

Final Report 2017 Survey of Town Meeting Members Milford, MA

A Citizens for Milford Initiative
Conducted by the Town Meeting Working Group

Preliminary Report publication date: May 15, 2017

Final Report publication date: December 31, 2017

Survey data collection period: March 3-28, 2017

Questionnaire Distribution: By email or postal mail to all 240 elected Town Meeting members as well as 8 at large members who are not elected Town Meeting members.

Survey Response: The Questionnaire was administered by paper survey and online in the form of a web survey. The paper and web survey responses were submitted anonymously to the survey company, Great Blue Research.

Response rate: 192 Respondents (77%)

Acknowledgement: The Citizens for Milford is indebted to Great Blue Research for their pro-bono assistance with this survey.

Available

On Line at www.milfordma.gov Town Meeting Tab
or via

U.S. Mail or email upon request to: Town Clerk, 52 Main St., Milford MA 01757

Table of Contents

Introduction

Survey Questions - Responses Page 1

Appendix - Typical Comments Page A-1

Addendum - Milford Town Meeting 2017 Survey - All Survey Comments

Addendum is available on line at www.milfordma.gov , Town Meeting Tab
or via

U.S. Mail or email upon request to: Town Clerk, 52 Main St., Milford MA 01757

INTRODUCTION

In June of 2014, Reno DeLuzio, a Town Meeting Member for over 40 years, petitioned the Citizens for Milford (CFM) to organize a Town Meeting Improvement Initiative. CFM is a volunteer, nonpartisan, grassroots organization whose mission statement includes, *“coordinat[ing] projects and events that address current issues that seek to improve the quality of life in our community”*. CFM accepted the project and after some initial strategizing prepared a methodology to address the initiative. The methodology was presented to the Board of Selectmen in September 2015 who unanimously supported the initiative and the methodology.

Although later than anticipated, the following 13 member Town Meeting Working Group (TMWG) was established to manage the initiative:

Steven Trettel (CFM)	Thomas Harmon (Precinct 3)
Kim Smith (CFM)	Michelangelo BonTempo (Precinct 4)
Peter Scandone (CFM)	George Marino (Precinct 5)
William Buckley (Selectmen Designee)	Paul Malnati (Precinct 6)
Atty. Michael Noferi, Moderator (At Large)	Reno DeLuzio (Precinct 7)
Dr. Richard Heller (Precinct 1)	Michael Visconti, Jr. (Precinct 8)
Jose Costa (Precinct 2) TMWG Chairman	

The TMWG proceeded to implement the methodology as follows:

- Researched other Towns to get a sense of what is being done to improve their Town Meeting form of government.
- Worked with a professional survey company to develop this survey questionnaire and distributed it to Town Meeting members and Members at Large for their input.
- Based on the survey results, prepared a prioritized list of improvements to pursue.
- Petitioned the October 30, 2017 Special Town Meeting (Article 15) to establish, by standing vote, a Town Meeting Study and Improvement Committee (TMSIC) to transition the initiative from the volunteer TMWG to the TMSIC. The TMSIC is comprised of nine (9) elected Town Meeting Members, one (1) from each of the eight (8) precincts and one (1) from the body to achieve an odd number. Town Meeting approved the motion.

The TMSIC will, **for the very first time**, provide an official and continuous mechanism to study and pursue the improvements recommended in the Survey. These improvements will bring Milford's Town Meeting into the 21st century by using current technology and practices to make it a more informative and pleasant experience and thereby preserve this form of government for future generations.

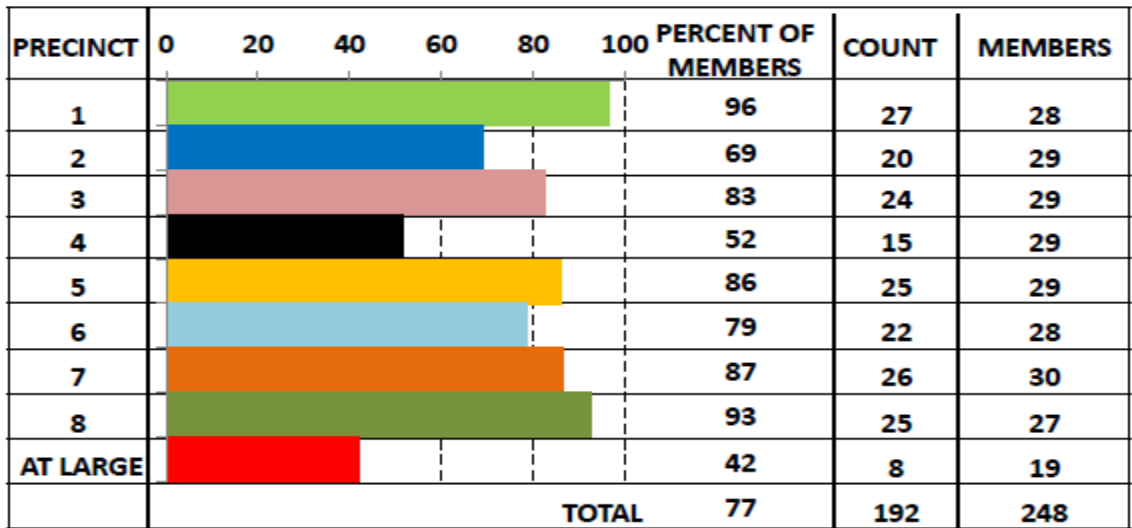
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Town Meeting Working Group members greatly appreciate and are indebted to:

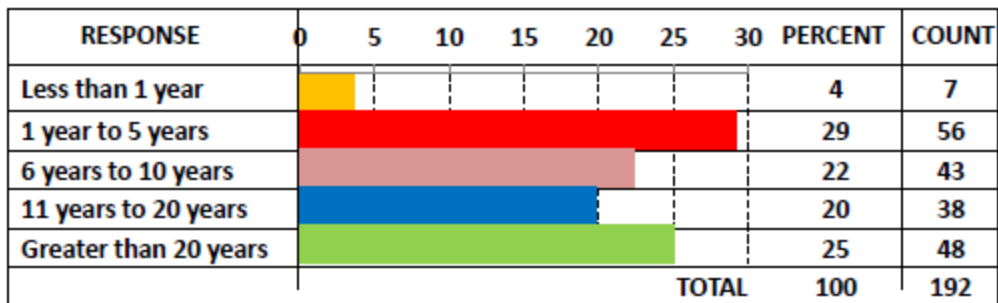
- Reno DeLuzio for petitioning the CFM and for all his efforts in putting together this Final Report.
- Citizens for Milford for sponsoring this initiative.
- Peter Scandone for his participation in this initiative and his service as Chairman until his resignation from the TMWG in July 2017.
- Jose Costa for securing the services of Great Blue Research, a professional survey company.

