

TOWN MEETING STUDY AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

(TMSIC)

Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Town Meeting Study and Improvement Committee was held on Monday, December 13, 2021, Renaldo A. DeLuzio being in the chair called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Present at the meeting were seven members of the Committee: Charles M. Clark, Sr., Renaldo A. DeLuzio, , Kathryn L. Mastroianni, Christine Crean, Richard A. Heller, Michael Visconti, and Jose M. Morais. Two members of the Committee were absent: Catherine S. Porter and Michael B. Aghajanian. Two Participating Applicants to the Committee were present: B. Gregory Johnson and Brian W. Long. Michaelangelo Bon Tempo, Consultant Volunteer, was also present.

Administrative Items:

Chairman DeLuzio announced that the meeting was being recorded and asked if anyone had objection. There were no objections.

Chairman DeLuzio noted that there was a significant amount of supporting documentation emailed to Members, Participating Applicants, and Consultant Volunteers in advance of the meeting. A Meeting Agenda Guide (Attachment 1) was also emailed that correlates the documents with the Agenda Items to facilitate the orderly conduct of this meetings proceedings.

1. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Chairman DeLuzio moved and the minutes of the regular meeting of September 21, 2021 were accepted as read.

Chairman DeLuzio moved and the minutes of the regular meeting of October 12, 2021 were accepted as read.

2. Invitation to Speak: No requests.

3. October 25, 2021 Town Meeting Debriefing

Chairman DeLuzio handed out and reviewed his notes on specific articles (See Attachment 2). He then called on the members and others to offer their observations and concerns. Discussion ensued on the following common themes:

- a) Questions not answered or inadequately answered. – All concurred.
- b) Insufficient information provided in advance of Town Meeting – All concurred
- c) Motions changing From/To: When motion language just indicates the segment of text or data that is changing From/To, the original full text or data is not provided. Original text or data should be provided as supplements to the Warrant *[preferably as a markup in advance of Town Meeting]*.
- d) Twice reading of motions – Chairman DeLuzio observed that the practice of reading the motion more than once is continuing. (See 5e below)

e) Reducing the quorum – Mr. Morais commented that he does not favor reducing the quorum. Mr. Visconti agreed. Mr. Bon Tempo explained that under normal circumstances there is no provision to reduce the quorum. Special legislation was passed that allowed the option for the Moderator, in consultation with the Select Board, to reduce the quorum for town meetings held remotely due to

TOWN MEETING STUDY AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

(TMSIC)

Covid. It is a temporary condition, as the special legislation is scheduled to end on December 15, 2021. Since the passage of the special legislation the only town meeting held remotely with a reduced quorum was the January 2021 Special Town Meeting, even though there were sufficient town meeting members present to meet the usual quorum number. The October 25, 2021 Special Town Meeting required three attempts to achieve a quorum after the initial session.

f) Mailed Warrant is arriving late. Mr. Morais & Mr. Long received it the day of the Town Meeting, Mr. Visconti received it 1 or 2 days before. Mr. Heller commented that the Warrant preparation schedule dates are not being enforced and the US Mail delivery is now taking longer. Chairman DeLuzio reported that he spoke with Mr. Villani regarding lateness of the Warrant and is addressed in the Chairman's Initiatives Status Report Ref: Email dated 12/8/21). *[Mr. Villani acknowledged that this issue has to be addressed.]* .

4. Establish Meeting Dates (2022)

Chairman DeLuzio took another look at possible meeting dates for 2022. Upon consideration of member preferences and holidays, he recommended the Regularly Scheduled Meeting dates be scheduled for the second Monday of the month.

Mr. Visconti so moved – Approved unanimously.

5. TMSIC Initiatives & Prioritization Status – Key Topics

Chairman DeLuzio presented his status report which was emailed to all in advance of the meeting and will be placed on file. Discussion ensued on the following:

a) Town Meeting Procedural guide

Mr. Bon Tempo reported that he will have a draft for the Jan. 10, 2022 meeting.

b) Pre-town Meeting Forums

Chairman DeLuzio reviewed participation data which shows poor participation. Chairman DeLuzio commented that we cannot be doing the same thing over and over again and expect a different result. He recommended the Committee conduct a survey of Town Meeting Members to get their opinion of the Forum. Pros and cons of including At-Large Members was discussed. Consensus of the Committee was to conduct a survey of all Town Meeting Members including At Large Members.

Chairman DeLuzio handed out and reviewed proposed survey questions including participation statistics. Ms. Mastroainni suggested adding – Have you viewed any of the Pre-Town Meeting Forums on Milford TV? Chairman DeLuzio will check with Milford TV to confirm the Forums that were broadcast. All concurred to include the question.

[Post meeting: Oct. 9, 2018 was not broadcast nor recorded due to technical difficulties. May 15, 2019 and Oct. 22, 2019 were broadcast and recorded]

Discussion ensued regarding how many Forums were recorded and posted on the Town Website and how to incorporate video recordings for future Forums. Chairman DeLuzio recalled only one *[May 15, 2019]* that he posted on the TMSIC webpage. . He will check with IT to see if others were posted. *[Post meeting from IT – “We try our best to post any recorded meeting, but this is a luxury and not required to be posted on the website.” “We refer all citizens to the Milford TV castus site to find and watch any recorded past meetings - -- <https://cloud.castus.tv/vod/milford-vod/?page=HOME>”]*

TOWN MEETING STUDY AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

(TMSIC)

Mr. Long suggested inserting “Pre-Town Meeting Forum” ahead of “more” for emphasis. All concurred.

Mr. Johnson suggested adding – “Would you prefer asking questions at Town Meeting rather than at a Pre-Town Meeting Forum? Chairman DeLuzio opined that the answer would more than likely be “at Town Meeting”. *[Mr. Johnson offered the question again under d) below]*

Mr. Bon Tempo recommended the participation statistics not be included in the survey preamble because the data from the 3 Forums is too small a sample to draw any conclusions. Mr. Long agreed with Mr. Bon Tempo. He felt the Forum is still fairly new and needs more time to catch on.

Chairman DeLuzio agreed to remove the statistics. He did not agree that we should continue what we are doing hoping participation will improve, especially when it takes so much effort to produce a Forum. He also felt it is not justifiable to request Town Departments to attend with so little participation. Chairman DeLuzio is willing to keep trying.

Ms. Crean suggested phoning Town Meeting Members requesting their participation. Mr. Heller noted that phone numbers are not available these days. Chairman DeLuzio noted that for one of the forums he sent emails to 30 Town Meeting Members who we knew personally and received no responses.

However, the question becomes -- If a significant percentage of Town Meeting Members negatively respond to the Survey *[Question 3 (Not interested and/or See no value in it)]* should we continue with the Forum? The Committee has to decide what that percentage should be. *[Q4 and Q5 need to be revised]*

d) Town Meeting Member Surveys

Mr. Morais favored a more comprehensive survey to find out what the TTM Members think about the Town Meeting. Chairman DeLuzio noted we did that in the 2017 Survey. Mr. Morais noted that was 4 years ago and attitudes may have changed. We could use the same or similar questions. Chairman DeLuzio favored narrowly focused and more frequent surveys and felt preparing a comprehensive survey could take much longer to develop given available resources to work on it.

Mr. Morais moved to conduct a comprehensive survey of Town Meeting Members. Approved unanimously.

Mr. Johnson once again suggested adding – “Would you prefer asking questions at Town Meeting rather than at a Pre-Town Meeting Forum? Chairman DeLuzio opined that the question would have to be reworded to add “even if it meant longer or more frequent Town Meetings”

Mr. Morais asked if the Survey responses are to be anonymous. Chairman DeLuzio to check the 2017 Survey. *[Post Meeting: The 2017 Survey Questionnaire was anonymous and there was no option for signature.]*

TOWN MEETING STUDY AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

(TMSIC)

Chairman DeLuzio asked if anyone was familiar with implementing Survey Monkey surveys. None were. Mr. Long noted he has some familiarity but has not implemented a survey.

Chairman DeLuzio's summation:

- Proceed to develop a comprehensive survey.
- The Forum and Asking Questions at Town meeting will be topics.
- The Forum preamble will not include any Forum participation data.
- Chairman DeLuzio to prepare another draft of the Forum questionnaire for the next meeting.

Chairman DeLuzio encouraged all to prepare additional topics they would like to see included and questions. Also prepare questions for Asking Questions at Town Meeting.

e) Twice reading of motions – (See item 3d above).

