

**Lincoln Town Meeting Study Committee Survey
Survey Data and Open-Ended Comments from Participants
Survey Period: May 2025**

Prepared for the Town of Lincoln
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1. Overview

The Town Meeting Study Committee (TMSC) administered an online community survey for three weeks from June 3 to 26, 2025. The survey allowed residents to express their sentiments about how the Town of Lincoln plans, prepares for, and conducts town meetings and identify ways to improve their town meeting experience.

A total of 566 respondents participated in the survey. The average time to complete the survey was 7m 26s, and the response rate was 79 percent. A substantial majority of the respondents (484, or 85.5 percent) reported attending Town Meeting at least once in the past five years; within this group, 43 percent said they had lived in Lincoln for more than 20 years, and 42 percent reported their age as 65 or older. Almost 62 percent reported having no children under 18 in their home.

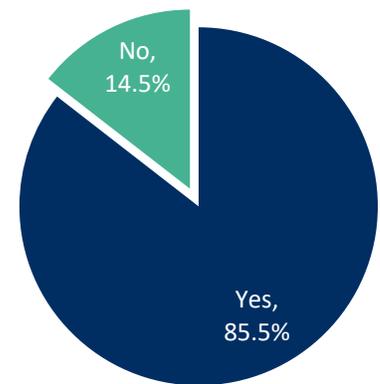


Fig. 1.1. Have you attended Lincoln Town Meeting in the last five years?

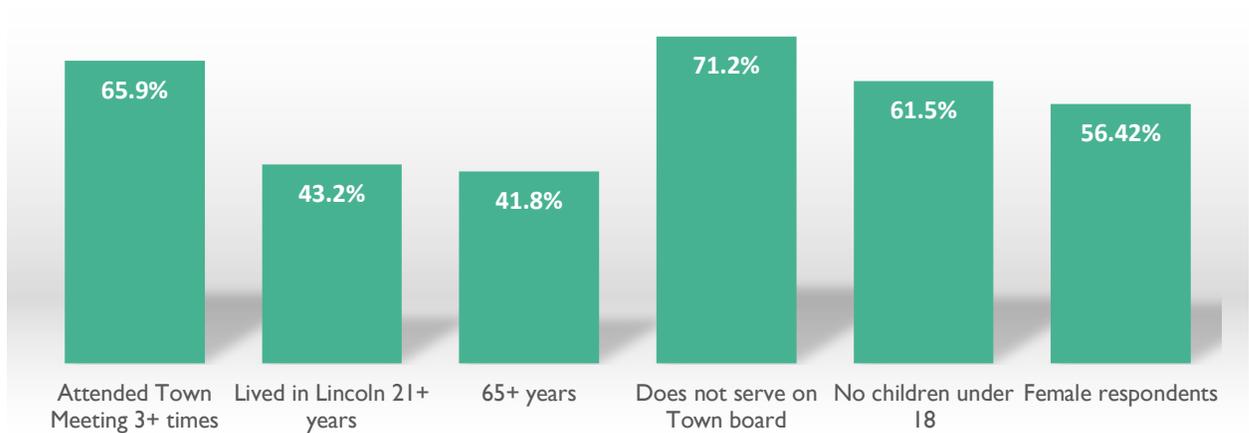


Fig. 1.2. Snapshot of respondents who attended Lincoln Town Meeting in the past five years.



This report focuses primarily on the respondents with recent town meeting experience. Since the TMSC's charge is to "examine our current Town Meeting procedures, identify what is working well and not, and develop possible strategies for improvement," residents who attend town meetings may be in the best position to advise the committee. Section 2 of this report covers this group's responses and provides selected cross-tabulations to shed light on some of their differences of opinion. Section 3 reports input from respondents who have not attended any town meetings in the past five years. **Appendix A** consists of summary charts and tables for all respondents and questions in the survey.



2. Town Meeting Experiences

This section reports responses from the 484 participants who answered “yes” to the first survey question, “Have you attended Lincoln Town Meeting in the past five years?”.

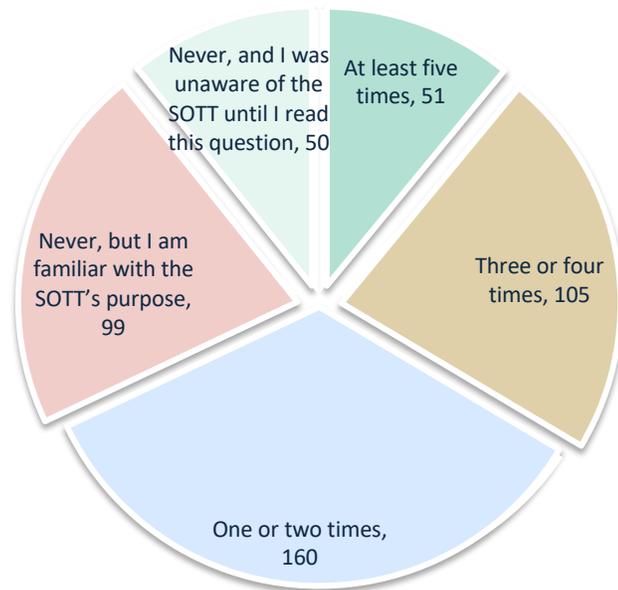
Information

The survey included several questions about how, where, and when residents get town meeting information. The first of these questions polled respondents about their experiences with the State of the Town, a forum typically held in the fall for community conversations about timely local topics, including topics likely to come up at the spring town meeting.

State of the Town (SOTT)

Fig. 2.1. How many SOTT meetings have you attended in the past 5 years?

Response: 465
Skip: 19



Overall, this group of respondents said they are knowledgeable about matters on the Town Meeting warrant. Fifty-seven percent said they feel adequately informed by the time they get to Town Meeting, and another one-third said they “sometimes” feel adequately informed. The survey included a list of information sources respondents rely on for Town Meeting news, with instructions to select their top three sources. Over half cited Lincoln Talk. The opinions of family and friends also ranked high on the list. Table X reports all responses, ranked by selection frequency. Open-comment responses from all respondents can be found in **Appendix B**.



Table 2.1.

**What sources of information do you rely on most to prepare for Town Meeting?
(Pick up to three.)**

Rank/Source	Percent Selected	Number Selected
1/Lincoln Talk	53.6%	240
2/Positions taken by family, friends, or groups/organizations I trust	49.8%	223
3/Town Meeting Warrant	38.8%	174
4/Select Board newsletter	34.8%	156
5/Lincoln Squirrel	24.3%	109
6/State of the Town Meeting	21.4%	96
7/Attended board, commission, or committee meetings	17.2%	77
8/Watched board, commission, or committee meetings (live or recordings)	17.2%	77
9/ Town website	8.9%	40
Other (please specify)	4.0%	18
	Answered	448
	Skipped	36

Just over half of the respondents said “yes” when asked whether their opinion had changed because of presentations made at the Town Meeting. Several respondents skipped these questions, however.

Table 2.2.

Has your position on an issue changed because of ...

Possible response	Presentations you heard at Town Meeting		Comments you heard from residents at Town Meeting	
Yes	35.7%	154	38.1%	165
No	52.3%	226	52.0%	225
Not sure or no opinion	12.0%	52	9.9%	43
	Answered	432	Answered	433
	Skipped	52	Skipped	51

Subset: Town Board/Committee Service

Less than one-third of Lincoln’s 484 Town Meeting goers reported current or recent experience serving on a town board or committee. (About 29 percent, or 118 out of 410, said “yes,” and 74 skipped). This subset of respondents reported a higher rate of participation in the SOTT, a higher frequency of attending three or more town meetings, and a higher likelihood of getting information about town meeting matters from attending or watching town boards and committee meetings. While they also selected Lincoln Talk and positions taken by family and friends as their top information sources, attending and watching board and committee meetings ranked third on their list, not



seventh. In addition, they were somewhat more likely to change their position on an issue because of comments heard from residents at Town Meeting (42 percent).

Another noteworthy difference: this group skipped *very few* survey questions.

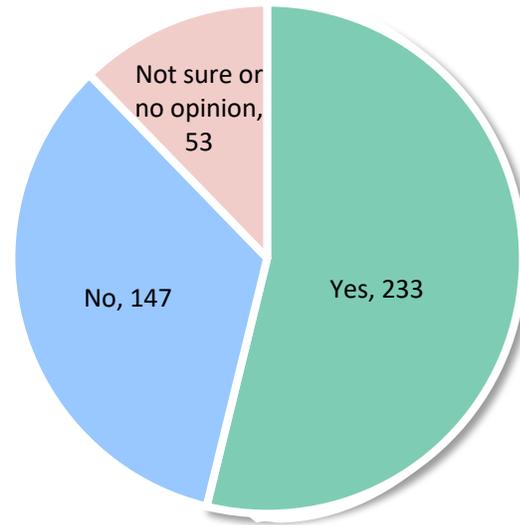
Views of Town Meeting

Respondents were divided about whether Town Meeting provides enough opportunity for presentations, debate, and so forth. Over half of those who answered the question said yes, but just over one-third said no, and some were simply unsure.

