

Town Meeting Procedures Review Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2010

The Town Meeting Procedures Review Committee was called at 7:31PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

Attendance: D. Berry, R. Stack, D. Bernstein, S. Correia, W. Steinberg, M. Jones

Absent: P. Gossels

Miranda Jones opened and chaired the meeting:

1. **Motion:** Approved minutes of 4/29/10. Vote: 6-0
2. **Town Meeting Suggestion Box:** Bill Steinberg read the suggestions left in the suggestion box at Town Meeting.

Pubic Hearing

Listed below are the scribe's best intent to capture the spirit, thoughts and highlights of individual residents' comments and should not be taken as literal quotations of what may have been said. Please refer to WayCam for full commentary.

1. George Harris, 8 Holiday Road:

- a. We need to have a sense of what the prior Town Meeting Review committee implemented.
- b. There are 3 categories of people who go to Town Meeting:
 - i. those who know exactly how they want to vote and just go to Town Meeting to vote;
 - ii. those that will look at the recommendations of FinCom and vote the way FinCom recommends;
 - iii. and a final group that goes to Town Meeting to debate.
- c. There is a problem getting people to understand what we are doing at Town Meeting.
- d. For residents that go to Town Meeting to debate, this is where governance starts, not ends. Whatever happened at any prior meeting does not count. Town Meeting is where it counts.
- e. The water meter proposal (capital budget) should have been a stand alone article.

2. Cynthia Lavenson, 40 Mitchell Street:

- f. Town Meeting needs strong acoustics, visuals and A/V technology. The Town should explore using overheads at the Middle School for the next Town Meeting.
- g. The prior town meeting review committee identified a number of recommendations that were implemented, such as piloting a Sunday Town Meeting etc.

3. Annette Lewis , 33 Claypit Hill Road::

- h. There should be only one Town Meeting per year. There is a limited amount of time for boards to prepare for fall town meeting because newly elected people just come onto boards.
- i. The Town Clerk needs people to work at Town Meeting and elections.
- j. Concerns with attendance are not new. Previous issues were addressed in the 70's. The real issue is that articles are not well thought out. Articles need hearings before Town Meeting, not just a budget presentation.
- k. Budgets are not addressed at hearings. The public needs the budget long before the hearing. Group sessions, dirty questions need to be asked; residents deserve to have real answers.
- l. The Board of Selectman Warrant hearings just correct typos.
- m. A 5 year capital plan is needed. Why was the meter reader proposal not in the capital plan?

- n. There should not be placeholder articles. Petitioners send in a lot of articles because Wayland's government is not functional.
- o. It is up to the Board of Selectman to make sure there is adequate preparation so articles move along at Town Meeting.
- p. Amended motions should be visible on an overhead screen vs. printed copy. Ask Peter Gossels if this is OK.
- q. Town Meeting should rent equipment for visuals.

4. Clifford Lewis, 33 Claypit Hill Road:

- r. Town meeting presentations are ill prepared. Cost benefit analyses have not been brought into the capital plan presentation/proposals. One solution is a more detailed capital plan.
- s. Wayland should have only one Town Meeting per year.
- t. Wayland should have Town Meeting on Sunday and residents should stay at the meeting until articles are finished.
- u. Visual presentations are needed.

5. Alan Reiss, 463 Old Connecticut Path:

- v. Boards should have their own websites (to present and justify their requests).
- w. You can't talk about budget or a request before Town Meeting. When you do get to Town Meeting, you can't talk about the budget or request because you are told it was discussed prior to Town Meeting?
- x. Town Meeting needs audio visuals.
- y. Voice counts are inaccurate. You get a different perspective depending upon where you are seated, thus getting the wrong answer.
- z. Privacy is important; people felt intimidated.

6. Linda Segal, 9 Aqueduct Road:

- aa. Linda questioned if the electronic voting vendor is coming to fall Town Meeting to understand how Town Meeting works.
- bb. The drop dead date for article submissions is not held firm. Articles are not submitted on time. There should be no placeholder articles submitted (or accepted).
- cc. Zoning articles should always have a clear/clean map. Many zoning/permitting articles, or land use articles need to be better understood including implications.
- dd. Town meeting should start on Thursday and run to Sunday.
- ee. Spring Town Meeting was supposed to be for financial articles, fall Town Meeting for non-financial. This does (has) not work(ed).
- ff. There is less and less financial line item detail. We used to have more detail on the water budget. The water budget used to have its own set of comments, now the water budget is buried in the DPW budget. The water budget had more detail when it was a separate article.
- gg. The Warrant opens at the end of August? How will boards have time to prepare given this time frame? *Steve Correia commented that boards should be working on articles/proposals all year long, and should not wait until the Warrant opens to begin their budget process.*

The Town Meeting Review Committee adjourned for the evening at 9:30PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Stack