

**Middlesex Town Meeting Solutions Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 4, 2016**

Present: Susan Clark, Ron Krauth, Janette Shaffer, Dave Shepard, Barb Whitchurch, Greg Whitchurch

**1. Minutes of February 17, 2016 Meeting**

Barb read the minutes she took from the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Town Meeting Solutions Committee (TMSC). She will prepare a typed version for formal approval.

**2. Town Meeting 2016 Review**

- Budget Spreadsheet and Pie Charts: Ron asked about the possibility of creating larger versions of these like those that had been posted on the wall at some previous Town Meetings. Greg noted that even a fairly large poster with this information still looks pretty small from the audience. On balance, the printed out versions placed on the seats may be most useful. Janette suggested printing a small number with larger print on bigger pieces of paper that could be available for attendees that might have difficulty reading the print on the standard version. Some of the data that was presented this year was inadvertently from the previous year. Susan has asked Town Clerk Sarah Merriman if the TMSC could assist with proofing the charts before they're printed. Sarah said possibly the Budget Committee could play a role in the review and/or preparation of the charts. Susan will contact Sarah about how best to proceed.
- Presentation of the Colors: This didn't happen this year, TMSC isn't sure why. We can decide whether to revisit this next year.
- Paper Ballots: TMSC had been under the impression that it was problematic to accommodate paper ballot votes by voters participating in Town Meeting remotely through the Remote Town Meeting Participation (RTMP) process since counting an RTMP participant's vote by someone physically at Town Meeting could possibly be considered proxy voting. Susan has learned from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns that proxy voting is not disallowed by Vermont statute, but only by Robert's Rules. Therefore, RTMP participants could be accommodated by suspending Robert's Rules for a particular paper ballot article by a 2/3 vote of those present.
- RTMP: There were extensive outreach efforts this year to publicize the availability of RTMP but there were no participants this year. The outreach included the following:
  - Fliers were distributed by Meals on Wheels from the Waterbury Senior Center on two occasions
  - Posting on Front Porch Forum
  - Project Independence posted the flier
  - The flyer was posted on the bulletin board at Rumney School and inserted in the Rumey newsletter
  - Flyer was distributed through Home Health and Hospice
- Portable Microphones: There were some difficulties encountered with the microphones cutting in and out. Battery life may have been a contributing factor. Janette will contact Bennett Shapiro about options for next year and whether issues with the existing

microphones can be solved or whether new microphones may be needed. If new ones would be the best solution TMSC will check into funding options for purchasing.

- Noise from Conversations of Residents Waiting to Vote by Australian Ballot: At times during Town Meeting, while Australian voting was in progress, there was some distraction from conversations of those waiting in line to vote. Possible remedies for next year were discussed including signs indicating a meeting is in progress to remind those in line to keep their voices down. The location of the voting stations may have been a contributing factor due to their presence on the side of the auditorium closest to the entrance such that those in line may have felt they were off to the side and not heard by meeting attendees. There may have been more participants in Australian ballot voting due to the Presidential primary.

### **3. Act 46**

Susan mentioned the ongoing discussion concerning Act 46, the education reform bill, from last year occurring in an Act 46 Study Committee made up of school board members from the 5 towns in the Washington County Supervisory Union. It's not specifically a Town Meeting issue but it is a local democracy issue – should the TMSC have a role in this issue? Opinions on the TMSC were divided and no formal decision was made.

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard