

**Minutes: Boxborough Town Meeting Study Committee: September 14, 2016**

Grange Room Boxborough Town Hall

Final October 5, 2016

1. Meeting was called order at 8:05 am by Susan Bak of the Board of Selectmen (BOS). Present were: Susan Bak, Jennifer Campbell, John Fallon, and Abby Reip. Absent: Jeanne Kangas
2. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 31, 2016.
3. Jennifer distributed and the Committee discussed a summary of the first 46 surveys.
  - a) 44 had attended Town Meeting: not surprising since over 60% were collected at the State primary and most of the rest at Harvest Fair, i.e. involved citizens.
  - b) Many strong reasons given for attending, e.g. interest in Town, sense of commitment, wanting to be heard.
  - c) "Lack of time" was the biggest issue keeping people from attending all meetings/nights.
  - d) Over 75% of those responding did NOT favor a weekend town meeting.
  - e) A surprising percentage (68%) would support a "one night town meeting" indicating that shorter, rather than longer, town meetings are considered better by most people.
4. The survey will be further distributed:
  - a) In hard copy with the November 1 tax bill.
  - b) In hard copy at the Library: Jennifer has placed copies at the Library
  - c) In hard copy at the potential December 12 Special Town Meeting.
5. The survey is available on the Town's website for download and mail/drop-off at Town Hall. Members of the Committee talked to Town staff about putting the survey on the website for on-line completion. However, this presented a number of technical issues. The Committee voted unanimously not to pursue completion of the survey on-line.
6. Once the tax mailing surveys come in Jennifer will summarize the results again.
7. A number of surveys/e-mails from the public had ideas on how to make town meeting better. The Committee discussed these and other various ways to improve Town meeting itself. While a "one night town meeting" cannot be guaranteed, there are ways to make town meeting shorter while still giving voters their right to be heard albeit at the cost of changing "tradition". John will circulate some ideas on ways to make the meeting more effective and improve presentations for discussion at the next meeting.
8. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of having the Boxborough Town Meeting on the second Monday in May.
  - a) Town meeting was moved from the second Monday in March to the second Monday in May in 1975. Principal reasons appear to be frequent unpredictable changes in the ABRSD budget which meant Boxborough needed to vote after Acton, extremely

variable State Aid, and weather. However, the ABRSD and State aid situations are no longer as volatile and thus critical.

b) A counter argument is that the “middle of May” is a much more busy time than early/middle April.

c) The Committee seriously discussed the idea of asking the Board of Selectmen to put a warrant article on the May 2017 Boxborough ATM to move the Boxborough Town Meeting to the first Monday in April. The Committee would not necessarily take a position on the article but let the Town choose. [To get the broadest representation this article should appear on the warrant just after the budget article.]

9. The Committee briefly discussed the proposed Facebook page and postponed a full discussion of ideas to attract people to Town Meeting to a future meeting.

10. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 am

11. Next meeting: Wednesday October 5 at 8:00 am at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

John Fallon  
Secretary