parliamentarian**, I manage the meeting according to relevant local bylaw, state law, parliamentary procedure, and custom. In practice, this includes determining who speaks when, enforcing time limits, ensuring motions are in the correct format and taken up in the right order, determining the result of votes, etc. One particularly important parliamentary responsibility is ruling on whether motions offered are within the scope of the warrant. The **warrant** (agenda), mailed to each household in Lexington, lists all of the **articles** (topics) that will be considered at Town Meeting. This serves as the warning to all residents (not just Town Meeting members) of the issues to be considered, and the Moderator makes sure that Town Meeting doesn't stray from this agenda.

As meeting **facilitator**, I strive to do my part to set a tone of collegiality and respect, and I work to ensure a fair and consistent process, accessible to all who wish to participate. I also engage in

significant pre-meeting planning with staff, boards, committees, and article sponsors so things run as efficiently as possible when we get to Town Meeting.

As **appointing authority** for the two finance committees (Appropriation Committee and Capital Expenditures Committee) and for the Cary Lecture Series, I am always on the lookout for qualified candidates to serve the town in these volunteer capacities.

2. *What does the town do in order to bring new Town Meeting members as well as the interested public up to speed with the functioning of local government?*

The Moderator's purview is Town Meeting, which is the legislative branch of our local government. I run an annual workshop for new Town Meeting members to orient them to the Town Meeting process and the roles of all the stakeholders. I also publish an annual "citizens' guide to Town Meeting" in the Lexington Minuteman. And in general, I make myself available throughout the year as a resource for anyone wishing to know more about Town Meeting. It is important to note that Town Meeting members themselves play a significant role in educating members through their Town Meeting Members Association.

Your question is a broader one about all Town efforts to educate citizens about all branches and aspects of local government, so I will name just a few: the Lexington Citizens' Academy (an initiative of the Town Manager's office), the public meetings and publications of elected and appointed boards and committees, the Town and School Department websites, guest columns in the Lexington Minuteman and the Colonial Times, the educational activities of the Lexington League of Women Voters, etc.

3. *If elected, what changes if any are you planning to bring to Town Meeting this year?*

I don't have any significant changes planned for the conduct of the meeting, but want to focus in the coming year on developing some resources for citizens who wish to bring an article to Town Meeting.

The candidate is asked to limit the response to each question to at most two or three paragraphs, and to provide the questionnaire responses by end of day Sunday, Feb 19th, 2017. Responses will not be edited, and will run as submitted. They will be posted on lex-wiki.org in PDF format and announced through other town media. Questionnaire coordinator Andrei Radulescu-Banu (bitdribble@gmail.com, 617-216-8509).