MILFORD TOWN MEETING 2017 SURVEY RESULTS

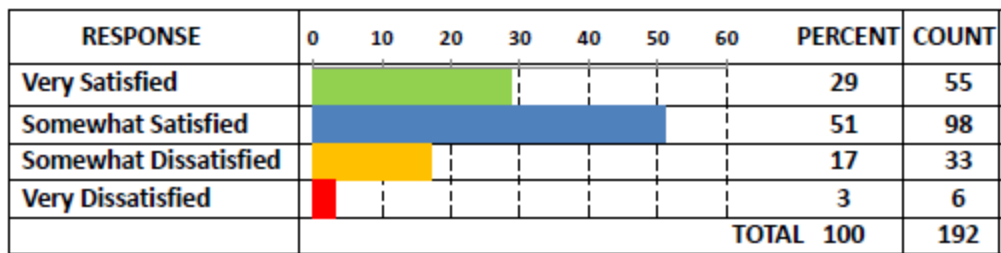
1. What Precinct do you represent?



2. Approximately how long have you been a Town Meeting Member?





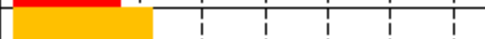
3. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the Town Meeting operates?



4. What do you like most about Milford's Town Meeting? (See Appendix)

5. What do you dislike most about Milford's Town Meeting? (See Appendix)

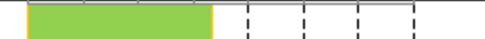


6 . Have you received a copy of “A GUIDE TO REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING” from the Town Clerk?

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	PERCENT	COUNT	
Yes										62	118
No										17	32
Don't know / unsure										22	42
	TOTAL									100	192




7. Would you like the Pledge of Allegiance recited at the beginning of each meeting?

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	PERCENT	COUNT
Yes	<div><div></div></div>					77	118
No	<div><div></div></div>					12	32
Don't know / unsure	<div><div></div></div>					12	42
	TOTAL					100	192




8. Do you receive feedback from any of your precinct neighbors on how you should vote on one or more articles?

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	PERCENT	COUNT	
Yes										33	64
No										64	123
Don't know / unsure										3	5
										TOTAL	




9. Would you prefer that Town Meeting be held on a Saturday?

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	100	PERCENT	COUNT
Yes							11	21
No							82	158
Don't know / unsure							7	13
							TOTAL	




10. Would you prefer that Town Meeting start at 7:00pm?

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	100	PERCENT	COUNT
Yes							82	158
No							10	20
Don't know / unsure							7	14
							TOTAL	




11. Do you believe a Town Meeting webpage should be developed where explanatory information for each article would be available for all?

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	100	PERCENT	COUNT
Yes							89	171
No							5	9
Don't know / unsure							6	12
	TOTAL						100	192





12. Do you favor grouping all STREET ACCEPTANCE ARTICLES in ONE ARTICLE with the provision that any one item may be removed to be considered separately?

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	PERCENT	COUNT
Yes						72	138
No						20	39
Don't know / unsure						8	15
	TOTAL					100	192

13. Do you favor grouping all ROUTINE HOUSEKEEPING ARTICLES in ONE ARTICLE with the provision that any one item may be removed to be considered separately?

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	PERCENT	COUNT
Yes						64	123
No						30	58
Don't know / unsure						6	11
	TOTAL					100	192





14. How often do you attend Town Meeting?

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	PERCENT	COUNT
Always						69	133
Often						27	51
Sometimes						4	7
Rarely						1	1
	TOTAL					100	192

15. How often do you leave Town Meeting early?

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	PERCENT	COUNT
Never	<div><div></div></div>					67	129
Rarely	<div><div></div></div>					20	38
Sometimes	<div><div></div></div>					9	17
Often	<div><div></div></div>					3	6
Always	<div><div></div></div>					1	2
	TOTAL					100	192

16. What method would you prefer to receive/acquire information to prepare for Town Meeting?

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50 PERCENT	COUNT	
US Mail Only							46	89
Electronically via email							29	55
Download via the Town of Milford Website							6	11
Warrant and Finance Committee report by US Mail and supplements via email							19	37
	TOTAL						100	192

17. How well do you understand the following Town Meeting Parliamentary Procedure? ----- How to amend a motion.

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Knowledgeable					52	100
Somewhat Knowledgeable					38	73
Not at all					10	19
	TOTAL				100	192

18. How well do you understand the following Town Meeting Parliamentary Procedures? ----- How/when to move the question.

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Knowledgeable								57	109
Somewhat Knowledgeable								34	65
Not at all								9	18
	TOTAL							100	192

19. How well do you understand the following Town Meeting Parliamentary Procedures? ----- When to rise for a point of order.

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Knowledgeable							47	91
Somewhat Knowledgeable							39	75
Not at all							14	26
	TOTAL						100	192

20. How well do you understand the following Town Meeting Parliamentary Procedure? ----- How/when to move for reconsideration

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Knowledgeable							38	72
Somewhat Knowledgeable							44	85
Not at all							18	35
	TOTAL						100	192



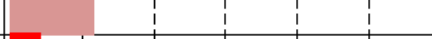
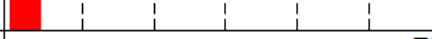
21. How well do you understand the following Town Meeting Parliamentary Procedure? ----- The difference between an article and a motion.

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Knowledgeable	<div><div></div></div>					71	137
Somewhat Knowledgeable	<div><div></div></div>					23	44
Not at all	<div><div></div></div>					6	11
	TOTAL					100	192

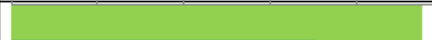

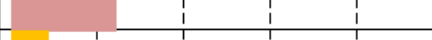

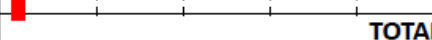
22. In thinking about how you prepare for the Town Meeting, please indicate how satisfied you are with how early you are notified of the Town Meeting dates so that you may plan your schedule .

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Satisfied	<div><div></div></div>							58	111
Somewhat Satisfied	<div><div></div></div>							27	52
Somewhat Dissatisfied	<div><div></div></div>							9	17
Very Dissatisfied	<div><div></div></div>							6	12
	TOTAL							100	192

23. In thinking about how you prepare for the Town Meeting, please indicate how satisfied you are with the materials you receive for the meeting arrive in sufficient time for you to review and prepare.


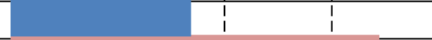


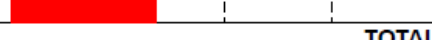
RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Satisfied								54	104
Somewhat Satisfied								30	58
Somewhat Dissatisfied								12	22
Very Dissatisfied								4	8
TOTAL 100								192	

24. In thinking about how you prepare for the Town Meeting, please Indicate how satisfied you are with the Finance Committee Materials you receive are comprehensive and informative.

