



Please Join us for the Annual Town Meeting!

The annual town meeting is a tradition that takes place on the 3rd Tuesday of April every year. Unlike a regular town board meeting or even a community meeting, the annual meeting is a grassroots event that involves motions and voting by town residents (electors).

Agenda items will include, but not be limited to:

- Approval of minutes for the 2020 Town Meeting
- Review of the 2020 Financial Statements
- Presentation from the Ad Hoc Committee to Study the Impact of Growth on the Town
- Overview of the events and issues for the Town of Verona
- Discussion and potential action on matters of interest to town residents (Discussions subject to a motion and second by Town residents)

The Town of Verona Annual Meeting will be **Tuesday, April 20th at 7:00 p.m.** at Town Hall. All qualified electors of the Town are welcome to participate in the discussion. For more information about the powers of the annual meeting , please see the following page.



Town Meetings

Revised by Philip J. Freeburg, J.D., and
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Introduction

The town meeting is a meeting of the electors of a town to exercise powers directly. It descends from meetings in the earliest settlements in New England, and distinguishes towns from other Wisconsin governments. Unlike towns, village, city, county, and state governments act solely through elected representatives. In Wisconsin, town electors may exercise their unique powers via an annual town meeting, or at special town meetings called for specific purposes.

Towns may exercise only those powers granted by Wisconsin Statutes. Specific powers of a meeting of a town's electors can be found in Section 60.10 of the Wisconsin Statutes. This fact sheet will review law regarding both the annual town meeting and special town meetings. Suggestions for how to conduct town meetings for various actions, such as setting the town levy, are also included. Remember the town meeting is a meeting of a town's electors—that is, the people—and is not a meeting of the town board. While town board members attend the town meeting, it is not a meeting of the governing body, and is thus not covered under the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law.

Powers of the Town Meeting

The powers that may be exercised by the people at a town meeting, and that are binding on the town, are enumerated in Wis. Stat. § 60.10. Three categories of town meeting action are authorized:

1. The town meeting may exercise powers directly under Wis. Stat. § 60.10(1)
2. The town meeting may grant the town board authority to act on some things (which the board may decide not to do) under Wis. Stat. § 60.10(2)
3. The town meeting may authorize the appropriation of funds for specific purposes under Wis. Stat. § 60.10(3)

The town meeting may act on only those subjects that Wisconsin Statutes specifically grant it the power to do so. Actions on other matters have no legal effect at all, and thus are advisory only.

Direct Powers

A town's electors may exercise certain granted powers directly at a town meeting, such as:

- Levy taxes to be spent by the town. The meeting may either levy a dollar amount—say \$50,000, or set a tax rate—say one mill, or a dollar per thousand, on the taxable property in the town. This is the most important power of the town meeting.
- Fix compensation for town offices.
- Combine certain town offices, such as clerk with treasurer or clerk with assessor, or make some town offices part-time.
- Establish or abolish the office of constable.
- Establish election of town board members by means of numbered seats.
- Increase the size of the town board, if the town's population is 2,500 or more, and provide for the appointment of the office of town clerk, treasurer or combined clerk-treasurer.

Grant of Authority

Electors at the town meeting may also vote to give certain grants of authority to the town board. Grants of authority may be "general and continuing," or be of limited scope, or for a specific time. Wis. Stat. § 60.10(2), lists eleven areas where a town meeting may grant authority to the town board. Some examples are:

- Delegate to the town board the authority to levy the property tax to be used for town purposes.
- Exercise village powers for increased regulatory authority.
- Purchase land for town purposes; purchase, lease, or construct buildings; and dispose of town real property.
- Authorize the town to exercise zoning authority in counties with a zoning code using village powers.

The town board, as a legislative body, may decide not to do what the town meeting has authorized, or to do it in a manner different from what the people at the meeting had in mind. However, the board cannot exceed the authority granted to them. No recourse is provided if the town board does not spend the money as the meeting wished, but electors may withdraw a grant of authority if the town board does not do what was intended. The people may also choose to replace town board members at the next election.

Authorize to Appropriate Money

The town meeting may authorize the board to appropriate money for certain specific purposes, such as conservation of natural resources by the town or a nonprofit organization, and for civic functions listed in § 60.23(6), or a rural numbering system.