

TOWN MEETING STUDY AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

Report to the May 24, 2021 Annual Town Meeting
(Reporting Period: June 13, 2020 through February 26, 2021)

The Town Meeting Study and Improvement Committee (the “Committee”) was established by Article 15 of the October 30, 2017 Special Town Meeting. The Committee was organized in January 2018.

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

During this reporting period, the Committee continued to pursue its initiatives despite the challenges brought about by COVID-19 restrictions and the unexpected deaths of Steven J. Trettel (one of Committee’s original members), and Michael J. Noferi, Esq., Town Moderator.

Committee Accomplishments and Activities

1. Pre-Town Meeting Forums – Pre-Town Meeting Forums for the June 29, 2020 and the January 6, 2021 Town Meetings were cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Committee felt that hosting the June forum would place Town Meeting Members at an unnecessary risk. The January forum was also cancelled as this was the first time a fully remote Town Meeting was being attempted. The Committee is preparing plans for a forum for the May 24, 2021 Annual Town Meeting whether it is remote or in person.

2. Twice Reading of Main Motions

From time to time the practice of reading the main motion twice, first by the sponsor of a warrant article and again by the Moderator, has been questioned by Town Meeting Members. It was also mentioned in the 2017 Town Meeting Member Survey. The Committee decided to study the issue. The study’s research results and conclusions are summarized below.

Twice Reading Motions - Other Towns TM Video Survey (9-3-20)					
Towns with Representative Town Meetings -- 33					
		#Towns That			
Data Sheet	# Towns Surveyed	Read Once	Read Twice	Not Read	# Articles Surveyed
M. BonTempo	7	1	1	5	20
B. Long	6	5	1	0	16
R. DeLuzio	6	4	0	2	18
J. Morais	6	6	0	0	18
Total	25	16	2	7	72
		64%	10%	28%	

Videos of 8 Towns could not be located.

Milford Town Meetings -Twice Reading Motions Survey Summary		
		(h:mm:ss)
Town Meeting	No. of Articles	First Reading Time
May 20, 2019	25	0:17:09
Oct. 28, 2019	42	0:19:18
May 14, 2018	29	0:23:20
Oct. 15, 2018	36	0:27:55
May 22, 2017	44	0:18:58
Oct.30, 2017	27	0:16:07
	Average	0:20:28

Conclusions: Milford is in the minority for the twice reading of main motions and time is saved if main motions are read only once.

The study was forwarded to Moderator Noferi in September for his consideration, Sadly, Moderator Noferi was not able to respond prior to his passing in October. The study was then forwarded to Charles D. Boddy, Jr., Esq., Town Counsel, for consideration which resulted in main motions being read only

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once at the remotely held January 6, 2021 Special Town Meeting.. (Ref: TMSIC Memorandum to Atty. Michael Noferi, Moderator; September 14, 2020; Re: Twice reading of motions at Town Meeting)

3. Milford Town Meeting Procedural Guide

Significant progress has been made in the development of the guide by Michelangelo Bon Tempo (Committee Clerk). The most recent draft for Committee review can be found on the Town's Website under Agendas, TMSIC, December 21, 2020.

4. Electronic Presentation Guidelines

Significant progress has been made in the development of the guidelines by the Committee Chairman and Brian W. Long (Town Meeting Member and Participating Applicant of the Committee). The most recent draft for Committee review can be found on the Town's Website under Agendas, TMSIC, February 16, 2021. At the February 16th meeting, the Committee approved advancing this draft to the Information Technology Department and other Town Departments, Boards, and Committees for their review and comment.

5. Electronic Voting

This initiative came to halt with the passing of Mr. Trettel who was the lead person in advancing it. However, the Committee intends to keep it on the agenda to the extent that time and resources will allow. As reported in the June 24, 2020 Annual Report , the E-Voting demonstration authorized by Town Meeting for the 2020 Annual Town Meeting was postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Passage of Article 16 at the January 6, 2021 Special Town Meeting re-authorized a demonstration at any Town Meeting, as voted upon and approved by the Committee.

6. Graphics to Improve Presentation of Land Articles

Recently the Committee has begun research into developing requirements for providing Town Meeting Members with graphics that illustrate the location and features of the land under consideration (street acceptance, disposition of Town-owned land, site plans, etc.) during presentations at or in advance of Town Meeting.

7. Asking Questions at Town Meeting

Town Meeting is a deliberative assembly and not a question-and-answer forum. The Pre-Town Meeting Forum was established to provide a venue for Town Meeting Members (and the public) to ask questions directly to the sponsors of warrant articles (or their representatives).

The Committee has recently begun researching how other towns with representative town meeting deal with this issue.

Committee Administration

The Committee was established for the sole purpose of improving, and thereby preserving, our Town Meeting. Town Meeting Members are encouraged to take advantage of its potential by participating as an applicant, by petitioning the Committee to consider ideas for improvement, or to express concerns.

1. Standing Votes of Town Meeting – Town Meeting Study and Improvement Committee

Under Article 28 of the January 6, 2021 Special Town Meeting, the Committee's Standing Vote was amended by deleting section (b) in its entirety and inserting new section (b) on Committee appointments; term of office; termination of membership; and Committee vacancies.

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2. New Town Meeting Member Orientation Program

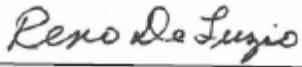
The development of this program remains unattended. Outreach to Committee Applicants and Town Meeting Members for assistance will continue. Anyone having an interest in assisting can contact the Committee at tmsic@townofmilford.com.

Financial Report

October 15, 2018 Appropriation -----		\$5,000.00
Expenditures to date -----		<u>958.75</u>
	Account Balance	\$4,041.25

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

Respectfully submitted,



Reno DeLuzio, Chairman