Town Meeting

Fig. 2.2. Does Town Meeting provide enough opportunity for presentations, discussion, and debate to give residents the information they need to vote on important issues?

Response: 433
Skip: 51



Several survey questions sought residents' opinions about how the Town Meeting currently operates. On average, about 10 percent of survey participants skipped these questions. In most cases, respondents not only selected from the survey's list of potential ideas but also offered comments in the open-ended response field. The open-ended responses to each question can be found in the Appendix. However, the following section includes a sample of open-ended comments to add breadth to the survey analysis and help readers understand the wide range of opinions respondents hold about Town Meeting. Comments aimed at particular individuals by name have been edited.

The survey tried to understand how residents view Town Meeting and whether Town Meeting, as it currently operates, addresses what they care about. From a list of purposes typically associated with the Town Meeting form of government, residents were asked to pick up to three that matter most to them, and two purposes easily rose to the top, as shown in Table X. A significant difference separates the top two and all the other items selected as a third choice.



Sample Open-Ended Responses

Town meeting is inefficient and is not equal and fair. Busy people cannot attend.

I would argue that it does not maximize perspectives as who can attend is very inequitable.

We should just have a private vote in a booth - NO meeting.

Table 2.3.

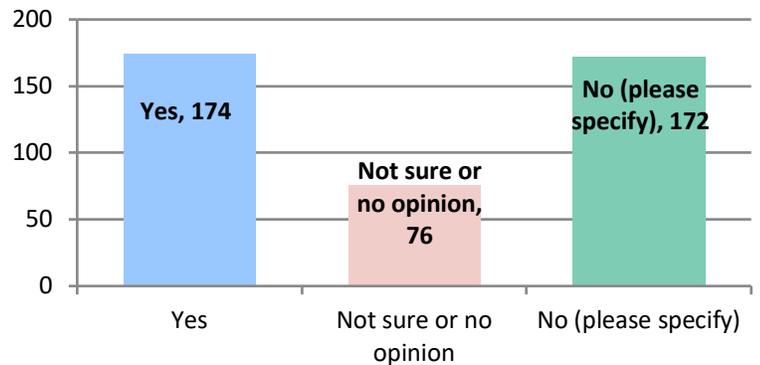
Town Meeting serves multiple purposes. What are the most important purposes to you? (Pick up to three.)

Options	Responses	
To cast an informed vote	59.1%	256
To debate and decide important Town issues	55.2%	239
To preserve direct democracy traditions	34.2%	148
To encourage civic participation	28.9%	125
To maximize the range of voices and perspectives in the decision-making process	27.7%	120
To have an efficient way to make major policy decisions, including but not limited to the Town budget	21.9%	95
To educate residents	21.3%	92
Other (please specify)	10.9%	47
	Answered	433
	Skipped	51

The response to a related question, “Does Town Meeting serve the purposes that are most important to you?”, drew an almost identical number of “yes” and “no” responses. Since the “no” option encouraged participants to explain more in an open-ended response, most added comments. Their comments often conveyed general unhappiness with Town Meeting, lack of trust in town officials, frustration with a voting process requiring in-person attendance, and a “culture” that many characterized as unkind or unfair to opponents of warrant articles.

Unhappiness with Town Meeting was reinforced in responses to a direct question, “Overall, given your experience, are you satisfied with Town Meeting?” Forty-four percent of respondents said “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied,” while 28 percent said “satisfied” or “very satisfied.” About 12 percent opted for a neutral response. One hundred thirty-six respondents provided comments to explain their discontent, often echoing the previously mentioned themes. In addition, some commenters identified inadequate audio-visual equipment and concerns about the length of Town Meeting.

Fig. 2.3. Does Town Meeting serve the purposes that are most important to you?



Several mentioned wanting to participate remotely, but under current state law, open town meetings require voters to attend in person.

Opportunities to Improve Town Meeting

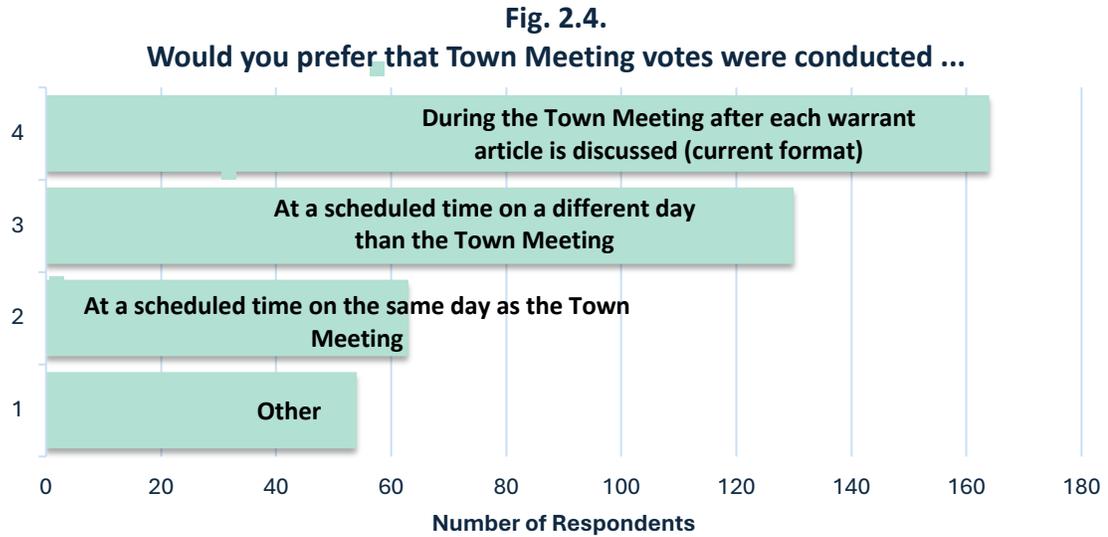
The survey allowed respondents to describe what could make Town Meeting a better experience for them. They could choose one or more of the possibilities listed below, and for purposes of this report, the survey items have been reordered from most to least frequently selected ideas. The top-ranked item (“pro/con” summaries) was by far the most frequently selected option, and only the first two listed below were selected by over half of the respondents

- Brief “pro/con” summaries for each warrant article should be printed in the warrant
- Every significant issue should have some information about the pros and cons formally presented at Town Meeting. (For example, this could be accomplished by dissenting members of a board presenting an alternative view or by a group with a prepared presentation about an alternate viewpoint.)
- Shorter time limits on presentations
- Well-publicized childcare
- Short videos explaining warrant articles posted on the Town’s website and Lincoln TV
- Subsidized transportation to/from Town Meeting
- Other

Concern about adequate time for proponents and opponents of warrant articles is a recurring theme in this survey. Still, the sheer number of respondents (302) liking the idea of pro/con summaries in the warrant suggests that even people happy with Town Meeting see benefits in having balanced information available ahead of time.

Respondents gave mixed reviews to a list of options for scheduling votes on warrant articles. The TMSC wanted to know if people prefer the current arrangement – votes taken after debate closes on each warrant article – or some other plan, such as having votes occur at a different time of day or a different day altogether. None of the possible response items received a majority response, and this question had a higher skip rate than most other questions in the survey.





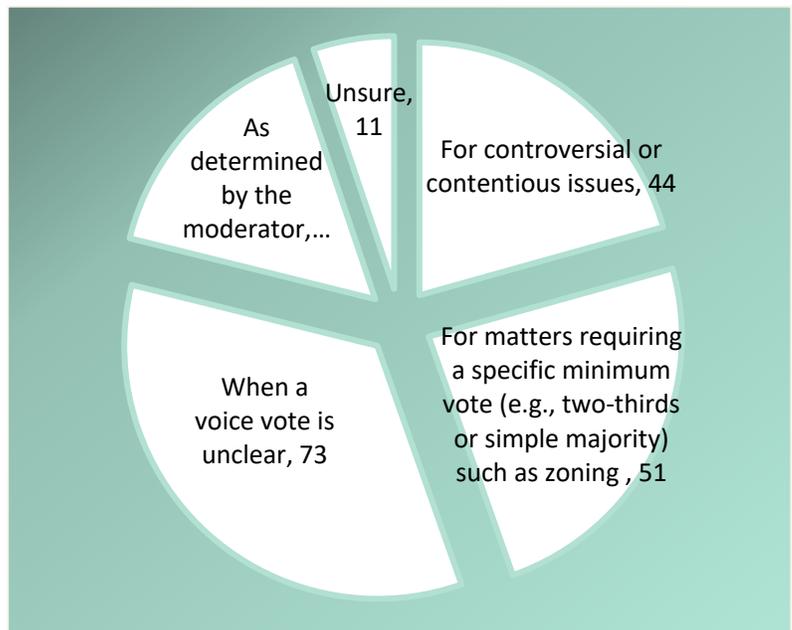
Electronic Voting Systems (“Clickers”)

At the 2025 Annual Town Meeting, voters approved a warrant article to use electronic voting devices, commonly called “clickers,” at future town meetings. The survey included three questions for voters to comment on how clickers should be used. Most respondents (308) said clickers should be used for “all votes,” meaning for every item on a town meeting warrant. Only 16 selected “no votes,” and 62 participants skipped the question entirely. The 98 respondents who selected “some votes” were directed to a follow-up question, “Which types of votes should use clickers?” They could choose any or all of the options from a list of possible answers. The most frequently chosen response: When a voice vote is unclear.