Mr. Bon Tempo explained that under common parliamentary law a motion is read three times: the first by the sponsor/maker when introducing the motion; the second by the moderator when stating the question for debate (ensuring that it is read properly and in the correct form); and third, by the moderator when putting the motion to a vote (ensuring that the voters know what they are voting on). Mr. Bon Tempo also noted that according to common parliamentary law that main motions must be available the day before the meeting.

A colloquy followed between Mr. Long and Mr. Bon Tempo on the Committee's study on the twice reading of motions and the preference for the majority of town meetings surveyed to read the motion only once. Mr. Bon Tempo concluded by stating that the study only looked at the first two readings of the main motion, and not how other towns handled how the question or motion is put to the voters. He further stated that he prefers the once reading by the moderator, and that when putting the question to a vote the form used would be "the motion as presented" when there is no opposition to the motion and a reading of the motion when there is opposition to ensure that the voters know what they are voting on.

Mr. Visconti favored the sponsor of the Article making the motion. Chairman DeLuzio requested Mr. Bon Tempo specify the procedure he intends to follow *[including who does the first reading]* in the Town Meeting Procedural Guide which is now under development so we won't have to keep going over it. Mr. Bon Tempo agreed to do so if it not already there.

f) Electronic Voting – No discussion.

g) Asking Questions at Town Meeting

Chairman DeLuzio handed out Mr. Long's research and read an email from Christopher Pilla (Town Treasurer) regarding no response to questions and unsatisfactory answers. He also handed out Mr. Long's report regarding his research of other Towns on this issue.

Chairman DeLuzio noted that there is no requirement to answer a question. Mr. Visconti felt the questions should be addressed to an individual. Chairman DeLuzio favored including this topic in the survey to get TMM views.

Chairman DeLuzio introduced Brian Cole's (Consultant Volunteer) Standing Vote proposal which was emailed to all. Chairman DeLuzio handed out and reviewed his edited version.

TOWN MEETING STUDY AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

(TMSIC)

Mr. Visconti found it extremely restrictive. Ms. Crean noted that the Moderator needs to regulate the Q&A to keep the meeting moving. Mr. Morais felt it was too complicated. Mr. Long noted that Mr. Cole is attempting to separate the Q&A time period from the Debate time period. It is too rigid. Need to have questions allowed during the debate. Chairman DeLuzio asked Mr. Bon Tempo if Mr. Cole talked with him about this. Mr. Bon Tempo responded that he had not.

Discussion drifted off topic to -- how to reduce questions -- pressing for answers that are unsatisfactory -- what should be the basic requirements for advance information that should be presented -- Warrant availability --- how much time should the TMM have to review the Warrant -- directing questions to an individual. *[topics for another meeting and the Survey]*. Mr. Bon Tempo noted that a question can be directed through the Moderator to an individual. Mr. Visconti moved to give a negative recommendation as written. 5 in favor, 1 opposed (CC) and 1 abstention (KM) - Motion passed.

Item 6 Town meeting attendance *[Suggestions for improving attendance]*

Chairman DeLuzio noted that Mr. Villani asked what could do about improving Town Meeting Member attendance. I responded that I had no good ideas but would bring the matter before the Committee for suggestions.

Mr. Long recommended stopping the practice of incumbents just signing an affidavit to get on the ballot. They should get signatures. Mr. Bon Tempo reported that most towns have lower signature requirements for those running for election. Mr. Long did not care about the number. Mr. Visconti recalled that changes how the incumbents get on the ballot requires an act of the Legislature.

Mr. Visconti brought up his earlier recommendation to the Committee to adopt the Framingham By-Law that had a removal process for delinquent TM Members. Chairman DeLuzio responded that former Town Counsel Gerry Moody reported to the Committee that Framingham never enforced the By-Law. Mr. Visconti disagreed. He will attempt to verify that it was enforced. Mr. Visconti may re-introduce the Framingham By-Law for the Committee's reconsideration.

Mr. Bon Tempo referred to a Town Meeting Rule that attendance records must be made available to the public by the Town Clerk's office two days after each town meeting session.

Mr. Morais noted that the question to be answered is -- Why don't TMM attend? We have to find out. Chairman DeLuzio recalled that according the Mr. Cole's attendance data, there is approximately 5% of TMM that are chronically absent. They are in a separate category. The data also shows that, on the average, Town Meeting Members attend about 50% of the time but are not necessarily the same cohort each time. The only way to get a handle on why they don't attend is to do a survey. Mr. Long suggested setting limit on articles per Town Meeting and have shorter and more frequent Town Meetings.