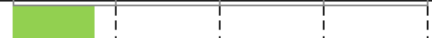
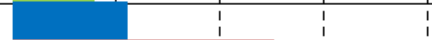



RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Satisfied							47	91
Somewhat Satisfied							35	67
Somewhat Dissatisfied							12	23
Very Dissatisfied							4	8
Don't know/unsure							2	3
	TOTAL						100	192

25. Commentary on questions 22 through 24 (*See Appendix*).

26. How often do you attend (or watch on Milford TV) any meeting(s) or hearing(s) of the Board of Selectmen in preparation for Town Meeting?.

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	PERCENT	COUNT
Very often						16	30
Often						17	32
Sometimes						34	66
Seldom						20	38
Never						14	26
	TOTAL					100	192

27. How often do you attend (or watch on Milford TV) any meeting(s) or hearing(s) of the Finance Committee in preparation for Town Meeting?

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	PERCENT	COUNT
Very often						8	15
Often						11	21
Sometimes						25	48
Seldom						23	44
Never						33	64
	TOTAL					100	192

28. How often do you attend (or watch on Milford TV) any meeting(s) or hearing(s) of the Planning Board in preparation for Town Meeting?

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	PERCENT	COUNT
Very often						5	10
Often						7	13
Sometimes						20	38
Seldom						32	62
Never						36	69
	TOTAL					100	192

29. How often do you attend (or watch on Milford TV) any meeting(s) or hearing(s) of the School Committee in preparation for Town Meeting?

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	PERCENT	COUNT
Very often						4	7
Often						10	19
Sometimes						18	35
Seldom						31	59
Never						38	72
	TOTAL					100	192




30. How often do you attend (or watch on Milford TV) any meeting(s) or hearing(s) of the Personnel Board in preparation for Town Meeting?

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	PERCENT	COUNT
Very often									2	3
Often									2	3
Sometimes									9	18
Seldom									25	48
Never									63	120
	TOTAL								100	192




31. In addition to the Finance Committee Report, would you like to receive reports from the School Committee, Planning Board and Personnel Board on Warrant Articles they have sponsored PRIOR to the meeting?

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	PERCENT	COUNT
Yes						68	130
No						25	48
Don't know / unsure						7	14
	TOTAL					100	197

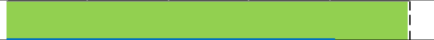



32. Do you favor financial information be summarized in graphic form in addition to the numbers charts and it be provided PRIOR to Town Meeting?

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	PERCENT	COUNT
Yes						76	145
No						13	25
Don't know / unsure						12	22
						TOTAL	





33. Do you favor a map showing the location of the street being considered for acceptance and the areas to be re-zoned and these be provided PRIOR to Town Meeting?

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	PERCENT	COUNT
Yes						79	152
No						14	26
Don't know / unsure						7	14
TOTAL						100	192





34. How satisfied are you with the clarity of the information in the report presentations of the Finance Committee at the beginning of Town Meeting?

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	PERCENT	COUNT	
Very Satisfied							50	95	
Somewhat Satisfied							41	78	
Somewhat Dissatisfied							7	14	
Very Dissatisfied							3	5	
TOTAL							50	95	





35. How satisfied are you with the clarity of the information in the report presentations of the of the Planning Board for each article sponsored?

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Satisfied							29	56
Somewhat Satisfied							46	88
Somewhat Dissatisfied							16	31
Very Dissatisfied							9	17
TOTAL							100	192




36. How satisfied are you with the clarity of the information in the report presentations of the of the Personnel Board for each article sponsored?

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Satisfied							27	51
Somewhat Satisfied							45	87
Somewhat Dissatisfied							16	30
Very Dissatisfied							13	24
	TOTAL						100	192




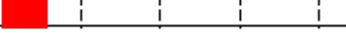
37. In thinking about the most recent Town Meetings, please indicate how satisfied you are with the meeting begins promptly at the designated time.

RESPONSE	0	25	50	75	100	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Satisfied						87	166
Somewhat Satisfied						12	23
Somewhat Dissatisfied						1	2
Very Dissatisfied						1	1
TOTAL						100	192


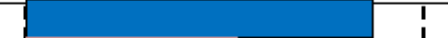


38. In thinking about the most recent Town Meetings, please indicate how satisfied you are with the meeting being run in an organized fashion.

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Satisfied						74	142
Somewhat Satisfied						23	44
Somewhat Dissatisfied						3	6
TOTAL						100	192



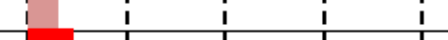
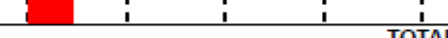
39. In thinking about the most recent Town Meetings, please indicate how satisfied you are with the quality of the audio system

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Satisfied							30	58
Somewhat Satisfied							43	83
Somewhat Dissatisfied							21	40
Very Dissatisfied							6	11
TOTAL							100	192




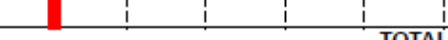
40. In thinking about the most recent Town Meetings, please indicate how satisfied you are with the quality of the visual presentations.

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Satisfied							17	32
Somewhat Satisfied							44	84
Somewhat Dissatisfied							27	51
Very Dissatisfied							13	25
	TOTAL						100	192



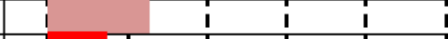
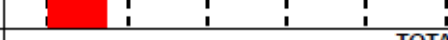
41. In thinking about the most recent Town Meetings, please indicate how satisfied you are with the voting process (standing to vote, voice votes, etc.).

RESPONSE	0	20	40	60	80	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Satisfied						60	115
Somewhat Satisfied						26	49
Somewhat Dissatisfied						6	11
Very Dissatisfied						9	17
	TOTAL					100	192

42. In thinking about the most recent Town Meetings, please indicate how satisfied you are with the process to make amendments to motions at Town Meeting.

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Satisfied							42	81
Somewhat Satisfied							41	79
Somewhat Dissatisfied							15	29
Very Dissatisfied							2	3
	TOTAL						100	192

43. In thinking about the most recent Town Meetings, please indicate how satisfied you are with the way in which the Town Budget is presented, discussed and approved.

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Satisfied							46	88
Somewhat Satisfied							34	66
Somewhat Dissatisfied							13	24
Very Dissatisfied							7	14
	TOTAL						100	192

44. In thinking about the most recent Town Meetings, please indicate how satisfied you are with the way in which Zoning and Land Articles are presented, discussed and approved.

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	PERCENT	COUNT
Very Satisfied							32	61
Somewhat Satisfied							41	78
Somewhat Dissatisfied							19	36
Very Dissatisfied							9	17
	TOTAL						100	192

45. Commentary on questions 37 through 44 (*See Appendix*).

46. I come prepared for every meeting to vote on all articles presented.

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	PERCENT	COUNT
Always								52	99
Frequently								39	74
Sometimes								8	15
Rarely								2	3
Never								1	1
	TOTAL							100	192

47. I feel comfortable participating and expressing my views.

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	PERCENT	COUNT
Always						40	76
Frequently						27	52
Sometimes						17	33
Rarely						12	22
Never						5	9
	TOTAL					100	192

48. I feel comfortable expressing an opposing or minority view at Town Meeting.

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	PERCENT	COUNT
Always						38	73
Frequently						21	41
Sometimes						20	38
Rarely						14	26
Never						7	14
	TOTAL					100	192

49. I feel Town Meeting Members are respectful and listen to others' comments .

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	PERCENT	COUNT
Always						22	42
Frequently						40	77
Sometimes						32	62
Rarely						5	10
Never						1	1
	TOTAL					100	192

50. Commentary on questions 46 through 49 (See Appendix).

51. How often have you spoken at Town Meeting in support or opposition to an article?

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	PERCENT	COUNT
Every Meeting	<div><div></div></div>					1	2
Most Meetings	<div><div></div></div>					8	16
Some Meetings	<div><div></div></div>					25	47
Rarely	<div><div></div></div>					33	63
Never	<div><div></div></div>					33	64
	TOTAL					100	192

52. If you have never or rarely spoken at Town Meeting, please explain why and provide any recommendation to improve Town Meeting to address your reason(s) for not speaking? (See Appendix)

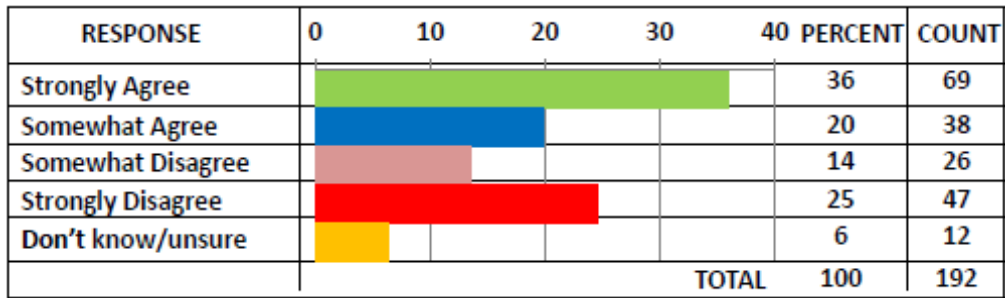
53. Meetings are too long.

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	PERCENT	COUNT
Strongly Agree							23	44
Somewhat Agree							48	92
Somewhat Disagree							14	26
Strongly Disagree							14	27
Don't know/unsure							2	3
	TOTAL						100	192

54. An individual's speaking time in response to a presented motion should be regulated per article.

RESPONSE	0	10	20	30	40	50	PERCENT	COUNT
Strongly Agree							48	92
Somewhat Agree							26	49
Somewhat Disagree							9	17
Strongly Disagree							17	32
Don't know/unsure							1	2
	TOTAL						100	192

55. Electronic voting should be investigated for use at Town Meeting



56. Please provide any additional information that you feel would improve Milford's Town Meeting. (See Appendix)

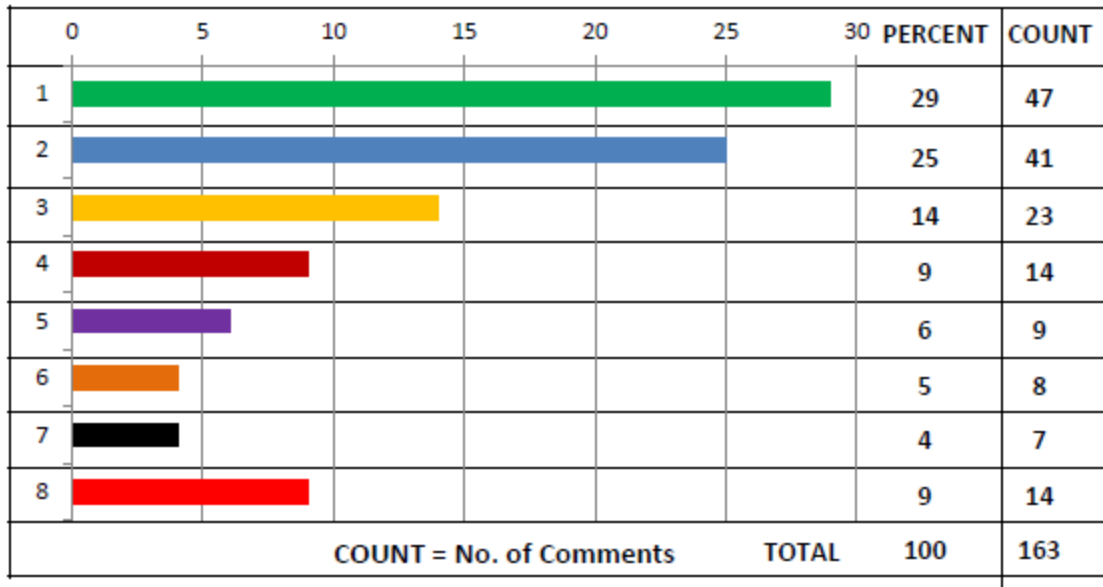
APPENDIX

TYPICAL COMMENTS

Comments Statistics

Comments to the Following Questions	Number	Percent
(Q4) What do you like most about Milford's Town Meeting?	163	24
(Q5) What do you dislike most about Milford's Town Meeting?	217	32
(Q22-24) Satisfaction with info provided prior to the meeting	46	7
(Q37-44) Satisfaction with clarity of info presented at the meeting	41	6
(Q46-49) Town Meeting Member Participation	33	5
(Q52) If you have never or rarely spoken at Town Meeting, please explain why.	94	14
(Q56) Provide additional information that you feel would improve Town Meeting.	84	12
Total	678	100

Question 4 – What do you like most about Town Meeting



Likes Categories

	1. Opportunity to become involved, informed, and participate in the decision process
	2. The ability of TM members and registered voters to speak freely and express their views
	3. Well organized and structured
	4. Moderator does an excellent job managing the meeting and moving it along
	5. Finance Committee report
	6. Purest form of Democracy
	7. Opportunity to represent constituents
	8. Miscellaneous likes

Notes:

1. All comments to Question 4 can be found in the Addendum.

Question 4 - Typical Comments

Question 4. What do you like most about Milford's Town Meeting?
1. Opportunity to become involved, informed, and participate in the decision process
An opportunity to be better informed about issues facing the town.
Being involved with our town's development.
I like doing my civic duty.
Necessary materials are provided in advance so that members are/can be informed at Town Meeting.
Opportunity for relatively wide participation in town governance (the fact that we have a town meeting rather than mayor-council).
Hearing the opinions of others on the motions before Town Meeting.
The opportunity to see first hand where the town spends money and how different departments are run.
TM members get to listen to all sides of an issue and vote on the merits of the issue.
Not only is data provided in advance for review, but we're plenty of opportunity to discuss articles as desired.
That each department can present articles and explain why and how much to spend on the request.
The warrants are sent out prior to the meeting for review.

2. The ability of TM members and registered voters to speak freely and express their views
A chance to have an input, however small, in how the town is run.
Free exchange of view, opinions and ideas.
Open forum to speak about the town article being considered.
It is a great institution that allows all registered voters to voice their opinion on the affairs of the town.
That they give the public a chance to say how they would like their town to be run (though their elected representatives).
Varying viewpoints of 200+ members have served the town well.

3. Well Organized and structured
The rules provide for a streamlined manner of proposing, debating and acting upon measures.
Town officials are very prepared and make process go smoothly.
A lot of town business is accomplished in two nights per year.

4. Moderator does an excellent job managing the meeting and moving it along.

I believe that the Moderator is fair in allowing Town Meeting members and others to make their presentation without time pressures.

Town moderator does a great job at moving the meeting along

5. Finance Committee report

Our Financial presentations are simple and easy to understand.
--

FINDING OUT WHAT THE TOWN SPENDS TAXPAYER'S MONEY ON
--

The way out Finance Comm. handles our money

6. Purest form of Democracy

Its the purest form of democracy. Theoretically the citizens hold the purse strings---It would be great if TMM recognized that and acted accordingly.

7. Opportunity to represent constituents

Representing my constituents and being a voice in things for the betterment of the town.
--

The people having representation.

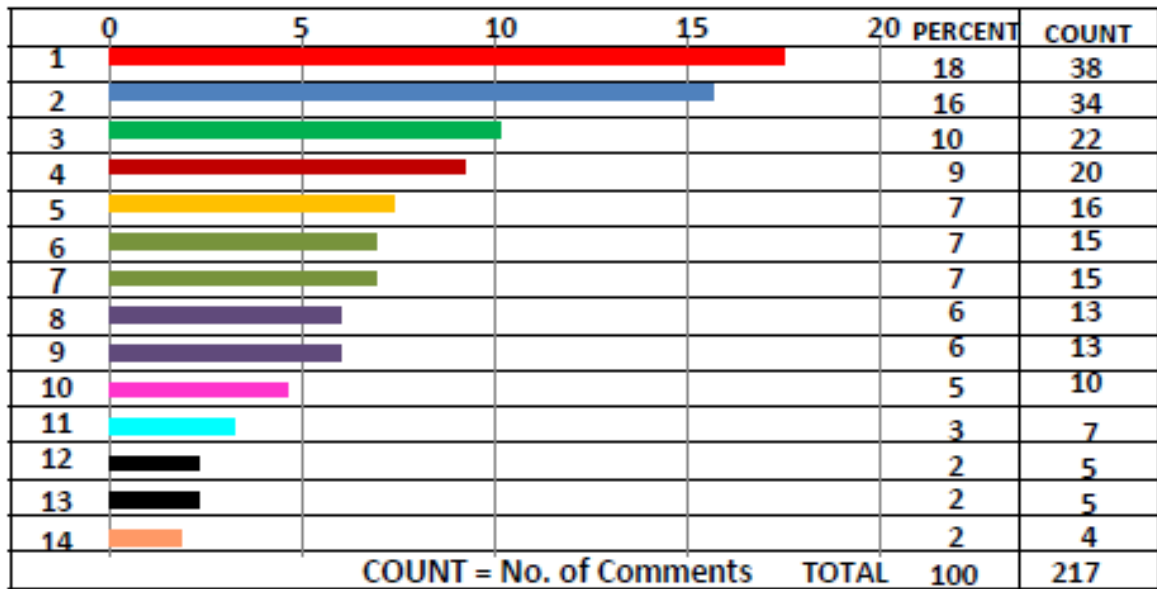
8. Miscellaneous likes

Town Meeting is forum bringing together Milford residents from all areas of the community.
--

It is a check by the people on the way that the town spends it money, and keeps a check on the zoning issues that the town faces.

Members who come take it seriously and seem to be doing their best in evaluating how to vote.

Question 5 – What do you dislike most about Town Meeting



Dislikes Categories

	1. Speaker time limits
	2.The length of the meeting
	3. Debating issues
	4.Membership, Moderator, and Finance Committee critique
	5. Audio/visual system quality including speaker issues at the microphone
	6. Decorum and conduct of town meeting members
	7. The content, clarity, and timeliness of information provided
	8. The same people get up and talk
	9. Seating comfort and arrangement, parking
	10. Voting method
	11. No dislikes
	12. Asking questions on articles
	13. Content and clarity of visual presentations
	14. Being recognized to speak

Notes:

1. All comments to Question 5 can be found in the Addendum.

Question 5 - Typical Comments

Question 5. What do you dislike most about Milford's Town Meeting?
1. Speaker time limits
How individuals are allowed to go on too long about their point of view. Should be a time limit.
Long winded speakers.
Speakers sometimes being allowed to ramble and not speak succinctly about topics at hand.
That there is often no time limit on how long someone is allowed to speak to an issue.
The lack of time limits on speakers and people's ability to ramble on with NO end in sight.
Speakers that monopolize time speaking.

2. The length of the meeting
Starts too late. Start it earlier.
Having to stay after 10:00 pm to finish the warrant.
I dislike the apparent pressure to complete TM in one night and the lack of discussion on many articles.
Too many articles packed in one session. We get out late and most of us have to get up early in the morning. I sometimes will leave early.

3. Debating Issues
Circular arguments lead to unnecessarily long discussions.
Some people feel the need to argue just for the sake of arguing.
Meeting members repeating what has already be said.
Presenters who mumble, speak too softly, too loud or too fast.
When one addresses the floor and go off on a tangent.
When someone has something to say they have to walk to the front and address from the podium. Waste of time.
When debate is shut off.
Too little real discussion.

4. Membership, Moderator, and Finance Committee critique
It appears that the great majority of members have never approached the microphone.
Members exiting the hall after an important vote.
Members not attending.
People who do not listen and do not come to the meeting informed .

4. Membership, Moderator, and Finance Committee critique (Cont'd.)
Too many town meeting members are town employees.
And some seem clueless on how it operates.
that some seasoned members, despite having prior experience submitting amendments, continually fail to follow the required format.,
The way the finance committee gives it's take on the pre-meeting and their superior attitude towards the way they cast their decisions on spending.
Too much control by the finance committee. They are supposed to be a recommending board, not the final decision maker.