When to use clickers?

Fig. 2.5. Which types of votes?

Respondents: 98
Skip: 386 (skipped due to response to a previous survey question)



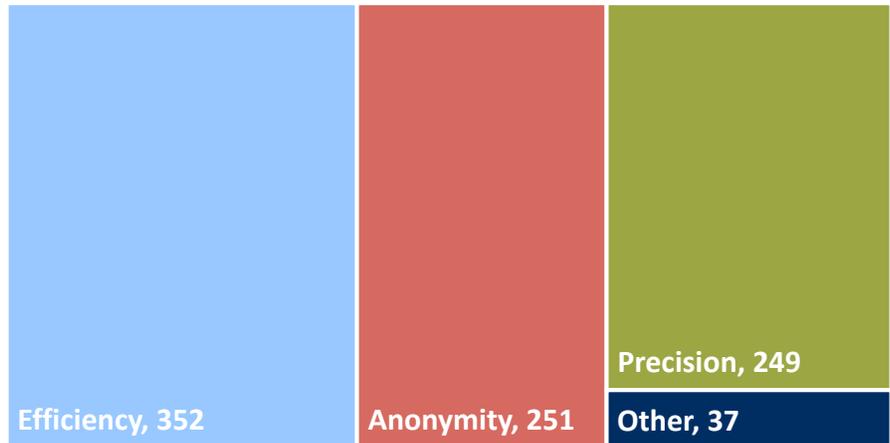
All participants had a chance to respond to the last question about electronic voting systems, "What do you think is the value of using clickers?". This question also allowed respondents to select more than one option. Efficiency stands out as the most frequently selected answer. The open-ended responses shed further light on respondents' opinions, as several people said they prefer a ballot vote. This is consistent with some of the comments provided in previous open-ended response fields.

Why use clickers?

Fig. 2.6. What do you think is the value in using clickers?

Respondents: 400

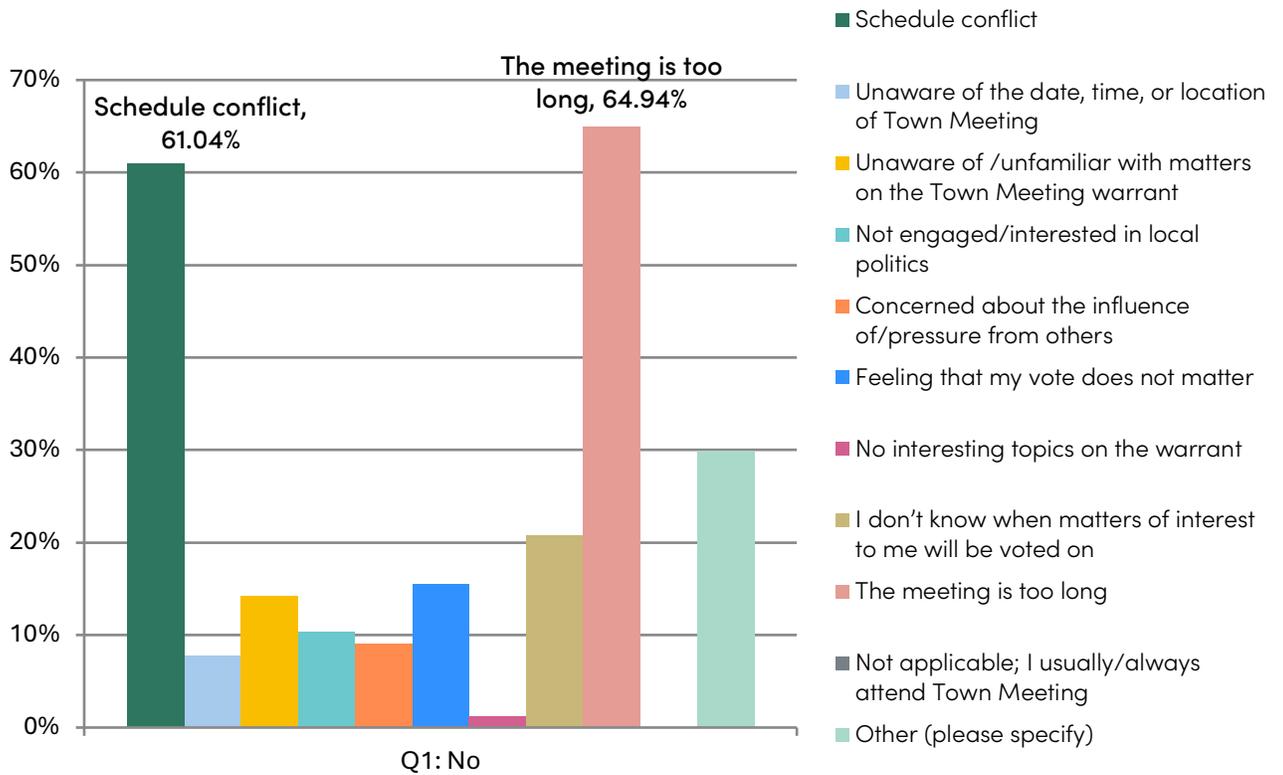
Skip: 84



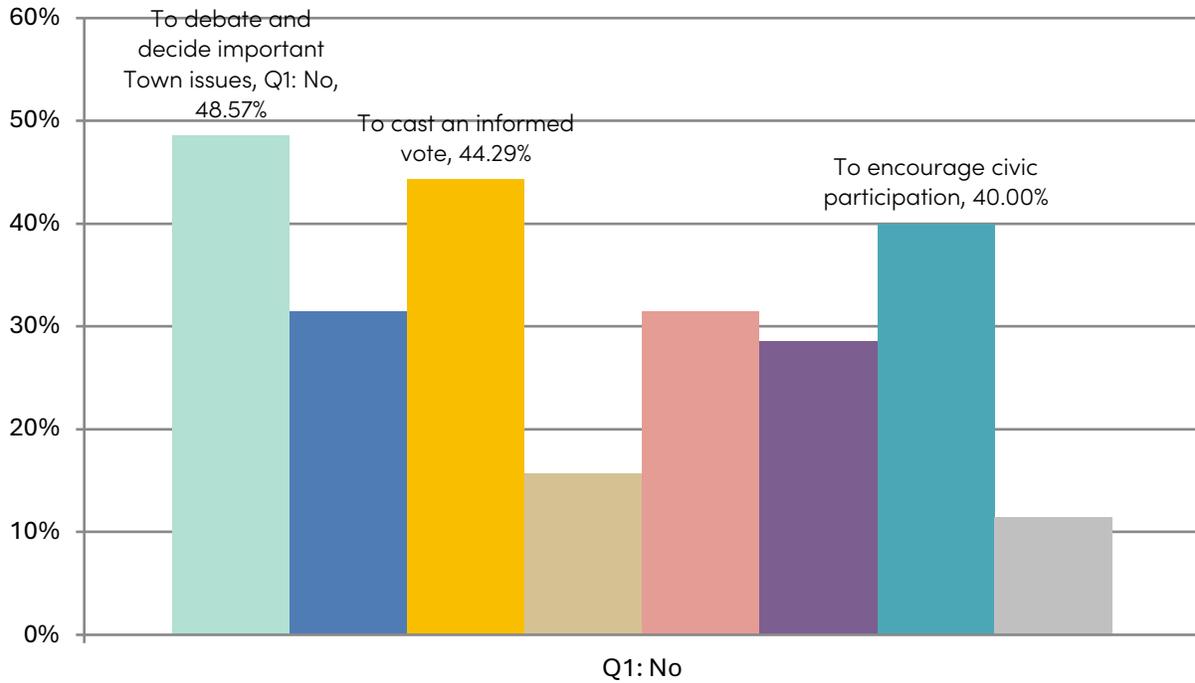
3. Respondents Not Attending Town Meeting

This section reports responses from survey participants who said they have not attended any town meetings in the past five years.

