

### **Call to Order**

Town Clerk Mr. Simko called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. TGSC members all participated remotely via WebEx, with each member able to see and hear one other and share documents for all to see. The meeting was recorded for future viewing by residents.

### **Participants**

The following members were online for the meeting: Town Clerk Austin Simko (ex-officio); Andrew McBrien; Richard Fox; and Sheila Doherty (moderator).

### **Discussion**

The subcommittee, which in 2020 had been charged by the full committee with the task of proposing reforms that would promote efficiency of Town Meeting, turned to two questions presented to the full committee on March 1, 2021 and remanded by the full committee back to the subcommittee for further consideration.

Those questions were: (1) Should the Town require/encourage/incentivize pre-submission of article amendments for review prior to Town Meeting? And (2) should Town Meeting on a motion be allowed to vote on an article before consideration is given to an amendment already moved and seconded?

On the question of amendment pre-submission, the subcommittee clarified that amendments would need to be submitted three business days before the first session of Town Meeting. This would allow for Town Counsel and committees to review and consider amendments before Town Meeting, thereby creating both efficiency, transparency, and “good legislating” effects. The proponents of pre-submitted amendments would be required to attend and present their amendments at Town Meeting notwithstanding their pre-submission of the amendments.

Under this framework, amendments could be submitted on the floor of Town Meeting (in addition to the pre-submission of amendments).

The subcommittee then considered what incentives might be offered for the pre-submission of amendments (as opposed to the submission of floor amendments). One incentive would be that priority in consideration would be given to amendments that were submitted before Town Meeting. Another incentive considered was that amendments offered on the floor of Town Meeting require a two-thirds vote, while pre-submitted amendments would only require a simple majority.

The subcommittee decided that increasing the approval threshold for amendments would distort the simple majority threshold for the underlying article. Also, State law may prohibit setting an amendment threshold in this manner. The subcommittee decided that considering pre-submitted amendments prior to those submitted from the floor would allow proponents of pre-submitted amendments an increased likelihood of having their amendments considered, particularly on articles where multiple amendments may be moved. The subcommittee noted that these measures might be modified in the light of experience.

The subcommittee then turned to the second question and determined that we cannot allow for a vote on an article before consideration is given to an amendment that has been moved and seconded.

Mr. McBrien raised another potential Town Meeting reform where a standing committee would continually evaluate Town Meeting practices and propose enhancements on an ongoing basis. The subcommittee discussed that the efficacy of this committee would depend, perhaps tenuously, on the particular individuals serving on the committee, the mandate of the committee, and the Moderator retaining the discretion necessary for the conduct of the Town Meeting. The proposal will not be pursued.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Simko moved that the meeting adjourn, and Mr. McBrien seconded. The subcommittee voted by roll call unanimously in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 3:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Austin Simko, Town Clerk