5. Audio/visual system quality including speaker issues at the microphone
Speaker (audio) still not being loud enough.
Acoustics - always difficult to hear speakers.
The hall's sound system leaves a lot to be desired.
People not talking into the mike
The lack of respect many show towards the moderator and other members.
Town meeting members who can't shut up during proceedings....always the same ones. Shut up and pay attention!

6. Decorum and conduct of town meeting members
Some town officials who can be condescending.
The lack of respect many show towards the moderator and other members.
Sometimes what is said is not relevant to the motion in question.
The need of some members to hear themselves speak for the sake of hearing themselves speak.
Town meeting members who can't shut up during proceedings....
Very noisy.....

7. The content, clarity, and timeliness of Information provided
Information to be voted on seems to be disseminated at the last minute.
Not having an opportunity to be better informed about topics before voted on.
Planning board and zoning issues can be difficult to understand.
The order in which articles is presented seems random. Topics that require in-depth explanation and discussion should be presented first, to ensure they receive the attention they deserve. Plus, often not much information is provided to explain what is being voted on.
Written documentation should be provided that indicates what would happen if the article does not pass. (Similar to State ballot questions.)
The lack of timely information in some cases - finding material on the chair with no time to give it thorough consideration' I also feel there needs to be better visuals.

7. The content, clarity, and timeliness of Information provided (Cont'd.)

Advance information not easily available. Consider taking advantage of information technology. Consider Town Meeting tab on the Town's website to post reports and YouTube links to Fin Com, Planning Board, Selectmen, and School Committee meetings that deal with the budget and Warrant Articles.

hard decisions matters should be put on agenda first NOT last when everyone is tired and no thought goes into the vote.

I find the terminology of some of the articles hard to understand.

8. The same people get up and talk

When the same people get up and drone on and on - Some are always negative - But that's their right.

9. Seating Comfort and Arrangement, parking

Pr. 6 never has been close behind Members/at/Large during so-called Precinct rotations.

I wish there was a little more room, sometimes it is a little cramped (the seats).

Parking.

10. Voting method

Silent vote would yield truer feelings and opinions.

Voice vote and the influence of others on their votes.

11. No Dislikes

I actually don't have complaints.

12. Asking questions on articles

People not understanding that TM floor is NOT the place to ask questions.

WOULD LOVE TO BE ABLE TO ASK QUESTIONS.

Town Meeting Members frequently ask for more information about particular warrant articles at Town Meetings, and the sponsors (or other seemingly knowledgeable town officials) sometimes do not provide answers during the relevant floor 'debate'...

When some gets up ask questions about an article. One thing to ask for point of clarification.

13. Content and clarity of visual presentations

Slides with print that is too small to read and too much information on one slide.

The visual displays, can't see what is being shown.




14. Being recognized to speak

Difficult to be recognized by moderator

and difficult for the moderator to hear us when we want to be recognized.

Questions 22-24 Comments

Question 25. Please Elaborate on Questions 22-24

How Satisfied are you with	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	PERCENT	COUNT
22.Meeting dates notice?											20	9
23. Materials you receive prior to Town Meeting?											39	18
24. Fin. Com. materials you receive?											43	19
COUNT = No. Comments											TOTAL	46

Notes:

1. All comments to Questions 22-24 can be found in the Addendum.
2. There were 5 comments entered in this section that did not address these 3 questions.

Question 22 -Typical Comments

22. How early you are notified of the Town Meeting dates so that you may plan your schedule.
Would prefer 3 to 6 month advance notice.
No notice from Selectmen or Town Clerk when date is set.
Town meeting dates should be easier to find on the town web page.
An email with the date ("save the date") would also be helpful.
Would like earlier and multiple notifications of town meeting dates.

Question 23 - Typical Comments

23. Materials you receive for the meeting arrive in sufficient time for you to review and prepare.
Do not like to have articles found on the chair the night of the meeting
Need to get better at letting town meeting members know what is available on the web site
It works great.
Sometimes the mail arrives late
More time is needed before town meeting
Televised committee meetings, websites, and papers have a lot of info

Question 24 - Typical Comments

24. Finance Committee materials you receive are comprehensive and informative.
Finance committee report is clear.
Finance Committee vote should specify how many voted for and against.
Additional materials are not always easy to understand.
Finance Committee should provide the following with the warrant: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The 5 yr. capital plan.2. Detailed explanation of ALL reserves, not just stabilization.3. Initial costs and recurring operating costs for each article.4. Tax rate impact.5. Description and analysis.

Questions 37-44 Comments

Question 45. Please elaborate on Questions 37-44

How Satisfied are you with:	0	10	20	30 PERCENT	COUNT
37. Beginning and ending on time?				0	0
38. Being run organized?				10	4
39. Audio System Quality?				17	7
40. Visual Presentation Quality?				22	9
41. The Voting Process?				10	4
42. The Amendment Process?				7	3
43. Budget Presentations?				7	3
44. Zoning & Land Articles Presentations?				27	11
COUNT = No. Comments				TOTAL 100	41

Notes:

1. All comments to Questions 37-44 can be found in the Addendum.
2. There were 6 comments entered in this section that did not address these 8 questions.

Question 38 - Typical Comments

38. How satisfied are you with the meeting being run in an organized fashion?
I think the town moderator does a great job.
It is hard to get the moderators attention.
Not necessary to repeat laws/amendments/etc. each time.

Question 39 - Typical Comments

39. How satisfied are you with the quality of the audio system?
People not speaking into the microphone. The moderator should intervene when people are shouting for them to speak up.
Difficult to hear.

Question 40 - Typical Comments

40. How satisfied are you with the quality of the visual presentations?
It is very hard to see visual presentations.
Poor quality of slides and graphics.
Some angles are not great for the slide presentations.
Visuals, such as power points and maps, are often crammed with too much information-making it hard to get information from the presentations.

Questions 37-44 Comments (Cont'd.)

Question 41 - Typical Comments

41. How satisfied are you with the voting process (standing to vote, voice votes, etc)?

I think votes would be more honest if done electronically.
--

Question 42 - Typical Comments

42. How satisfied are you with the process to make amendments to motions at Town Meeting?
--

It is difficult to think quickly enough to write out a motion, then get recognized.

Question 43 - Typical Comments

43. How satisfied are you with the way in which the Town Budget is presented, discussed and approved?
--

I suspect that if one surveyed random TM members concerning the budget, one might find a significant lack of understanding.

Question 44 - Typical Comments

44. How satisfied are you with the way in which Zoning and Land Articles are presented, discussed and approved?
--

The Planning Board seems to present their reports/articles poorly.
--

More maps or other visual aids.

Graphics used are often hard to follow.





