

Appropriation Petitions

Town Meeting 2021

COVID19 poses a threat to the public trying to obtain the required number of signatures to get an organization's request on the ballot for Town Meeting March 2021. Historically, Mendon staff would encourage organizations to obtain their signatures early during the August and November elections. A number of repeatedly funded organizations would have petitions available at the polls. Due to COVID19 election procedures are being amended to limit the exposure to the public as much as possible.

The State has not addressed appropriation request petitions for Town Meeting 2021. Although the State has waived candidate petitions for August and November elections. If the State continues with its current restrictions, it is possible for the state to waive the petition requirements and ALL requests go on the ballot to be voted on. This could result in a significant impact on the FY22 budget.

The Selectboard has received a request for the board to consider not requiring petition signatures this year.

In absence of a petition requirement by the town, the Selectboard can require the request be made to the Selectboard with an outline of information to be submitted with the request. Under current rules, the Selectboard can decide what requests can be warned on the ballot. However, an organization can still submit a petition signed by 5% of the voters to get their request on the ballot. This would however limit the number of petitions circulating in the community.

The request should include:

1. Organization, address, phone, contact information, website & email addresses
2. Amount requesting
3. Statement of what the organization will spend the town funds on
4. Services the organization provides
5. # of people the organization serves
6. # of Mendon residents the organization serves
7. Financials – last year actual income/expenses and proposed budget
8. Request deadline to the Selectboard is Wednesday December 9, 2020
9. Requests will be considered at the Selectboard Meeting December 14, 2020 for consideration on the ballot
10. Statement of whether Mendon has or has not funded the organization in the past
11. If an organization is requesting an increase from previous funding level specifically state reasons for the requested increase

In the event the State makes changes to the petition requirement the Town must follow the procedure the state requires. This could result in a request going on the ballot that does not follow the above procedure.

The Selectboard can still request the above information from all requesting organizations, but it would not be required to be submitted to get their request on the ballot.

If this is the case, I recommend the Selectboard make an overall public statement of support for funding appropriations that have been supported in the past and any new requests you have had the opportunity to review and determine its value to the Mendon community.