



TOWN OF PLYMOUTH

26 Court Street
Plymouth, Massachusetts 02360

Title	Select Board Policies & Procedures
Date Approved	December 30, 2025

1. PURPOSE

The Select Board of the Town of Plymouth, recognizing the need to codify the traditional and accepted working relationships among the members of the Board, between the Board and the Town Manager, and between the Board and other Town Boards, committees, officials, employees, and citizens; and also recognizing the need to reduce to writing the Town's public policies and procedures, hereby undertake to create operating procedures for the Select Board.

2. GUIDELINES

2.1 Nature of Policies and Procedures

These policies and procedures shall contain items relating to topics that cannot be addressed elsewhere. Subjects that would more appropriately be addressed in a statute, by-law or regulation shall not be addressed in this format.

2.2 Procedure for Establishing Policies and Procedures

Draft policies and procedures shall be placed on the agenda for any regularly scheduled meeting of the Board. Drafts shall be in writing, and may be introduced only by a member of the Board or the Town Manager. Upon receipt of a draft, the Board may choose to discuss the policy immediately or schedule the discussion for a future meeting. The Board may schedule any hearings or meetings it deems necessary for discussion. The Board may distribute a draft for comment to appropriate officials as it deems necessary.

In general, the Board shall not vote on a new procedural rule or policy at the same meeting that it is first introduced, unless prompt action is necessary. In that case, the Board must unanimously vote to adopt the policy and procedure at that same meeting.

The Town Manager shall be responsible for the maintenance of all policies and procedures.

2.3 Authority

The Select Board is an elected Board and derives its authority and responsibilities from the statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the by-laws of the Town of Plymouth, and the Charter of the Town of Plymouth.

2.4 Election and Qualification

The Board shall consist of five duly elected members. Before assuming official duties, each newly elected member shall be sworn to faithful performance of official responsibilities by the Town Clerk.

2.5 Role of the Select Board

In accordance with the Town Charter; "The Select Board shall be the chief executive office of the town. It shall serve as the goal-setting, long range planning and policy making body of the town. It shall make recommendations on major courses of action to town meeting and adopt policy directives and guidelines for implementation by the officers, boards, committees, commissions and employees of the town. The Select Board shall have the power to enact rules and regulations to implement its policies."

Concerns and questions about the operation of departments, and suggestions for improvements should be addressed to the Town Manager. The responsibility for addressing these issues is thus carried out through the Town Manager. Select Board may be called upon to resolve disputes that are unable to be resolved on the staff level. The Select Board may follow up on concerns or issues addressing these approved policies.

2.6 Board Ethics

A member of the Select Board, in relation to his or her community will:

- A) Realize that his or her basic function is to make policy, with administration the responsibility of the Town Manager.
- B) Realize that he or she is one of a team.
- C) Be well informed concerning the duties of a Board member on both local and state levels.
- D) Remember that he or she represents the entire community at all times.
- E) Accept the Executive Office of the Select Board as a means of unselfish service, not benefit personally or politically from his or her Board activities.

- F) Abide by the ethics established by the State and not use the position to obtain inside information on matters which may benefit someone personally.

A member of the Select Board, in his or her relations with administrative officers of the Town will:

- A) Endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies that will direct and support the administration for the benefit of the people of the community.
- B) Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration.
- C) Recognize that the Town Manager has full responsibility for discharging his or her dispositions and solutions to problems.

A member of the Select Board, in his or her relations with fellow Board members, will:

- A) Recognize that action at official legal meetings is binding and that he or she alone cannot bind the Board outside of such meetings.
- B) Not make statements or promises of how he or she will vote on matters that will come before the Board until he or she has had an opportunity to hear the pros and cons of the issue during a Board meeting.
- C) Uphold the intent of executive session and respect the privileged communication that exists in executive session.
- D) Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.
- E) Treat with respect the rights of all members of the Board despite differences of opinion.

2.7 Board Member Complaint Review Process

Complaints about or against a Board member will be addressed in accordance with M.G.L. c.30A §21.

2.8 Organization of the Board

The Chair shall be elected by the Board as described by the Charter. The Board at any time may remove the Chair. A majority vote shall constitute an election. Nominations require no second. The immediate past Chair shall preside as Chair pro temp until the Chair is elected. If there is no immediate past Chair, the senior member in terms of current service shall serve as Chair pro temp. In the case of members with the same amount of seniority, the member receiving more votes in the most recent election shall serve.

If a vacancy occurs in the office of Chair, the Board shall elect a successor. The Board shall further appoint a Vice Chair under the same provisions stated for the Chair.

2.9 Responsibilities of the Chair

The Chair of the Board shall:

- A) Preside at all meetings of the Board. In doing so, he/she shall maintain order in the meeting room, recognize Speakers, call for votes and preside over the discussion of agenda items.
- B) Sign official documents that require the signature of the Chair.
- C) Call special meetings in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.
- D) Arrange orientation for new members.
- E) Represent the Board at meetings, conferences and other gatherings determined by the Board or delegated by the Chair.
- F) The Chair shall have the same rights as other members to offer motions and resolutions, to discuss questions and to vote thereon.