Some discussion about the purpose of such articles in a report beforehand would be nice.
--

Zoning and land articles use terminology that is not familiar to many members.
--

Trouble figuring out the geography of land or street acceptance in question in relation to the rest of the town.
--

Questions 46-49 Comments

50. Please elaborate on Questions 46-49

Elaborate on the following:	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	PERCENT	COUNT
46. I come prepared.								15	5
47. Comfortable participating and expressing views.								15	5
48. Comfortable expressing an opposing view.								18	6
49. Members are respectful and listen to others comments.								52	17
COUNT = No. of Comments								TOTAL	33

Notes:

1. All comments to Questions 46-49 can be found in the Addendum.
2. There were 7 comments entered in this section that did not address these 4 questions.

Question 46 - Typical Comments

46. I come prepared for every meeting to vote on all articles presented
I work full and part time. I am not available during Town Hall hours to explore questions, so I am dependent upon the warrants being thorough and clear.
I prepare as much as possible by reviewing the materials provided; however, often there is not enough information in advance.
There is no pre meeting briefing that explains every article.
We could be more prepared if more depts./boards/committees/commissions prepared reports, ideally prior to Town Meetings.

Question 47 - Typical Comments

47. I feel comfortable participating and expressing my views
My comfort level is more to do with my personality than how the town meeting is run.
Need Privacy for my vote.
By the last 45 min I feel I do not give the articles justice, I just want it over!
It becomes tedious when the same person gets up to oppose many, many articles. I understand freedom of speech, but feel like a hostage at most town meeting.
It is difficult to get the moderator's attention when you want to speak.

Questions 46-49 Comments (Cont'd.)

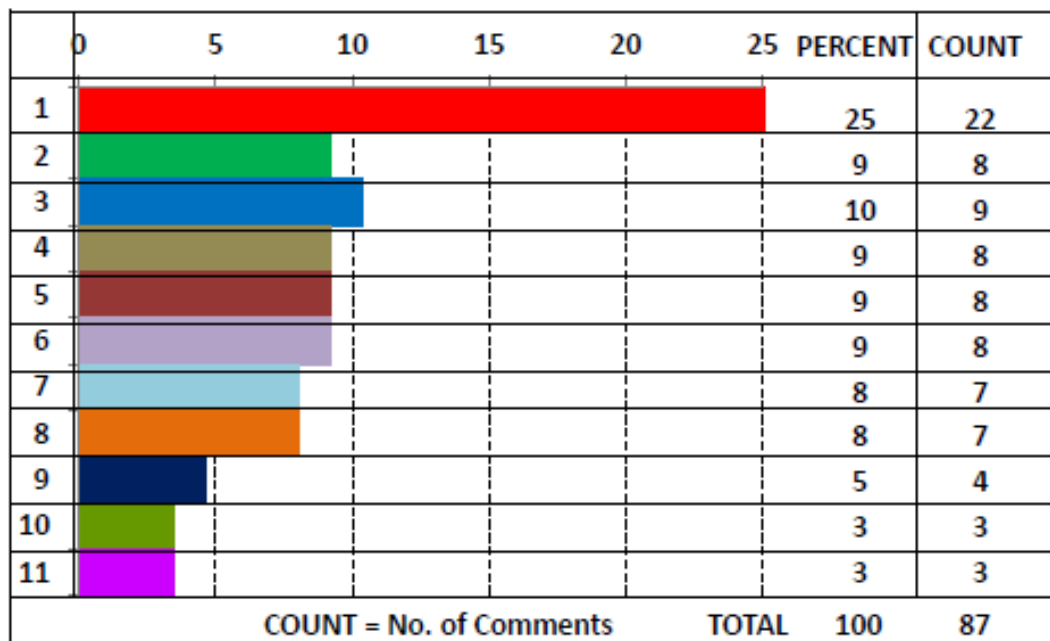
Question 48 - Typical Comments

48. I feel comfortable expressing an opposing or minority view at Town Meeting
<i>Not comfortable</i> because I am new as of 2016 with no prior experience.
I feel like decisions are made before Town Meeting.
I no longer feel comfortable expressing an opposing view or asking for clarification given the hostility I have witnessed from individual members.
If we had an anonymous voting system, the vote would reflect the TRUE OPINION of TMMs.
It is intimidating to speak before such a large body, but that's part of the job.

Question 49 - Typical Comments

49. I feel Town Meeting Members are respectful and listen to others' comments
I see and hear too many people talking with others instead of listening to the speaker. I find it distracting and difficult to hear at times.
Sometimes members get tired of lengthy debates and call for the end of debate without hearing all debate.
Members need to be respectful when others come up to express their comments, so people should listen and not be rude.
When members speak too long, too softly, and/or mumble, it becomes difficult to maintain focus and listen.

Question 52. If you have never or rarely spoken at Town Meeting, please explain why and provide any recommendation to improve Town Meeting to address your reason(s) for not speaking?



Speaking Categories

1	[Red]	Others have spoken for my position
2	[Green]	Intimidating
3	[Blue]	Save time
4	[Brown]	Shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence
5	[Dark Red]	Nothing new to add
6	[Purple]	No Reason, Futile - everything passes
7	[Light Blue]	Not Comfortable speaking in public
8	[Orange]	New member
9	[Dark Blue]	Not sufficiently knowledgeable
10	[Light Green]	Speaking Locations
11	[Pink]	Difficulty Being Recognized

Notes:

1. All comments to Question 52 can be found in the Addendum.
2. There were 7 comments entered in this section that did not address this question.

Question 52 - Typical Comments

1. Others have spoken for my position

By the time I'm ready, there is usually someone that has already spoken and for my position.

Most concerns are already addressed. Don't feel the need to hammer an issue into the ground; either way.

Usually someone has previously supported my position with a well-articulated argument.

2. Intimidating

I have been negatively approached by members after a meeting.

and some members in the audience make comments about some of the speakers when they get up.

They don't seem to give enough respect to the people that support or oppose an article. They seem to think it is a hassle.

3. Save time

Didn't want to extend time.

Sometimes debate can get redundant. And in respect for the time and other items on the warrant we just need to move on.

In spirit of moving the agenda there's no value having multiple folks express same points.

4. Shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence

Anxiety walking up to front of the room. Would prefer a microphone and be able to stay in my precinct seated area.

The reason has to do with my personality and confidence and not how the town meeting is run.

Too shy or uncomfortable.

5. Nothing new to add

I have always understood the question and had enough information to vote without a question.

I would be comfortable making my voice heard if I felt that I could contribute something meaningful.

6. No Reason, Futile - everything passes

90% of matters at the Town Meeting are routine and not worthy of comment. For those that are worthy of comment, a good portion of those commenting are only doing so because a microphone and audience are available
--

I feel it is a lesson in futility. Everything passes.

No reason.