When you have not attended Town Meeting or had to leave early, what were your reasons?(Pick up to three.)



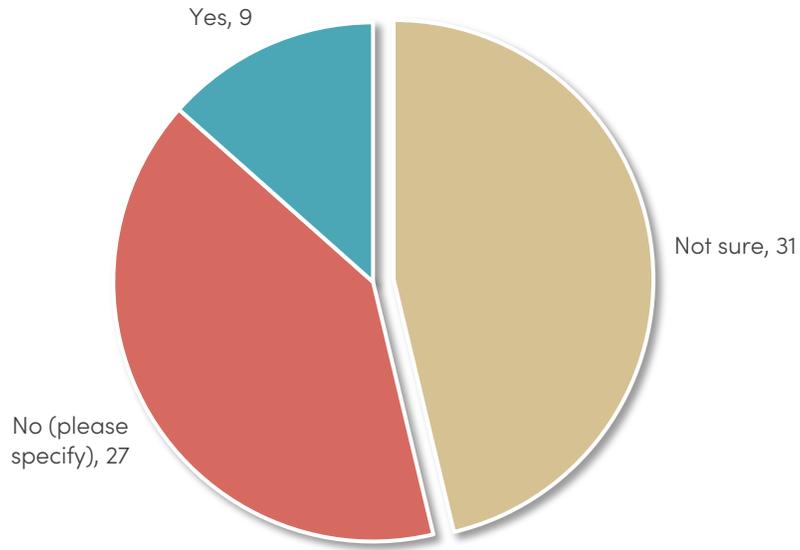
Town Meeting serves multiple purposes. What are the most important purposes to you?(Pick up to three.)



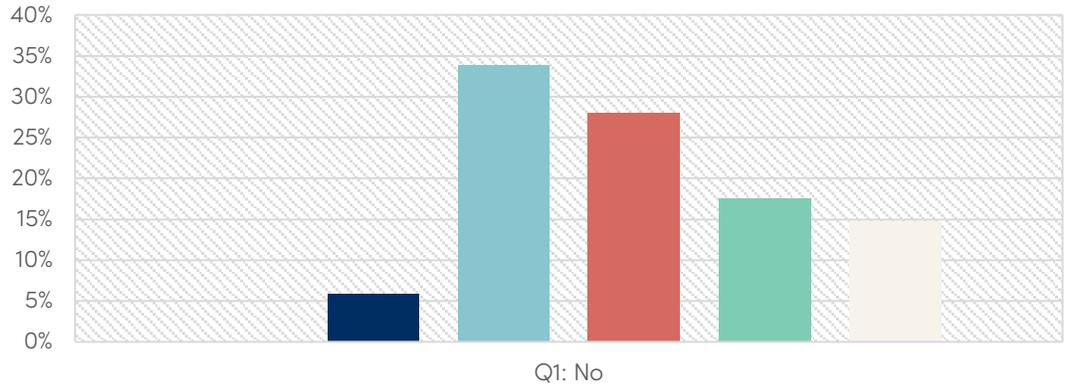
- To debate and decide important Town issues
- To educate residents
- To cast an informed vote
- To preserve direct democracy traditions
- To maximize the range of voices and perspectives in the decision-making process
- To have an efficient way to make major policy decisions, including but not limited to the Town budget
- To encourage civic participation
- Other (please specify)



Does Town Meeting serve the purposes that are most important to you?



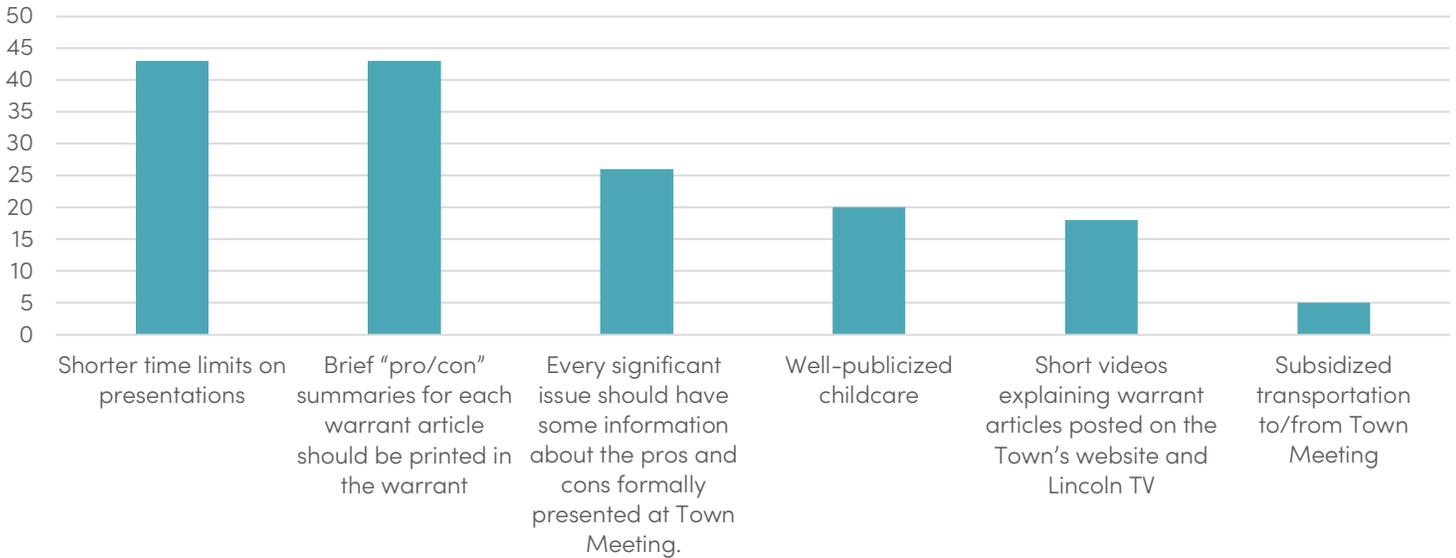
Overall, given your experience, are you satisfied with Town Meeting?



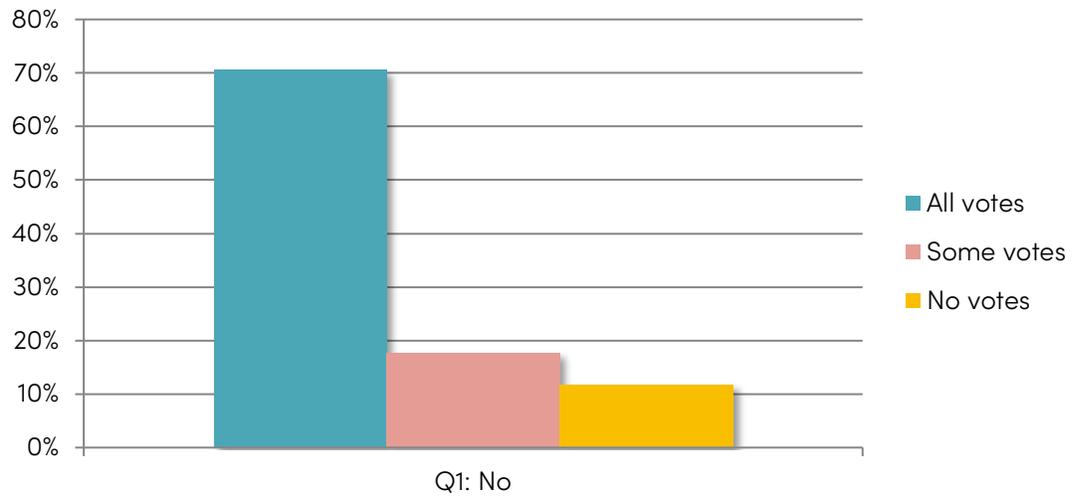
- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral/No Opinion
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Comments (optional). You may use this space to explain your answer.



Would Town Meeting benefit from any of the following changes?



At the 2025 Annual Town Meeting, the Town approved the use of clickers (automatic polling devices). How would you like to see them used?



4. Respondent Characteristics

All Respondents

Q. 19 How long have you lived in Lincoln?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than one year	0.62%	3
1-5 years	17.88%	86
6-10 years	17.26%	83
11-20 years	23.08%	111
21-30 years	14.35%	69
More than 30 years	26.82%	129
	Answered	481
	Skipped	85

Q20. Are you currently serving, or have you served in the last 5 years, on a Town board, commission, or committee?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	25.16%	120
No	74.84%	357
	Answered	477
	Skipped	89

Q21. Do you currently have children under 18? Choose all that apply.		
Answer Choices	Responses	
No	58.33%	280
Under 5	11.46%	55
5-12	26.67%	128
13-17	17.08%	82
	Answered	480
	Skipped	86



Q22. Race and ethnicity

Answer Choices	Responses	
White alone	69.39%	331
Black or African American alone	0.21%	1
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	0.00%	0
Asian alone	3.98%	19
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone	0.00%	0
Other race	0.84%	4
Two or more races	5.87%	28
Prefer not to say	19.71%	94
	Answered	477
	Skipped	89

Q23. What is your age?

