

Stefani Traina

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I appreciate all the work the committee is doing to gather input about Andover's form of government. I've lived in town for 35 years and have generally been a supporter of Town Meeting and its inclusiveness. The pandemic and being able to vote by mail without an excuse has made me wish there was a way to create some kind of mail-in voting system for Town Meeting. The Finance Committee report could include a ballot which would allow people to vote on each article. Public information sessions could be set up for people to learn about the articles and perhaps debate them, as well. But it would be up to each citizen to research the articles and vote on them. This kind of a system would really include all voters, not just those who can show up in person at Town Meeting. I know there are security issues inherent in this idea, but I think they could be worked out. It really would be more inclusive and fair and private. If something like this can't be done, I think it may be time to adopt a different form of government for Andover. It doesn't seem fair to a lot of residents/taxpayers to require them to show up and vote in person in order to have their voices heard and counted. Modern life doesn't lend itself to this antiquated form of government which requires you to show up in person and vote in front of everyone. My feelings about Town Meeting have really changed over time.