7. Not Comfortable speaking in public
--

I am not a person who feels comfortable speaking in front of a large audience of people I don't really know.
--

8. New member

Coming in new last year, there was no instruction regarding process and procedure. I think this is too important to rely on on-the-job training that in fact doesn't exist. It was like facing a driving test without ever having been behind the wheel.
--

9. Not sufficiently knowledgeable
--

Usually the presenters have the most knowledge about the article.

10. Speaking Locations

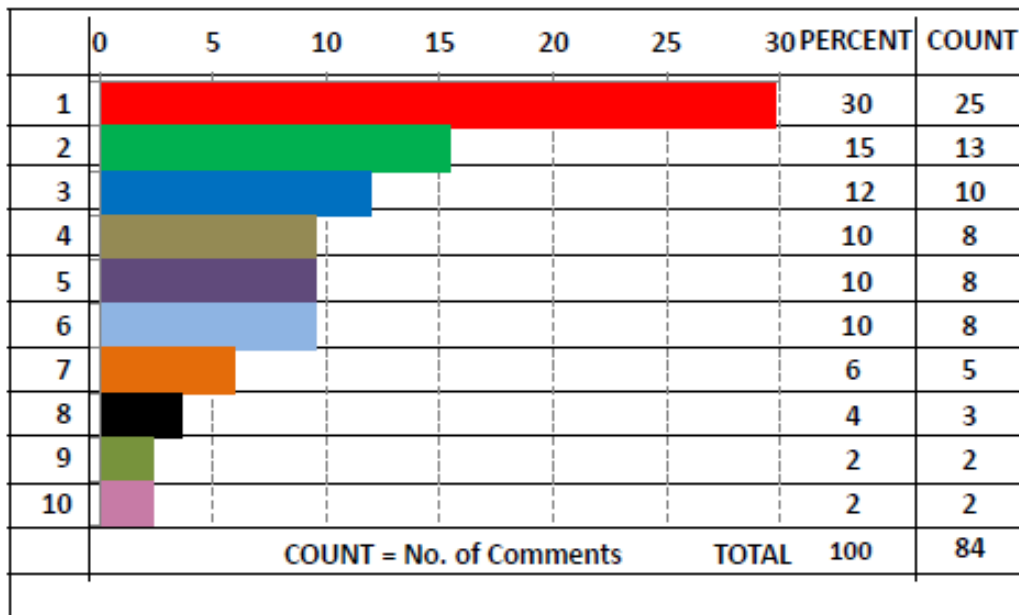
Would be more receptive to commenting if microphones were more readily available and spread throughout the assembly.
--

11. Difficulty Being Recognized
--

It is difficult to be seen and/or heard when you are located farther away from the stage. Maybe the precinct captains could help people get recognized by the speaker by holding up a sign.

It is hard to get the moderator's attention. The town meeting handbook should include example(s) of good speaking practices that emphasis the importance of making a point or asking for a point of clarification.
--

Question 56. Please provide any additional information that you feel would improve Milford's Town Meeting.



Improvements Categories

1		Speaker time limits and training
2		Materials and information provided
3		Number and duration of Town Meetings
4		Electronic Voting
5		Location, seating, and audio/video
6		Miscellaneous improvements
7		Pre-Town Meetings and Member Training
8		Member attendance
9		Moderator Recognition
10		Amendment Process

Notes:

1. All comments to Question 56 can be found in the Addendum.
2. There were 11 comments entered in this section that did not address this question.

Question 56 - Typical Comments

1. Speaker time limits and speaker training
As long as speaker is addressing topic, there should not be an arbitrary time period set for discussion. Some articles require more discussion /thought than others.
All officials should practice use of microphones if they are going to speak.
Repeat members get up too long too often.

1. Speaker time limits and speaker training (Cont'd.)

Speaker time should be regulated but not limited. However, the presenter of the motion and his or her designee (e.g., consultant, expert, legal representative, etc.) should be allowed all the time required to fully describe the motion. During debate each speaker's time should be regulated to afford other Members an opportunity to speak. Repetitive regulated times would continue until all speakers have been heard or a Member moves the question.

I think everyone who wants to be heard should have the opportunity. People with a spiral bound notebook full of essays that they are going to read aloud needlessly extends the length of the meeting.

2. Materials and information provided

Sharpening up the individual response time allowed and having information on all articles available 3-4 weeks before the meeting would take the meeting to the next level.

Timely backup materials for each article including modern graphics, maps, charts to clearly explain purpose and need for each article (responsibility of proponent).

That and the phrase "a sum of money"... TMMs want a ballpark figure at the very least, because there's nothing worse than finding out the bill at the last minute, right before we're expected to authorize action.

Require the Fin Com to present the pros and cons of each substantive issue as required by their charter.

Require the Fin Com to reflect the votes of their members for each article not the majority vote i.e. 3 for 6 against with reasons for and against.

When watching board/committee meetings on Milford TV in prep for TM, the audio quality is often poor and inconsistent - both live and replay. This discourages one from trying to follow presentations and discussions.

3. Number and duration of Town Meetings

Meeting should be planned for 2 nights. By 10:30 p.m. some members are getting restless, attention is waning, and some leave early. A 3hr. meeting is long enough. Start at 7:00 p.m.

Understandably, some of the meetings are long. But they are too long, especially for those of us who have worked a full day and are getting up early the next day.

4. Electronic Voting

Electronic voting should not be done.

Electronic voting would ensure an accurate vote and not one where someone may be intimidated by standing.

5. Location, seating, and audio/video
--

Again, I'm wide. Spread the seats out a bit. I get more elbow room flying coach.
--

improve the audio and video quality.

Place microphones in each precinct so speakers could speak from there if they choose, too much time is wasted waiting for speakers to get to front.

6. Miscellaneous Improvements

I feel that with the information that is given to TM members, such as the Finance Committee Report, we do not need them telling us whether or not their vote was favorable or not for each article, we have their report telling us such. All boards or committees do the same thing, they get up and tell us that they had a meeting. We already know they had a meeting. Time consuming.
--

Town Meeting Members frequently ask for more information about particular warrant articles at Town Meetings, and the sponsors (or other seemingly knowledgeable town officials) sometimes do not provide answers during the relevant floor 'debate'... if the sponsors don't have the answers, perhaps the votes should get tabled more often (perhaps automatically) to facilitate real or more-thorough answers, before a vote is actually taken.

7. Pre-Town Meetings and Member Training

A meeting before town meeting to explain all warrants, what it means if the vote is yes, pro/con.

Training for new members. .

8. Member attendance

Have all high important warrants for the end so members don't leave half way through the meeting.

keep the sign in attendance and keep track of those who stayed for the end
--

9. Recognition by the Moderator
--

Encourage the moderator to try to see if someone is trying to get his attention.
--

Moderator should recognize "new" faces not same as always-speakers.

10. Amendment Process

A little time should be given for someone who wants to write out a motion.
--