Answer Choices	Responses	
18-24	0.00%	0
25-34	1.27%	6
35-44	16.14%	76
45-54	23.78%	112
55-64	19.96%	94
65-74	19.75%	93
75-84	16.14%	76
85 or over	2.97%	14
	Answered	471
	Skipped	95

Q24. What is your gender?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	33.19%	159
Female	56.16%	269
Nonbinary or nonconforming	0.21%	1
Transgender	0.21%	1
Gender not listed here	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	10.23%	49
	Answered	479
	Skipped	87



5. All Questions: Tables and Open-Ended Comments

Note: Open-ended comments have not been edited. No changes have been made to correct spelling, grammatical, sentence-level, or other errors in participants' responses.

Q1. Have you attended Lincoln Town Meeting in the past five years?

Answer Choices		Responses
Yes	85.51%	484
No	14.49%	82
	Answered	566
	Skipped	0

Q2. How often have you attended Town Meeting in the past five years?

Answer Choices		Responses
At least five times	31.34%	147
Three or four times	34.54%	162
One or two times	31.34%	147
Not sure	2.77%	13
	Answered	469
	Skipped	97

Q3. Have you attended a State of the Town (SOTT) meeting in the past five years?(The State of the Town meeting is held every year in the fall, allowing Town boards and committees to present information, seek input and ideas from residents, and preview matters that will likely come up at the next Annual Town Meeting.)

Answer Choices		Responses
At least five times	10.97%	51
Three or four times	22.58%	105
One or two times	34.41%	160
Never, but I am familiar with the SOTT's purpose	21.29%	99
Never, and I was unaware of the SOTT until I read this question	10.75%	50
	Answered	465
	Skipped	101



Q4. When you arrive at Town Meeting, do you feel adequately informed to vote on important matters on the warrant?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	56.49%	261
No	9.96%	46
Sometimes	33.55%	155
	Answered	462
	Skipped	104

Q5. What sources of information do you rely on most to prepare for Town Meeting? (Pick up to three.)

Answer Choices	Responses	
State of the Town Meeting	21.43%	96
Town Meeting Warrant	38.84%	174
Select Board newsletter	34.82%	156
Lincoln Squirrel	24.33%	109
Attended board, commission, or committee meetings	17.19%	77
Watched board, commission, or committee meetings (live stream or recordings)	17.19%	77
Town website	8.93%	40
Lincoln Talk	53.57%	240
Positions taken by family, friends, or groups/organizations I trust	49.78%	223
Other (please specify)	4.02%	18
	Answered	448
	Skipped	118

Comments:

1. Lincoln Talk has censored all discussion with which the "moderators" (read censors) disagree. It has become useless.
2. The Town organizations like RLF, Park and Rec, and others send emails generally all in agreement on the issues.
3. Flyers in the mail
4. Citizens of Lincoln
5. Mailings
6. TM warrant, LT, LS, live stream/recorded meetings, positions by friends/groups- all in equal measure
7. I purposely avoided checking Lincoln talk as it has turned into truth social. While I read it, it's not factually informative from opposition



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8. I also rely on The Lincoln Squirrel, the Select Board newsletter, attend board/commission/committee mtngs, and listen to positions taken by family/friends/groups I trust. Unfortunately, the town website is very difficult to navigate and is often not up-to-date, so I rarely find what I'm looking for there, although I do try.
9. Getting information for any Lincoln event such as town meetings, elections, etc. is extremely difficult. It used to town newspapers were a primary source of this type of information however, the vacuum left has not been filled.
10. Mailings
11. Research and discussions; town website has often posted incorrect info
12. presentations during the meeting
13. Sometimes I go to board, commission, or committee meetings. But not always.
14. Lincoln talk
15. My own analysis
16. Squirrel, Zooms of board meetings
17. Facebook page
18. I ask my friends for the latest on what we're voting on

Q6. When you have not attended Town Meeting or had to leave early, what were your reasons?(Pick up to three.)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Schedule conflict	60.54%	316
Unaware of the date, time, or location of Town Meeting	2.11%	11
Unaware of /unfamiliar with matters on the Town Meeting warrant	5.56%	29
Not engaged/interested in local politics	3.64%	19
Concerned about the influence of/pressure from others	9.96%	52
Feeling that my vote does not matter	13.60%	71
No interesting topics on the warrant	10.54%	55
I don't know when matters of interest to me will be voted on	15.71%	82
The meeting is too long	50.77%	265
Not applicable; I usually/always attend Town Meeting	12.84%	67
Other (please specify)	19.35%	101
	Answered	522
	Skipped	44

Comments:

1. Disgust with bias towards opposition; does not feel neutral or democratic
2. i only moved to Lincoln last summer
3. Frustrated that the proponents and time leadership have so much control
4. The presentations are overly biased to the pro presenters and nos get little time. No genuine debate.



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5. Town Meeting is a party for one side - the Town Boards who all have to agree on everything.
6. As a parent with young kids its incredibly challenging to attend these meetings and impossible for both parents to attend.
7. After. yesterday, with the booing the nervous person new to Town and Town meeting, and unfortunately for her taking a No position on the community center, I will not attend again.
8. Child care
9. Handicapped
10. lack of childcare, birth of a child, inability to time my presence at the meeting to cast my vote
11. Have kids under 4, can't bring them
12. Seeing senior mini-buses and elderly people in numbers not seen at any other town events
13. Child care
14. The moderator is incompetent. NEVER starts on time. Prejudiced
15. Difficulty finding childcare, would love remote participation
16. A sense of urgency/push for the perceived "preferred" outcome and an unwillingness to allow townspeople to speak if their comments do not support the proposal.
17. Childcare needs. I'm not comfortable leaving my kids for hours on end with the informal "free babysitting" that's sometimes offered by people I don't know. I am so interested in voting and feel totally disenfranchised by the current model.
18. Very impractical for families with little kids
19. Cannot attend with toddler
20. CHILDCARE. The meeting process is not practical for families with young children. It essentially discourages and I would argue cuts out the participation of a large fraction of residents due to inadequate childcare coverage. Often a sitter or LEAP is not appropriate for babies and toddlers or even older children who need their parents for feeding/bedtimes/other support. The meetings are too long and voting process is antiquated – it makes no sense for people to have to sit through a several hours' long meeting to vote on particular issues, and not everyone wants to vote on every issue (they may be super informed/care about one but not at all on another). The voting process should be separate from the informing process, the same way it is for national/state elections. That way more people can participate.
21. childcare for young kids
22. Childcare
23. the meeting times/length are not convenient for families with small children
24. I have kids who I don't want to leave all day on a weekend
25. People spend too much time proclaiming their expertise and losing their resumes. It's really irritating.



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26. Had Covid, needed to get home for childcare
27. Physical disability
28. I have 4 kids and childcare is expensive (two aren't eligible for LEAP care)
29. Town boards have their thumb on the scale for everything
30. I was not a US citizen until now and I was unable to cast a vote
31. It is never clear when a vote will take a place. I just want my voice heard, I don't have time to sit there for hours listening to people talking past each other (they are already convinced of their position). The current format is highly undemocratic; it suppresses the vote.
32. I despise town meetings with every fiber of my being. They are an assault to the right to vote. Town meetings are purposefully exclusionary—unlawfully denying the right to vote of anyone with a conflict who just can't afford to spend countless hours waiting for a vote that may take place in one hour or ten. Votes should ONLY be on ballot and should be wholly separate from town hall discussions. The town hall format only serves the people with the most time to waste. Votes often take place hours after the "end" of the meeting, effectively waiting out any opposing opinions to become exhausted and leave so that the minority always wins. Every town hall meeting makes me hate living in this overly privileged and exclusionary town who prides themselves on their "direct democracy" of exclusion.
33. I just want to cast a private ballot
34. New resident
35. childcare conflict
36. Childcare/family constraints
37. It is 2025, we should have a more structured way to vote by ballot like a traditional election
38. Gets me aggravated
39. As a resident who lives in an apartment I have never felt welcome.
40. Lack of childcare
41. Childcare
42. Childcare
43. needing to be out of town
44. Sick
45. I feel overwhelmed by crowds
46. Prefer private ballot at voting booth
47. generally feel like the vote is already predetermined by Town Hall officials
48. I am a senior citizen and find it difficult to sit for hours.
49. The in person requirement makes it impossible
50. Child Care. Always Child Care.
51. I did not attend 2025 meeting for these reasons. Felt discouraged, disappointed by the 2024 meeting
52. Went to one to vote no on community center and thought vote in am - 4 hours later no vote so I left!