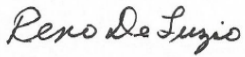
TOWN MEETING STUDY AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

(TMSIC)

Mr. Bon Tempo suggested having the Select Board post the attendance record of those who are up for re-election per a provision in the Town Meeting Rule.

Mr. Heller suggested that only Capital items should be on the Fall Special Town Meeting. The Kennel Article 25 should not have been placed on the Oct. 25, 2021 Special Town Meeting Warrant.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:00 PM



Reno DeLuzio
Chairman

Approved
1-10-2022

TOWN MEETING STUDY AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

(TMSIC)

Attachment 1

TMSIC Dec. 13, 2021 Meeting Agenda Guide				
	Agenda Item	Document Emailed	Group	Handout
1	Approve previous meeting minutes	Sept. 21 and October 12 Minutes		None
3	October 25, 2021 Town Meeting Debriefing	None		Chairman's Comments
4	Establish Meeting Dates (Dec. 2021 and Yr. 2022)	TMSIC 2022 Meeting Dates Options Chart (11-18-21)	1	None
5	TMSIC Initiatives & Prioritization Status	Nov. 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes (Excerpt) - Initiatives Status (12-6-21)	2	None
	Discussion/Status			
	Category A			
	1. Town Meeting Procedural guide (<i>M. BT. reports status</i>)	None		None
	1. Electronic Presentation Guidelines (<i>Chairman reports status</i>)	None		None
	2. Education & Orientation Program (<i>Chairman reports status</i>)	None		None
	3. Adequacy of Physical Facilities (<i>Chairman reports status</i>)	None		None
	4. Pre-Town Meeting Forums (<i>Chairman reports status and Survey Questions</i>)	(a) Pre-Town Meeting Forum Participation Analysis Summary (b) Responders to Article Requests	1	Chairman's Survey Questions
	Category B			
	3. Access and Timeliness of information (<i>Chairman reports status</i>)	None		None
	Committee Identified Initiatives			
	1. Electronic Voting (<i>Chairman reports status</i>)	None		None
	2. Twice Reading of Motions (<i>Chairman reports status</i>)	None		None
	3. Asking Questions at Town Meeting (<i>Discussion and Survey Questions</i>)	(a) Questions at Town Meeting Report by B. Long (b) Q&A Standing Vote from B. Cole	1	Emails (a)Chris Pilla (b) Bryan Cole
	4. Capital Expenditure/Improvements (<i>Chairman reports status</i>)	None		None
	Category B			
	1. Periodically Conduct Surveys	TM Member Survey Issues	2	Revision
6	Town Meeting Attendance Issue (<i>Discussion</i>)	None		May 18, 2018 email to B. Cole

Attachment 2

TOWN MEETING STUDY AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

(TMSIC)

Oct. 25, 2021 Town Meeting Debriefing – Reno's Notes
(Corrected per Dec. 13, 2021 TMSIC Meeting discussion.)

Took 3 tries to get a quorum.

Article 8 - Fino Field Pool (Park Commission)

Park Commissioner Chairman nor Consultant addressed funding questions from Visconti ~~& Abisla~~

Article 10 – Water Dept. Budget (Finance Director)

All line items read, not in the Warrant, not mailed , reason – not available when Warrant was mailed.
Why wasn't info subsequently mailed?

Article 11 – Water Dept Rates of Pay (Personnel Board)

No handout mailed.

Article 15 – Land Transfers (Conservation Commission)

Ownership question by Visconti not answered

Article 22 – Longevity Pay (Personnel Board)

When was it last raised by Abisla not answered?

~~Why did Moderator read twice?~~

Should have listed increase over previous amounts

Article 25 – Kennel Licenses (Select Board/Town Counsel)

Too long to digest at Town meeting

TMM should have been mailed a summary well in advance of Town Meeting

~~Article 27 – Hazardous materials removal at 72 Depot St. (Select Board)~~

~~Why did moderator read twice?~~

Article 31 -- Site Plan Review Amendment (Planning Board)

Joe Morais – Should have before and after language

~~Moderator lecturing on TMM preparedness (just for Mike)~~

Article 38 --- Amend Wage & Salary Schedule re Assessor/Administrator reclass (Personnel Board)

Visconti- Not enough information, should show steps