

**TOWN MEETING STUDY AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE
(TMSIC)**

**TOWN HALL
52 MAIN STREET MILFORD, MA 01757**

Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Town Meeting Study and Improvement Committee was held on Monday, October 29, 2018, in Room 14 of the Town Hall. Renaldo A. DeLuzio being in the chair called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

Present at the meeting were five members of the Committee: Renaldo A. DeLuzio (Chairman), Bartholomew R. Lawless (Vice-chairman), Michelangelo Bon Tempo (Clerk), Susan Marie Hastert and Kathryn L. Mastroianni. Three members of the Committee were absent: Richard A. Heller, Richard A. Morrison and Steven J. Trettel. Two Participating Applicants to the Committee were present: Charles M. Clark, Sr. and B. Gregory Johnson. No one from the public was present.

1. Chairman DeLuzio moved to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of September 24, 2018 as corrected.

Recently, Mr. Bon Tempo noticed an omission in the August 27, 2018 meeting minutes. The minutes neglected to record the appointment of Susan Marie Hastert to the Committee. On October 25th, Mr. Bon Tempo inquired of Amy Hennessy Neves, Town Clerk, of the date when the appointment was made. Mrs. Neves replied that she received notice of the appointment by Atty. Michael J. Noferi, Town Moderator, on June 8th; however, Ms. Hastert, as of October 25th, had yet to come into her office to be sworn in.

Chairman DeLuzio was unaware of Ms. Hastert not being sworn in. Ms. Hastert was present at the August 27th and September 24th regular meetings, and since she was not duly sworn in, she was not entitled to make nor to vote on any motions. The minutes for both meetings record that while she made no motions, she did vote on motions made by other members.

Mr. Bon Tempo moved to amend the previously approved minutes of the regular meeting of August 27, 2018 as follows.

Page 1 – delete third paragraph: Chairman DeLuzio informed the Committee of Joanne Dillon’s resignation.

And in its place add: Atty. Michael J. Noferi, Town Moderator, informed Chairman DeLuzio of the resignation of Joanne Dillon from the Committee and the appointment of Susan Marie Hastert to the Committee. Ms. Hastert has not been duly sworn in as a member by Amy Hennessy Neves, Town Clerk, and, therefore, is not entitled to make nor to vote on any motions.

Agenda Item 2 – amend: All votes on motions for Articles to be submitted to the Warrant for the

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October 15, 2018 Special Town Meeting changed from 7 in favor, 0 opposed to 6 in favor, 0 opposed.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. Bon Tempo moved to amend the previously approved minutes of the regular meeting of September 24, 2018 as follows.

Page 1 – insert a new third paragraph: Ms. Hastert has not been duly sworn in as a member by Amy Hennessy Neves, Town Clerk, and, therefore, is not entitled to make nor to vote on any motions.

Agenda Item 2 – amend:

The vote on the motion not to sponsor Article 22 changed from 1 in favor, 7 opposed to 1 in favor, 6 opposed.

The vote on the motion to amend the language of the motion for Article 22 changed from 7 in favor, 1 abstained to 6 in favor, 1 abstained.

The vote on the motion to amend the language of the motion for Article 3 changed from 8 in favor, 0 opposed to 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

The vote on the motion to amend the language of the motion for Article 7 changed from 8 in favor, 0 opposed to 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

The motion was carried unanimously.

2. Chairman DeLuzio presented revisions to the Committee's Ground Rules with respect to the order of speaking at meetings. By general consent the members agreed, and the revisions were received and placed on file.

3. Chairman DeLuzio presented revisions to the Sub-committee assignments. By general consent the members agreed, and the revisions were received and placed on file.

4. Ms. Hastert presented Sub-committee #7's impressions of the October 9, 2018 Pre-Town Meeting Forum.

The Sub-committee met on October 18th to review the Pre-Town Meeting Forum and considered the following areas:

- What worked.
- What didn't work.
- Attendance.

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- Thoughts about the questions asked.
- Role of the Moderator.
- What should be done different in the future.
- Impact on Town Meeting.

What worked:

- Many questions were asked.
- Sponsor presentations seemed to improve from Forum to Town Meeting.
- More questions seemed to be asked than would have been asked at Town Meeting.
- Audience members were able to get answers to their questions, which does not always happen at Town Meeting.
- Overall, the process worked smoothly.
- Moderator moved on to the next question quickly and kept people focused on asking questions and not advocating for or against article.

What didn't work:

- Received only 12 responses to indicate which articles should be discussed.
- Only two of those responses were from non-TMSIC members.
- Email sent to Town Meeting members: one had to open the attachments to see request for Town Meeting members to indicate which articles they would like to have discussed.
- The number assigned to articles changed from initial on-line draft of Warrant to final version of Warrant.

Attendance:

- Estimates ranged from 25 (not counting sponsors or Committee members) to 50 total people.
- There may have been some confusion concerning the date as the initial release and the Milford Patch article listed the date as October 1.
- Sub-committee members strongly feel that televising Forum would reduce attendance.
- Unknown how many TM members vs. general public attended.
- The initial release and the Milford Patch article stated that the Committee would choose the articles for discussion.

The questions asked:

- People seemed more willing to ask questions at the Forum than at Town Meeting.
- People got answers to their questions which does not always happen at Town Meeting.