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53. One sided long presentations by town committees, moderator doesn't allow time for adequate dissent.
54. Usually out of town in March, what month are most residents actually in town???
55. Too tired to for arduous process
56. childcare
57. I don't remember missing a town meeting
58. Childcare
59. Positions are presented as already decided by multiple boards - there seems to be no interest in discussion or alternate points of view. Also - when technical difficulties delayed the meeting 2 hours it should have been rescheduled. Lastly, it is very important that clickers be used so people can vote with integrity and privacy, especially in this setting where power is exclusive to a few people.
60. Articles need to be presented by pro and con positions
61. Moved here 8/21, was sick for the first town meeting or perhaps it was a state of the town, have been to all other meetings (also want to say and there is no place to say this in the question about how long I've lived here, I moved back in 2021 after the death of my husband, grew up in Lincoln, have had contact with the Town over the years, have friends here I've known all my life, value their opinion
62. Children need to go to bed!
63. I have attended all Town meetings but I come a little later and always leave early once the more controversial items have been voted on
64. Illness; difficulty securing childcare for the length of time of the meeting.
65. Have only lived here since Nov. 2024 and have attended all meetings since then.

66. Too challenging to do long in person meeting with young family (with children under 4)
67. I feel like I don't belong in this town. "The Lincoln Way" is not something I subscribe to.
68. LACK OF CHILDCARE FOR THAT LONG
69. covid
70. Childcare
71. Have a child under the LEAP babysitting age of 4 and can't drop her off for child care. I know I attended one town meeting before and I was there for 6+ hours and had to leave BEFORE the vote to relieve my babysitter at 11pm, and that whole experience cost me hundreds of dollars in child care and I didn't get to vote, and it was exhausting so it makes me feel that people with young kids don't really get to voice their opinion
72. moderator is hard to listen to- why is this not an elected position?
73. Prior to the acquisition of the clickers, I felt intimidated by the lack of privacy in voting.



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74. town meeting run by a "cabal." Often I feel as if the vote is pro forma and the decision has been made by the committee weeks or months earlier. Town meeting does not give equal time to all sides. Often feels one sided.
75. health concerns
76. The entire process feels interminable, the vast majority of comments horribly boring, repetitive, and unnecessary (i.e., "my mother always said "if you're going to do something so it's right"), the voice of the Moderator is as bad as nails on a chalkboard and she lets people drone on and on, and the majority of people present (mostly elderly) ALWAYS seem to have absolutely NO LIMIT on the amount they are happy to be taxed.
77. The well organized minority always gets their way
78. Only ever missed one or two because of illness. Been here since 1997.
79. Concern about how my vote will be perceived by fellow parents
80. To care for a child
81. Need from home option
82. Lack of Transportation , particularly for seniors.
83. Physically unable to sit long period due to pain! Not accessible! due to
84. Physical disabilities
85. Too hard with young children, not family friendly
86. No childcare
87. 2024 was totally egregious. Sincere opposition not allowed to speak...town moderator poorly understanding what was happening...rules of order clearly overusedclearly issues that the state AG's office would have deemed illegal. Altogether an illegal meeting. Why I skipped SOTT this year.
88. out of town
89. disenfranchised by "official" presentations that drive a specific outcome
90. Hate
91. We have small kids under 4
92. I feel the Town diminishes dissenting views at Town Meetings. Better governance comes from making the sausage. The town doesn't like to compromise ie HCA vote and Community Center. I have small kids and it is impossible to waste a weekend day on a Town Meeting. The Special Town Meeting is during summer vacation which further diminishes young family participation
93. The voting is always a forgone conclusion with only preferred and prejudicial persons permitted to speak.
94. TM Childcare being too expensive
95. Health concerns
96. Don't live in Lincoln
97. interested but not engaged
98. This month is an important meeting that has great impact for our family as we have one child in kindergarten and two at Magic Garden and there will be vote affecting playground and outdoor space. We have family vacation scheduled



months ago and have no way to have our voice heard. Entirely unfair and exclusionary to parents of young children.

- 99. too much conflict & too many people going on too long with their opinions
- 100. Child Care Constraints
- 101. Child care

Q7. Does Town Meeting provide enough opportunity for presentations, discussion, and debate to give residents the information they need to vote on important issues?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	48.31%	243
No	33.20%	167
Not sure or no opinion	18.49%	93
	Answered	503
	Skipped	63

Q8. Has your opinion on an issue changed because of presentations you heard at Town Meeting?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	31.67%	159
No	50.60%	254
Not sure or no opinion	17.73%	89
	Answered	502
	Skipped	64

Q9. Has your opinion on an issue changed because of residents' comments you heard at Town Meeting?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	34.79%	175
No	49.30%	248
Not sure or no opinion	15.90%	80
	Answered	503
	Skipped	63



Q10. Town Meeting serves multiple purposes. What are the most important purposes to you?(Pick up to three.)

Answer Choices	Responses	
To debate and decide important Town issues	54.27%	273
To educate residents	22.66%	114
To cast an informed vote	57.06%	287
To preserve direct democracy traditions	31.61%	159
To maximize the range of voices and perspectives in the decision-making process	28.23%	142
To have an efficient way to make major policy decisions, including but not limited to the Town budget	22.86%	115
To encourage civic participation	30.42%	153
Other (please specify)	10.93%	55
	Answered	503
	Skipped	63

1. To ensure the Town passes what the Town Boards and RLF want.
2. Not maximizing voices and perspectives is important. Lincoln would never do that, not in this culture.
3. Both sides should get equal time. This is not happening.
4. It SHOULD encourage civic participation. It comes across as totally lopsided.
5. This question is unclear - what do I wish it would be or what is it. Right now it is none of the above.
6. I think a town meeting should be separate from the actual vote. Meet to discuss, walk away and then be allowed to vote.
7. Town meeting is a complete waste of time and only serves to promote the interest of the few people on the planning and other committees while Minimizing and discouraging a true interest in votes for the majority of the town's residents.
8. I do not think town meeting helps engage the community. I think it is a broken system and should be information sharing only. The votes should happen anonymous and not in a public forum you have to spend all day at.
9. Town meeting feels like a sham, for many of us newer residents. The committees are stacked with the same people, new ideas or new members are not welcome. Town meeting is so discouraging, to the extent that many young families don't bother going. Allowing the committees to present their affirmation of their agenda items, with alternatives given NO time nor avenue to voice dissent, makes a mockery of the direct democracy. The process has left too much of the town divided and bitter... all to give the RLF club the run of the town.
10. To decide who is an idiot.
11. To vote and get out as fast as possible



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12. In an ideal world, it would serve the purposes listed above, but in my opinion it fails at all of the above in practice.
13. Please separate the vote from the discussion. In this day and age there are many ways to get informed perspectives. The discussion meeting should be optional and separate from the vote. Let me cast my vote the way I do for president.
14. I don't think voting in town issues should be limited to town meeting. Too many people can't or don't attend
15. It is unnecessary, let people vote off-line
16. I think the town meeting is a complete failure.
17. To suppress opposition and exclude voters
18. I don't think it serves a purpose anymore in the sense that private voting would bring about same outcome.
19. Our town's still using a voting system that worked great in 1775 —nothing says cutting-edge civic engagement like a voting method last updated when leeches were considered medicine.
20. I don't like town meeting because I don't want to listen to pontificating
21. To vote on issues
22. It's just a way for the same core group of people to make the decisions and newcomers are ignored.
23. Reduce property taxes
24. Town meeting is so out dated and slow, officials out of touch and rigid in thought,
25. I worry that decisions have been made before the meeting so that my vote won't count
26. We should just have a private vote in a booth - NO meeting.
27. To build community
28. It seems to be the only way to vote
29. Waste a lot of time and not get a chance to vote anyhow! Think we should have ballot voting at school.
30. I would argue that it does not maximize perspectives as who can attend is very inequitable
31. To vote on an item or warrant that I feel should pass (rarely vote against something)
32. All of the above.
33. I do not think the meeting accomplishes the purposes above.
34. Community engagement
35. In general, it is a waste of time. All topics are already dialed in. No dissent is permitted.
36. I read about issues to be voted on in advance and arrive having decided how to vote. I wish I could vote remotely or by mail.
37. I don't think town meetings have been efficient nor fair recently which makes answer this difficult



38. My first experience with town meeting was when I first moved to Lincoln in 2018. I accept it as what we have, but do I think it has an important purpose other than that's what we have? No. I daydream about having a mayor.
39. serves to pass decisions already made. "None of the above" is regularly NOT an option.
40. To talk with residents and strengthen the sense of community
41. I just want to vote with a PRIVATE vote - THAT is democracy
42. Town Meeting does not have any important purpose in my opinion. We should have meetings to debate and present information and SEPARATELY have a vote in booths or by mail like any other vote.
43. To stand up for conservation issues
44. Need written pros and cons and consequences(voter information) written form
45. To finish any pending knitting projects
46. Vote should be separate from TM debates
47. Town meeting does not meet the above needs for me
48. Town meeting needs to be streamlined, moderator more in touch with what's going on, boards stop tipping the scales to direct the vote
49. Town Meeting reinforces decision making by the minority that can attend. It is self-perpetuating (not be design, but in actuality)
50. It's a joke...ballot only
51. The above SHOULD be the purpose of town meeting BUT no dissenting voices are ever permitted to speak. The way you run town meeting it is like North Korea, all dissent is suppressed.
52. To interact with other town residents, meet people and foster better communications and involvement
53. Because I have to because this is the process.
54. Town meeting is inefficient and is not equal and fair. Busy people can not attend.
55. The votes should be scheduled. I don't have time to wait all day for one vote. The current structure discriminates against parents.



