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Mike Pastore Engages in Q&A as Town Moderator Candidate



Medfield Insider reached out to **Mike Pastore, candidate for Town Moderator** in the 2024 local election on **Monday, March 26**, to learn more about him, and his views. Thanks to help from readers submitting questions, his answers appear below. Pastore was asked to limit each response to 50 words or less.

Candidate voting records are easily obtained from Medfield Town Clerk; the record for Pastore **is here.**

Medfield Insider questions:

1. Tell us about yourself.

I am a husband, a father of an 8- and an 11-year-old, an attorney, and have been fortunate to call Medfield my home for nearly a decade. I am currently one of three elected Town Trust Fund Commissioners, the Chair of the OPEB Trust, a member of the Town Collective Bargaining Committee, and the Clerk of the Medfield TV Board of Directors. I also served for three years on the Warrant Committee, two of those as Chair. I have been actively involved in every Town Meeting since 2017 both from the floor and from the stage.

2. Why do you want to serve as Moderator?

That's an easy one – I love this Town and I love the legislative process. With respect to the first point, Medfield relies heavily on volunteers for its government, and I am proud to play a small part in that operation. On the second point, I worked for several years at the MA State House before going to law school, and always enjoyed the process of drafting legislation. I have found the Town Meeting process of lawmaking to present its own enjoyable set of challenges.

3. How do you see the role of Moderator evolving?

The role of Moderator is to preside over Town Meeting and make certain appointments, including to the Warrant Committee. While the issues that come up at Town Meeting are always different, the role of Moderator is set out in the Town Charter.

4. What are the 1-2 things you might change about Town Meeting?

Changes to Town Meeting are the purview of the voters and the Select Board. Although styles may change, my job as Moderator would be to preside over Town Meeting.

5. What specific steps should a new Moderator take to prepare for the role?

Too many to count. If I am lucky enough to be elected, I will have an extremely busy six weeks preparing for Annual Town Meeting. One of the most important things will be to develop a deep familiarity with the Warrant. Much of that time will also be spent working with the Town Clerk, Town Administrator, Select Board, and others in fine-tuning the mechanics of this year's Annual Town Meeting (ATM).

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6. What can a new moderator do to help a diverse group of voters feel welcome at Town Meeting, and boost attendance?

To me, the best way for a Moderator to make all voters feel welcome is to treat each speaker with respect and with equal consideration. Everyone should have the same opportunity to be heard whether that person has lived in Medfield for 30 days or 30 years. On attendance – I would love to see more people participate at ATM, and look forward to discussing ways to make Town Meeting more accessible to today's voter.

Reader questions (with Medfield Insider clarification in parentheses):

7. Recent years have seen the Moderator limit individuals' floor participation in order to complete the meeting in one night. Do you share his objective or believe the potential benefit of more time on major articles?

I don't agree with the premise. I think Moderator McDermott did a great job understanding which articles needed more time for debate and which could be heard and voted on more quickly. The objective is not necessarily to finish in one night, but to conduct an efficient Town Meeting where voters are given a full opportunity to understand the issues, and all sides are given a reasonable time to state their case.

8. As a candidate whose party affiliation is well-known, despite the fact this is, traditionally, a non-partisan role, how do you intend to keep even (unbiased) and when issues cross into territory covered by national (or local) politics?

I view Moderator as a process-focused position. I would be presiding over the mechanics of Town Meeting, not making policy or opining on any Warrant Article. My party affiliation or personal views have nothing to do with keeping time and order.

9. An important element of the Moderator's duties include appointments to the Warrant Committee. What criteria and other considerations will guide your search for Warrant Committee candidates?

Now this is a question very close to my heart. My experience as Warrant Committee Chair taught me that balance is essential to a successful Warrant Committee – and that applies to ideology, stage in life, time in Town, and so many other things. For an individual trait, I would prioritize candidates that are able to consider an article on its own merits.

10. What constitutes free speech (at Town Meeting) and what should not be allowed?

I'm not entirely sure that a Constitutional discussion is within the scope of this Q&A. As a general matter, a speaker should stick to the topic being voted on. I view personal attacks as off-limits, and disqualifying for a speech at the microphone or podium. And swearing is probably a bad idea.