

# Town Meeting Day Committee

## Meeting notes, May 8, 2024

Attending: Tom Ziobrowski, Alice Kitchel, Alison Despathy, Alison Low, Glenn Herrin, Clayton Cargill

Called meeting to order at 7:05.

The minutes of April 3 were discussed. There were no changes. Glenn moved to approve, Clayton seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

First was a discussion of the write up on the TM 2024 process with after actions, as prepared by Glenn, with photos from Alice. We will need to check with the Board of Civil Authority on the actual count of registered voters. Additional actions recommended:

- prepare a similar writeup for subsequent town meetings to create a historical record of attendance;
- broaden participation in the informational meeting with a pancake breakfast on a Saturday to get a different audience – and hopefully to appeal to elders who are anxious about attending evening meetings;
- include advisory question on the warning to promote deeper discussion; and
- make livestreaming and/or recordings of the Town Meeting available.

Alison D wondered about the polls being open – if they interfered with attendees hearing presentations.

The survey was still not fully tabulated for distribution, but the critical parts were in: A slight majority of respondents were NOT in favor of replacing floor meeting with Australian ballot; however, the majority of respondents preferred Australian ballot over floor vote for election of local officials, town general and highway budget, and school budget. In reality some respondents favor floor vote for some things, Australian ballot for others – in essence, hybrid. For those who don't attend, work schedules are most often cited. Attendees at TMD (who filled out paper ballots) showed a clear preference for floor participation in general. Some committee members expressed frustration in the indecisive results. The group discussed the need to move forward with ongoing efforts to increase engagement in the dialog. The idea of incremental change was discussed, and what that meant for the report and recommendations. Regarding all-floor or all-Australian Ballot, the group decided that it was not recommending these options. The majority also recommended not including a variation on hybrid like SB2.

There was a discussion of how individuals on the committee may have changed their perspective or learned something through the process. For example, Alice felt that there will never be a perfect time or day to hold town meeting day, and work will continue to conflict. However, Town Meeting Day as we know it was allowed to get “moldy” before we promoted it through the ad hoc committee and showrunner approach. Building on the face to face interaction is invaluable. Assignment for the whole group: **Get a statement on how your perspective has evolved over this process. This will be included in the report of findings and recommendations.**

There was discussion about Hybrid Option A v. Hybrid Option B. Eric cited a preference for Option A over Option B. Clayton suggested that a variation of Option A (absent a charter change) could be that floor voting still takes place, but candidates have to announce intent to run 30 days in advance with bios, statements, etc.

The bottom line is about the charter change: Now that we have a charter, we have to repeal the charter before any changes are actually implemented. It was also agreed that a subsequent charter change would prevent the Town from implementing any change from year to year in order to refine our approach. In other words, it would be better to NOT have a charter. This will take some education and outreach, and it should hopefully be up for discussion at a subsequent TMD.

The plan for now is to have one more meeting in June for a full preview of what we'll present to the Selectboard and Schoolboard in July.

Next meeting is June 5<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Low