

# Rye Civic League

PO Box 971, Rye, NH 03870 [www.ryecivicleague.org](http://www.ryecivicleague.org)

"Informing citizens, enhancing direct democracy and supporting the will of the voters"

## HOW TO CREATE A PETITIONED WARRANT ARTICLE

Determine the cause: e.g. Ban smoking from Rye beaches

Identify the petitioner: e.g. Isabella Hillman

1. Research the issue – Deadline: Oct. 15

- a. Determine if other towns have banned smoking on beaches.
- b. Assuming similar laws have passed, consider the following issues:  
Were there objections posed during the process to pass the law?  
Did the community have a budget for this effort (sign costs, etc.)? .  
How have the laws been implemented? Was there public education?  
How has the law been enforced? How are these laws written? Are there fines?  
If so, how much? Have communities with such laws experienced problems?

2. Contact Organizations/Associations that work on the issue – Deadline: Oct 14

- a. Contact Blue Ocean society: How do cigarettes contribution to pollution? Gather evidence and support for the cause.

3. Solicit public opinion or conduct a Survey – Deadline: Nov 7th

- a. Gather input from reasonable people who use the beach as well as public officials via short, informal surveys and interviews (sample questions).
- b. Solicit beach users - do written surveys - 2-3 questions – ask people you know who use the beach.
- c. Consider any costs that may arise from these surveys and interviews.

4. Solicit government input – Deadline: Nov 15th

- a. Interview the Beach Commissioner, Police Chief, Board of Selectman. Get their input and know where they stand.

5. Work on a draft for a petitioned warrant article with the RCL - Deadline: Nov 30

- a. The Warrant Article must be in writing and signed by 25 or more registered voters in the Town. RSA 39:3 {More is safer if some signatures are not later approved as registered voters}
- b. RCL Contact: Mae Bradshaw to arrange a meeting. If there are costs associated with this effort, that amount being requested of the taxpayers should be included in the article.
- c. The warrant article must be phrased in the form of a question addressed to the voters: "Shall the Town vote to ...?"
- d. Although there is no requirement in the statute to put in the effective date of the article, it is good practice to add to the article when it would go into effect.

6. Get at least 30 signatures from Rye resident *current* voters to sign the petition - Deadline: Dec. 31

- a. Consider venues to obtain signatures (the town recycling center, recreation events, etc.).
- b. Organize a system for obtaining signatures through social media awareness campaigns.
- c. The petition must include the following:
  1. The Article written at the top of the page followed by legible printed names and addresses, signatures, and dates? Should the petition require multiple pages, be sure the cause (article) is written at the top of each petition page.

## **HOW TO CREATE A PETITIONED WARRANT ARTICLE (cont.)**

7. Submit the petition to the Board of Selectman's (BOS) Office - Deadline Jan. 14
  - a. See BOS secretary Janice Ireland on the 2nd floor of Town Hall.
8. Prepare for Deliberative Session - Deadline: Start once petition is submitted Jan. 14
  - a. Make sure you can attend the Deliberative Session. It is typically held the first Saturday in February. This year it is scheduled for Feb 1<sup>st</sup>. Snow dates are scheduled (usually the subsequent Saturday) in consideration of inclement weather. The Deliberative Session is a version of the old Town Meeting that Rye used to hold; usually about 150 people attend (maximum in recent years). At this meeting, warrant articles may be amended before being placed on the ballot for the March election. This year the election will take place on March 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - b. Prepare educational materials to pass out.
  - c. Plan for speakers at the Deliberative Session who will speak in favor of the Warrant Article.
  - d. Consider arguments against the cause.
  - e. Prepare counters to the arguments against the cause.
  - f. Recruit people to attend the Deliberative Session to support the vote.
9. Build a Communication Plan for the March Election Deadline: Immediately following a favorable outcome at the Deliberative Session
  - a. Consider how you will educate the voters, prepare town wide educational materials. Create signs, use social media, speak at public forums.
  - b. Build support for the warrant article.
  - c. Go to The Rye Elementary School with a sign on the day of voting to encourage voters to vote for your article.
10. Prepare letters of thanks – Deadline: Immediately after the election- regardless of the outcome
  - a. Write a letter to editor of the Portsmouth Herald.
  - b. Place a notice in the Civic News thanking supporters and those who helped in the effort. This is good publicity, especially if the effort fails and you want to try again the next year.
11. Pick up your copy of the Town of Rye Annual Report (available on voting day at the polls or at Town Hall after the election). Review the green pages of the report to see how you made a difference in your town.