

TOWN MEETING STUDY AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

Report to the May 20, 2019 Annual Town Meeting
(Reporting Period: April 21, 2018 through May 15, 2019)

The Town Meeting Study and Improvement Committee (the “Committee”) was established by Article 15 of the October 30, 2017 Special Town Meeting.

The following is a summary of the Committee’s progress and activities over the reporting period as governed by the Committee by-law. The Committee continues to be guided by the 2017 Milford Town Meeting Survey.

Town Meeting Procedures and Selectmen Policy Accomplishments

The Committee sponsored eleven Articles over two Town Meetings.

Four articles presented and approved at the May 18, 2018 Annual Town Meeting addressed:

1. start time of 7:00 pm for the Annual Town Meeting (Article 7);
2. adjournment time of 10:00 pm for all Town Meetings (Article 8);
3. filling of Committee vacancies (Article 9); and
4. rules on “Speaker Time” (Article 10).

Of the seven Articles sponsored for the October 15, 2018 Special Town Meeting, three were presented and approved; one was presented and defeated; and three related articles were passed over. The three approved articles addressed:

1. recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States (Article 4);
2. requirements for Town Meeting members seeking re-election (Article 22); and
3. funding for the Committee’s general expenses (Article 34)

The defeated Article (Article 3) sought to conduct Town Meeting according to a manual of parliamentary procedure. This vote required the Committee to pass over three related Articles (Articles 5, 6 and 7).

In addition, and upon the Committee’s recommendation, the Selectmen adopted policies to start all Special and Adjourned Town Meetings at 7:00 pm and to consolidate routine housekeeping articles under one article.

Other Committee Activities

1. Organized Pre-Town Meeting Forums for the October 15, 2018 Special Town Meeting and the May 20, 2019 Annual Town Meeting.
2. Developed a Committee page for the Town’s Website.
3. A review of the audio equipment was initiated with the Information Technology Department to address Town Meeting members’ audio experience. It was concluded that the audio output provided by the equipment and its installation is more than adequate to service the Upper Town Hall.
4. Under consideration for improving the audio input are changing the configuration of the podium microphone and improving how Town Meeting members speak at the podium. The configuration issue is being addressed by the Information Technology Department. The Committee developed “Guidelines for Speaking at the Podium” (which was mailed with the Warrant for the May 20, 2019 Annual Town Meeting) as an attempt to improve speaking at the podium.
5. A draft of “Electronic Presentation Guidelines” has been prepared and is under review. The Information Technology Department’s role has been approved by said department and the Town Administrator.

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6. In co-ordination with the Town Clerk, electronic communication was established with Town Meeting members via email (for those who have their email listed).
7. The development of a Town Meeting Handbook continues.
8. The Electronic Voting study is on-going. One of the top electronic voting system providers attended a Committee meeting and gave a product demonstration.
9. Preliminary discussions have been initiated with the Finance Director and Finance Committee Chairman regarding presentation of financial status in a graphic form (for example, bar graphs, pie charts and so forth) and updating the 2012 Capital Plan.

Committee Administration

The Committee has experienced a fair amount of turnover and the list of applicants on file has dwindled for filling Committee vacancies. To counter this trend a recruitment program has been instituted to seek new applicants.

In addition, the Committee recently adopted a Consultant category for those Town Meeting members who cannot commit to serve as a Committee Member or Participating Applicant but have expertise to offer for special projects. Thus far, three Town Meeting members have volunteered for this position.

In collaboration with the Town Administrator, a protocol for the Committee was established to interface with Town Boards, Departments, Commissions, and Committees.

As a result of all that is currently being worked on and limited resources, the Committee has not been able to:

1. develop the New Town Meeting Member Orientation Program;
2. address improving the process to amend motions;
3. develop guidelines for answering questions raised at Town Meeting;
4. research and recommend ways to improve presentation of land and zoning articles; and
5. address the issue of being recognized by the moderator.

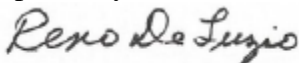
It is evident that there is ample opportunity for more assistance. The Committee hopes that the recruitment program and consultant volunteers will result in more participants to address these and other initiatives going forward.

Financial Report

October 15, 2018 Appropriation -----	\$5,000.00
Expenditures to date -----	<u>0.00</u>
Account Balance	\$5,000.00

Finally, the Committee extends its appreciation for the support and cooperation it has received from the Town Administrator and all Town Boards, Departments, Committees, and Commissions, that it has called upon over this reporting period.

Respectfully submitted,



Reno DeLuzio, Chairman