Role of Moderator:

- Atty. Noferi kept the Forum moving along.
- Stopped speakers from advocating by asking if the speaker had a question.

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- Town Moderator may not be needed to chair Forum.

What should be done different in the future:

- Limit articles to be discussed to ten.
- Enforce limitation of one question per person.
- When soliciting input from Town Meeting members, ask for the subject matter and sponsor of the article as article numbers change.
- When soliciting input from Town Meeting members, provide opportunity for Town Meeting members to state their question.
- If the hall set-up is for Town Meeting, remove chairs from Selectmen's and Finance Committee's tables so everyone sits in the audience and no one is treated as special / different.

Impact on Town Meeting

- Forum referenced 8 to 10 times during Town Meeting.
- Presentations of several sponsors noticeably improved from Forum to Town Meeting.
- Self-service gas station changed from disabled / elderly phoning attendant to full service island with attendant for all customers at that island.
- Sponsors for Meehan zoning article brought handout to Town Meeting.

Conclusions:

The members of the Sub-committee felt the initial Pre-Town Meeting Forum was a very positive experience.

Two major issues that need to be addressed: obtaining more input from Town Meeting members with respect to the articles to be discussed and increasing attendance.

Mr. Lawless commended the Sub-committee on their efforts and echoed their impressions.

Ms. Mastroianni commented that the use and placement of the microphone stands made the asking of questions easier and more comfortable for the participants.

Chairman DeLuzio commented on the poor audio experience and could not recall if an announcement was made on the availability of hearing devices for the audio impaired. He also felt that the adjustment of the microphone stands was awkward for some participants.

He observed that by the end of the forum adherence to the ground rules became too lax, in that participants were asking multiple questions and were advocating their viewpoint, and that the sponsors were advocating their viewpoint; he commented that it might be useful to pass out a bulleted ground rule handout to participants as a reminder.

He felt that the placement of the Atty. Noferi was awkward, and that for future Forums a tall stool and hand-held microphone would be more suitable.

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Lastly, Chairman DeLuzio suggested that the Sub-committee develop a short evaluation form to provide to the participants and sponsors to gather feedback on their experiences, and that there be a follow-up by sponsors to Town Meeting members of their unanswered questions.

Mr. Bon Tempo requested that participants identify themselves prior to asking a question.

Mr. Johnson echoed Chairman DeLuzio's suggestion of the short evaluation form and follow-up of unanswered questions. He also suggested that if future Forums were televised live, that the Sub-committee should investigate using live twitter for question from the at home viewing audience.

5. Chairman DeLuzio felt that the Committee was caught unawares by Gerald Moody, former Town Counsel, speaking in opposition to Article 3 (adopting *Town Meeting Time*). He also observed that comments by other speakers revealed some misconceptions on what the Committee is attempting to accomplish with town meeting.

Ms. Hastert commented that given the perception problem of the Committee by Town Meeting members, a follow-up survey might be appropriate.

Mr. Lawless observed that some members are having difficulty being seen by the Moderator when attempting to be recognized to speak.

6. There was a great deal of discussion on the process for developing a Town Meeting Handbook. The overall goal is to have Town Meeting members realize the fact that over the last 35 years town meetings have been run according to *Town Meeting Time*.

Emphasis will be placed on developing, as a foundation, a procedural guide. The procedural guide would be an accurate reflection of the way Town Moderator Noferi conducts town meeting. The procedural guide will be footnoted, so that Town Meeting members can see the various sources for the proceedings – the General Laws; the Act establishing town meeting; the Standing Votes of Town Meeting; customs and traditions; and *Town Meeting Times*.

Chairman DeLuzio recommended that the procedural guide be introduced via the format of a forum.

7. Chairman DeLuzio moved to study the number of signatures required for a Town Meeting candidate's nomination papers. Of the thirty-three towns with a limited or representative form of town meeting, twenty-seven of them require only ten signatures on a candidate's nomination papers. Milford is the only town to require thirty signatures.

Section 3 of the Act establishing representative town meeting in Milford states that "[t]he town meeting members, ..., shall be judges of the election and qualifications of their members." In view of one of the purposes of the Committee, "[to] incentive[e] more of the Town's citizens to seek the office of Town Meeting member", the Committee is best suited to make a

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recommendation as to whether the high number of signatures is a barrier to entry to the office of Town Meeting.

Therefore, the Committee needs to ascertain if the high number of signatures is a barrier to entry to the office of Town Meeting.

The motion was carried unanimously.

8. Chairman DeLuzio moved to take from the table of the August 27th regular meeting the matter of updating Section 5 of the Standing Votes of Town Meeting – Town Meeting Rules, the rule pertaining to new capital expenditures.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Chairman DeLuzio moved to prepare an article for the 2019 Annual Town Meeting warrant on revising the capital expenditure rule with input from the Finance Committee.

The motion was carried unanimously.

9. Chairman DeLuzio presented the Committee with examples of visual presentation guidelines from three towns – Amherst, Falmouth and Framingham. By general consent, it was agreed to use the Falmouth guidelines as a template.

10. Chairman DeLuzio proposed changes the Committee's Ground Rules. By general consent the changes were agreed to and placed on file.

11. No Sub-committee reports were presented.

12. No one from the public was present.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Michelangelo Bon Tempo
Clerk

Approved
11/26/2018