2.10 Responsibilities of the Vice Chair

The Vice Chair of the Board shall act in the place of the Chair during his/her absence at meetings. Should the Chair leave office, the Vice Chair shall assume the duties of Chair until the Board elects a new Chair.

2.11 Regular Board Meetings

Regular Board Meetings are held on Tuesday of each week. The Board shall not meet on days designated legal holidays. The Board may establish an alternative schedule by a majority vote.

In accordance with Open Meeting Law, the Board may conduct informal "workshops" from time to time as the situation warrants. At such meetings no official action will be taken.

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2.13 Meeting Procedures

Meetings are to be conducted in accordance with generally accepted rules of parliamentary procedure and the Open Meeting Law. It is the practice that application of such procedure be on a relatively informal basis, due to the size of the group and the desirability of flexibility in the expression of opinion. Robert's Rule of Order is used as a guide in matters requiring clarification of definition.

A quorum shall consist of three members of the Board. Actions and decisions shall be made by motion, second and vote.

The Town Manager or Assistant Town Manager is expected to be in attendance at all meetings of the Board. The Town Manager shall attend in order to keep the Board informed and advised and recommend in all matters that fall within the jurisdiction of his office. He/she shall carry out the actions of the Board as they relate to the conduct and administration of Town affairs under his/her jurisdiction.

2.14 Executive Session

The Board may enter into Executive Session to discuss only items clearly allowed under the Open Meeting Law shall be included in Executive Session. When motion is made to enter Executive Session, the mover must specify the reason the session is sought.

A majority of the members present must vote to enter Executive Session by roll call vote. The Chair must state whether or not the Board will reconvene into open session.

2.15 Agenda Procedures

The Chair and the Town Manager may place items on the agenda. The Town Manager, in consultation with the Chair, shall schedule a realistic time period for each appointment, interview, conference or other scheduled item of business.

When a Board member requests an agenda item, it will be assigned a date within two weeks. All requested items will be scheduled for a meeting within 60 days of the original request. (Example: A December 1 request is assigned by December 14 and heard no later than January 28.) This timeline may be extended by majority vote of the Board. The requesting Board member will be included in shaping the scope and format of the discussion.

Whenever practicable, all items for the agenda must be submitted to the Town Manager's office 10 days prior to the meeting. The agenda and packet of pertinent background information are to be made available to the Board one week prior to the meeting, and the agenda is to be posted to the public one week in advance of the meeting.

Agenda items normally include:

- i. Call Meeting to Order
- ii. Licenses, Permits, Administrative Notes, and Pending Business
- iii. Public Comment
- iv. Town Manager's Report
- v. Agenda Items
- vi. Select Board Discussion – New Business, Letters, Old Business
- vii. Adjournment

If background information is insufficient or complicated or if complex memos or motions are presented at the meeting which were not in the Board's meeting packet, any member may request the tabling of the item to allow careful study of the material presented or the motion proposed.

Issues raised during the "Public Comment" portion of the meeting are to be referred to staff or the responsible Board for investigation and the appropriate action.

2.16 Minutes

The Executive Assistant to the Select Board is responsible for preparing minutes of all Board meetings. Minutes shall contain a full statement of all actions taken by the Board and of the disposition of all proposals for action. Minutes of Executive Sessions shall be separately kept and recorded in accordance with the above procedures. Minutes (other than of executive sessions) are open for public inspection.

2.17 Appointments

The Board makes numerous annual appointments. In the case of appointments, no second to the nomination or motion will be required prior to Board action.

Whenever possible the Board will seek variety in backgrounds, interests, ages, gender, and geographic areas of residents, so that a true cross-section of the community will be reflected. In order to attract qualified and interested persons, vacancies will be made public as far in advance of appointment as practicable. Appointments must be based on merit and qualifications rather than political interest.

The Executive Assistant to the Select Board will:

- a) Maintain updated records of all Select Board appointments and provide the Town Clerk with a list of all appointed members.
- b) Advertise a list of vacancies on the Town's website.

- c) Annually notify all incumbent members with expiring terms by mid-April and request they complete an application for reappointment if they are interested and available.
- d) Annually provide completed applications to the Chair by early June for initial review.
- e) Schedule annual appointments to be made the Board no later than July 1st of each year, or as vacancies occur.

The Select Board may meet with potential new appointees at an open meeting before making a final decision on the appointment. Appointments will be made by a majority vote of the Select Board.

2.18 Advisory Committees to the Select Board

The Board may appoint standing or ad hoc advisory committees to aid on matters under the Board's jurisdiction. The use of such advisory committees provides greater expertise and more widespread citizen participation in the operation of government.

Charges to advisory committees shall be in writing and shall include the work to be undertaken, the time in which it is to be accomplished and the procedures for reporting to the Select Board. Each committee must report in writing at least annually to the Town Clerk. The Board will discharge committees upon the completion of their work.

The charges and membership of standing advisory committees shall be reviewed periodically—at least annually—to assess the necessity and desirability of continuing the committee. Reappointments will be based on an evaluation of the member's contribution, the desirability of widespread citizen involvement and the changing needs of the committee and the town.

It is the policy of the Select Board to appoint qualified citizens representing all sections of the town to such advisory committees.

In order to attract qualified and interested persons, vacancies will be made public as far in advance of an appointment as practicable.

2.19 Relations with Other Town Boards, Committees, and Commissions

The Select Board is aware that coordination and cooperation is needed among the town's major boards, committees and commissions to:

- A) Set town-wide goals and priorities
- B) Identify and anticipate major problems and work together towards their resolution
- C) Develop a process for dealing with state and county government

Therefore, as the executive board historically responsible for the overall leadership and coordination of town affairs, the Select Board will:

- A) In accordance with the Town Charter; "The Select Board shall meet jointly with the School Committee, Planning Board and all other elected boards of the Town for the purpose of sharing information. The Select Board shall schedule the joint meeting(s), which shall be held no less than twice (2) a year."
- B) Appoint members of the Select Board to act in the liaison role with various committees of the Board.

2.20 Relations with Citizens

An individual citizen or group of citizens may request an appointment before the Board by contacting the Town Manager, stating precisely the reason for the appearance and the action desired and naming a spokesperson for the group. Participants will be given the opportunity to make a reasonable presentation through the spokesperson and to express opinions and ask for pertinent information. Background data shall be prepared by the boards and departments concerned prior to the appointment insofar as possible, so that all parties involved can have a reasonable understanding of the subject matter. Citizens are encouraged to have written materials submitted in advance for the Board's meeting packet.

The Board may permit citizens to ask questions or make statements relative to any matter under consideration at the discretion of the Chair or upon request of any member of the Board.

All citizen questions and complaints should be answered promptly.

All other questions and complaints are to be referred to the Executive Office of the Select Board for action or recommendations. In those instances where common sense dictates that the Board member receiving the complaint deal directly with a department head, the Board member shall inform the Town Manager of the issue and its disposition.

2.21 Hearings Before the Board

Hearings before the Select Board generally shall be conducted in accordance with the following procedures. Variations may be necessary to comply with statutory requirements applicable to particular matters. Written material to be presented to the board during a hearing must be submitted to the board in advance. The procedure for conducting hearings is hereinafter outlined:

- A) Notice: Hearings will be posted and interested persons notified, such as abutters, as required by statute or as directed by the Chair in the absence of statutory requirements.

- B) Hearings will be held in open session unless otherwise voted by the Board in compliance with the Open Meeting Law.
- C) The Chair will announce the nature and purpose of the hearing, identify the particular matter, and recite the notice given. Where appropriate, the Chair will outline the procedure to be followed. All questions will be addressed by the Chair.
- D) The order of presentation will be:
 - i. Presentation by Proposer
 - ii. Receipt of recommendations from any Town agency or officer
 - iii. Statements by proponents
 - iv. Statements by opponents
 - v. Rebuttal statements by proponents and opponents
 - vi. Where appropriate, questions may be asked of any person making a statement after the statement is finished. Questions will be accepted from members of the Board first.
- E) The Board may permit persons not desiring to speak to record themselves as in favor or against the proposal. At the discretion of the Board as show of hands may be taken.
- F) At the conclusion of the hearing the Board may render its decision or take the matter under advisement, announcing the intended date of decision.

2.22 E-Mail Correspondence Protocol

In keeping with open meeting law, members of the Select Board will not “reply to all” when responding to e-mail correspondence directed to the entire Board. Each member may respond individually to the sender, if he or she so desires.

In general, e-mails directed to the Board that are related to operational issues and resident complaints will be handled by staff and directed to the appropriate department for timely response.

2.23 Town Meeting

Annual Town Meeting—The Town Meeting warrant is the Select Board’s warrant by statute. The Select Board may insert articles in the warrant on their own initiative or by written petition signed by ten (10) registered voters for the Annual Town Meeting.

Special Town Meeting—The Select Board may call a Special Town Meeting when a deferment of the particular matter(s) proposed for inclusion on the warrant for the Special town Meeting will not serve the interest of the Town. The Select Board must call a Special Town Meeting if they receive a written request, signed by two hundred (200) registered voters.

The Select Board may insert articles in the warrant on their own initiative by vote of the board or by written petition signed by one hundred (100) registered voters for Special Town Meeting.

Notwithstanding the above, the interest of economy of operations and impositions on the voters the Select Board shall strive to limit the calling of Special Town Meetings to the minimum necessary as is otherwise in the Town's best interest. In determining whether to call a Special Town Meeting, the Select Board may consult with other town committees, officials, and staff as appropriate. It is strongly recommended that the Moderator and the Town Clerk be consulted for each Town Meeting.

3. QUESTIONS

For inquiries, contact **The Executive Office of the Select Board**.

Signed By:


Chair, Select Board

12/30/2025
Date


Town Manager

12/30/2025
Date