Q11. Does Town Meeting serve the purposes that are most important to you?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	37.42%	183
Not sure or no opinion	21.88%	107
No (please specify)	40.70%	199
	Answered	489
	Skipped	77

Comments:

1. The audience is encouraged by the moderator to boo or cheer. The moderator makes a joke of it. Why doesn't the moderator set decorum, its supposed to be a debate - no boos, no applause. Courtesy. Instead the moderator encourages booing.
2. Lincoln Town meeting, at least yesterday, creates an environment of ridicule for anyone not in line with the Select Board and RLF.
3. There is a clear bias with town board, committee, and RLF pushing their support, with almost no allowance for the opposition to have time to mount alternative options or present at Town Meeting. If there isn't time, then it should be broken up into information presentation one day, with ballot voting on another day.
4. secret ballot is not always available.
5. The culture of the meeting prevents real debate
6. The sound systems don't work for the hearing impaired. I'm quite sure that I'm not alone with this (for us) very big problem.
7. No debate so no really informed decsions,
8. The Select Board should do what Secretary Galvin does and fairly present both sides of all warrants. There should ALWAYS be an opposing view, fairly stated.
9. Town Meeting is unkind and designed for Town Boards including RLF which is essentially a Town Board, to have a party.
10. Schedule and in-person nature of meetings disproportionality impacts the younger residents of Lincoln
11. It was shameful seeing how mean a lot of this town can be
12. Town meeting has clearly turned into a rubber stamp for the town boards and committees. Any dissenting voices are met with boos and anger. Boards and committees stack the deck by giving 4-5 biased speeches before every article gets debated. These just waste time since they are always all in agreement. It really just shows that there is no opposing views allowed to have any real voice in this town. How could it possibly be that out of 4-5 boards and committees that are allowed to comment on articles, not a single alternative view point is mentioned? That means either the boards and committees are stacked with people who will push these things through and are one sided... or they are silencing dissenting views on their own boards and committees. Both of which are terrible things for this town.



13. On important decisions it often feels as if Town Administration takes a position and then arrays a battery of supporting groups to endorse that position, leaving dissenting groups relatively little time to speak and absolutely no time for critical questions to be answered. I wanted to learn at last night's STM, for instance, how LEAP came to be folded into the Community Center programming, when the original intent (that we voted on) was to build a center for the COA and PRD, where people of all ages could gather. The addition of LEAP to the program reduces space for the original stakeholder base, and it now looks like we'll be getting a building with a lobby for a gathering space. The juggernaut of proponent endorsements made these questions – when were LEAP's needs folded in, and why – feel superfluous, though no question attached to such a large expenditure should ever be considered superfluous.
14. It doesn't generate democratic discussion. This Town Meeting I learned of the extensive outreach of the RLF Board prior to the meeting, misinformation, mistruths, spread through phone calls and emails, to get people to attend and vote. I also saw Lincoln Talk shut down to conversation. Then at the meeting all the mics were quickly grabbed with pro speakers. While it was great to have a dissenting opinion, they left the previous speakers slide up during his presentation. The question was called while some important voices were waiting at mics. For example a LEAP board member concerned the community center didn't have enough space in the current design never got to speak. I saw someone new to Town, nervous to speak, booed. Who then would be brave enough to speak to anything. The moderator made a joke of it it seemed.
15. need an evener playing field between town board voices and citizen voices
16. No, the Town Meeting, while reporting to advance a Democratic process, does the exact opposite. The effect is at critical decisions relative to real estate planning and finances are left to a few town members who are more enamored with their power to control residence monies than doing what's best for the town.
17. I do not think the vote should be public and only happen at the meeting
18. The committees put forth their agenda, and in lock step they all take maximum time to applaud one another.
19. Absolutely not, it's an onerous obligation to vote
20. Town meeting sucks
21. Obvious stacked votes, unequal treatment of speakers, definite slant to hear only from one side and not the other
22. Most issues have been pre-decided
23. Only preferred people are permitted to speak. This is becoming more and more like North Korea.
24. Not efficient – always seems like we're starting from scratch
25. I wish there was a way to vote without attending town meeting (or after watching it on Zoom). It is very difficult to drop everything for a few hours to attend the meeting, when you don't know what time the vote will be.



26. It fails at giving residents equal access to participation and voting because of the extraordinarily long duration and lack of opportunity to vote for those unable to attend.
27. Debating should not be combined with the process of voting
28. I don't see it working as a democratic process. It seems as though the outcome is heavily expected to be a vote of approval for the presented proposals. Peer pressure can be felt, so I don't know if this also influences the way townspeople vote.
29. Speakers at the back mic are sometimes cut off when their views are not in line with the moderator; speakers with views that differ from other board members and the moderator are not given an adequate chance to express their views; an amendment was sprung on the attendees at the March 2024 meeting when some planning board members and others "in the know" were aware that this was going to occur.
30. I only want to vote. I haven't in years because I can't sit through hours of town meeting.
31. It feels unfair because it takes the right to vote away from the people that don't have the time/means to attend
32. It is unreasonable to expect working parents or people with disabilities to attend an unbounded length meeting to vote. It is no wonder the meeting is over represented with retired people.
33. It aims to serve those purposes that are important to me, but I (and I think many others) have often not been able to participate due to childcare needs (please see previous note)
34. While town meeting is intended to allow for voices and ideas to be heard, it does so very very inefficiently. Meetings could be held, recorded, transcripts and summarized to allow resident to think more critically after the meeting, discuss with each other, then quickly vote at a later date
35. Sometimes participation cut off too early (I call the vote)
36. Education on topics and voting should be separate. Also format is 1700s. Can we make this into 21st century please
37. Not always; lengthy and disorganized comment period and procedural delays/confusion get in the way
38. the meetings are too long, the vote counting takes forever, the meeting is inefficient
39. It does not allow the most amount of people to participate
40. Too long. I have an autistic daughter to attend to. Never know when the topic I'm interested in will be up for a vote. So I feel disenfranchised because my vote doesn't get counted.
41. Town meeting does not meet the need of allowing the entire town to vote.
42. It is Quinton, but ultimately more useful for older generations
43. I want to vote on the issues that affect my life but that is very difficult to do in the current format.
44. Anyone with out time to waste is excluded from voting



45. I just want to vote and not have to listen to people go on and on about nothing
46. I think allowing voices to be heard is very important. I am uncomfortable with the public vote though
47. Format is antiquated
48. The Selects and Planning Board essentially make the decisions. Whatever they approve/present gets approved.
49. It takes so long I several times have had to leave without being able to vote. Even though I was informed and wanted to vote
50. it is inefficient. the presentations (and at times moderator) are biased and equal presentation of opposing viewpoints is not common. Certain stakeholders (RLF) are often given preferential treatment. Moreover, the meetings take forever, and those of us with other responsibilities have to sacrifice greatly to attend. It should not be this way,
51. I usually cannot attend because of the timing and kids. I would happily vote early or online.
52. Too long. Each side should be given 10 minutes to summarize an issue or position.
53. It actually disallows people who work from being involved
54. It is a challenge to attend as a family with young children
55. Too much people talking
56. I want to vote, do not want to listen to discussions
57. If everyone's voice/opinion mattered then the residents who opposed the Housing Choice Act would have been allowed to show slides. However, the town moderator said no. If everything were equal then RLF wouldn't have gotten to pull the stunt they pulled. It is just disgusting.
58. Does not give enough time to dissenting voices; marginalizes them by limiting the amount of time they can speak
59. An all day meeting on a Saturday is very difficult to attend as a parent of two kids
60. My experience in town is usually unaffected
61. too large to have nuanced discussions. would require smaller group discussions.
62. In the sense that I get to vote, yes. But having to vote in this fashion, versus a ballot, is cumbersome on schedules, especially with families.
63. Voting shouldn't be limited to Town hall
64. There should be a separate voting mechanism which doesn't require hours of in-person attendance at town meetings, which seems clearly designed to favor/suppress particular voters
65. My voice is unheard and never turn into actions
66. I think the Town Meeting is looking for a rubber stamp of previously agreed upon recommendation of a committee while stifling any diverse discourse.
67. does not allow voting even with legitimate schedule conflict
68. Presentations on certain issues can be one sided with time-wasting endorsements from committees that have little if anything to do with an issue. It seems like a lot of pressure "to go along to get along"
69. Excludes too many voters



70. Times never work too long
71. The most important reason for town meeting is to vote. but the voting is restricted only to those at town meeting, which is typically a small cohort, and possibly not representative of the entire town. The town meeting format is highly inefficient overall.
72. It seems to me that we vote on huge issues without the necessary knowledge.
73. Not efficient, private or reflective of broad population in town
74. Doesn't provide an opportunity to vote if you don't attend
75. Too often, dissenting opinions are shut down/out
76. It is a nice idea, but a lot of people can't be there for so long, and incredibly important decisions get made by so few.
77. Hate that we have to vote on that day
78. Voting on issues is most important and town meeting makes that agonizing and difficult
79. i feel like the vote is already determined and officials do what they can to get the vote to go the way they want it to
80. By presenting one sided presentations and prohibiting online voting, it goes directly against the type of democracy I want. Voting shouldn't be limited to those with the financial flexibilities to attend in person.
81. overrun by outside people who aren't even Lincoln residents such as contractors to influence bias.
82. It does not
83. Don't want/need it
84. Not enough time for residents' opinions to be heard fairly; presentations are limited or biased
85. Opposing views are not given enough time to be heard
86. Again, i'm not sure this is the right question to ask. Most people don't have a purpose to attend the town meeting. If they wish to exercise, their right to vote, They have to attend the town meeting. The town meeting is a forum to Understand topics better in order to be able to vote for them or not. So again, the better question would be What purposes would make you attend the town meeting more often.. Or What aspects of the town meeting are not meeting your needs.
87. Would prefer different voting options
88. Being someone who does not go to committee meetings, I get much of my info at the town meeting and appreciate the debate to inform my decision-making
89. Hard to participate if only one shot with no absentee ballot
90. No, I want to vote, not listen to hours of discussion mostly one sided
91. Unrealistic for many residents to attend and cast their vote
92. Town committees don't provide pros and cons. Moderator stifles dissent from audience w/2 minute rule.
93. The vote is skewed by who shows up and is not representative of the entire town.
94. not enough debate, decisions railroaded



95. Waste of my time. I just want to vote on each warrant item. Do not need to hear people voice their options
96. The process has been used to push through deals not in the best interest of local neighborhoods (high density zoning) often by members who do not live in the affected neighborhoods.
97. I felt the group championing for Option 'E' were suppressed at the town meeting during which the zoning for HCA was voted on.
98. I'd rather be able to just vote on questions without having to attend an all day meeting
99. It feels like an impractical and outdated way of educating the public and collecting votes from a demographically broad sample of Lincoln households
100. too long and does not help support my decision to vote.
101. It's unmanageable for full-time employed people to fully participate and understand
102. We do not have physical presence to vote in this digital age
103. Leading up to Town Meeting the powers that be stack the deck for their preferred outcome. They deflect resident input and opinion unless it's the same as theirs. The elected officials, for the most part, have abandoned conservation and protecting Lincoln's legacy, any resident who feels differently is pushed aside.
104. Powers that be have opportunity to present their view, dissenting views are not given sufficient opportunity
105. Issues are not fairly discussed. Town and committee leaders spend unlimited time selling their side of an issue. The other side is not given equal time to present and educate town residents who have not followed issues on Lincoln Talk.
106. I don't have time to dedicate many hours or a full day. It doesn't work for working parents and people. I am also a physician and work weekends.
107. Not Efficient
108. Recently, I do not feel as if all voices have been heard or given equal time
109. Need time for more than one position/presentation
110. Inequitable access for parents/caregivers and people who have many jobs to do. No remote option.
111. There isn't enough debate. Dissenting views need more space.
112. Sometimes a particular outcome on a warrant article pushed through at the expense of hearing other perspectives.
113. I was very disappointed in 2023 when important voices and information were not allowed to be heard re: the HCA, despite a large number of residents trying to use all the avenues available to them. While they were allotted a short time to speak, they were not allowed to use slides although the RLF was. It was especially disappointing that sitting and dissenting members of the Planning Board were not allowed to speak from the podium, and the Option "E" was mischaracterized by the town's slides presentation (rather than letting organizers of Option E speak for themselves with their own slides, especially since this was a very complex topic.)
114. Too difficult to get large participation with current format



115. It does not allow enough time for opposing views to be heard
116. A lot to the "debate" that goes on at town meeting would be called "committee work" in a corporate board. The debates should happen on a different day and the legal meeting should just be to vote, to spare us the rancor that goes on.
117. Too many one-sided presentations.
118. Town Meeting serves primarily as a forum for presenters in favor of a warrant article. It doesn't serve the presenters' purpose to discuss the downsides of voting yes to the warrant articles. There is insufficient time given to hear/discuss questions and opinions by non-presenters. A line of people speaking for 2 minutes each does not result in debate or discussion of their views. There is insufficient time to hear and fully consider important questions that have an impact on taxes and town funds. A two-day meeting could help alleviate time pressure when there are multiple important items on the warrant.
119. unable to vote due to mandatory in person attendance
120. It depends on who can make it.
121. Lincoln TM currently favors and caters to an elite political class in town, and reinforces that implied political caste system.
122. I just want to cast a private vote.
123. Does not maximize the range of voices especially if they opinion different from the official position
124. My issue with Town Meeting is that if someone is unable to attend, they can't vote. There ought to be a way to have others who want to vote on the issues, vote outside of town meeting.
125. Process to vote is too onerous and inefficient. Feels like only suited for extreme opinions/personalities that are willing to endure the process at any length.
126. There is not of enough genuine debate. Too often residents feel as though they are simply asked to rubber stamp decisions that have already been made.
127. Not enough time for opposing arguments.
128. I feel disenfranchised because the meetings are too long and there is no specified voting time. With little kids and work, it's too difficult to plan and there is no way for both my wife and I to vote.
129. I am not able to engage in Town Meeting and make my votes on important matters that will affect my family's finance and experience living in Lincoln and engaging with the school system.
130. It appears to me that the opinions of people who are opposed to certain
131. Not efficient use of time. If you are fine with the articles, schedule all the votes after all the different debate and comment. Then vote, vote, vote....
132. The information presented is always one sided, that is the town officials and organizations have more presentations and a longer time frame to present their views than do independent town voices.
133. No dissent is ever permitted. If it is an "approved" opinion, they can talk for hours. If it is a dissenting opinion, they can speak for 90 seconds if they are lucky. The moderator is prejudiced.



134. It has been heavily one sided in recent years and the perspectives taken by our board leaders have not been neutral making air time and debate time insufficient
135. Only allowing proponents of a warrant to present has decrease the objectivity of the information. The 2 minutes limit to comment has not allowed for adequate alternatives to warrants.
136. It is my impression the town "establishment" just rams things through. There is very little "democratic process."
137. The process is manipulated by Selects and RLF to achieve their predetermined goals
138. Insufficient tolerance for positions other than those supported by the leaders
139. Town meeting despite appearances, is not democratic but ruled by those who are "in."
140. Most of the town is disenfranchised because voting takes too long. You need to have one time period where people can vote so folks don't have to stay for an entire day
141. I feel the meetings are biased towards the opinions of town officials and vested interests
142. I do not feel my vote matters
143. Often outcomes are predetermined
144. Voting at the Town Meeting represents a tiny fraction of the town. It is not a good process for democracy
145. It has become a charade, since the selects dominate the agenda and discussion.
146. Town meeting strikes me as an antiquated form of voter suppression for entitled white people of means.
147. inefficient and unwieldy. The Moderator does a poor job of controlling the meeting.
148. Opinions, other than those being promoted by the heads of each board are not given sufficient time. Board and committee presentations become sales pitches.
149. Want ballot vote not binding vote on town meeting
150. The length and unclear vote timing makes it very difficult to vote (the most important part). I feel disenfranchised.
151. Meeting is too long; majority can't/don't attend; not democratic. Need more efficient way to vote.
152. Too one-sided.
153. Mostly, but logistics need improvement and often the moderator evidences partisanship.
154. Voting on key issues is very difficult because the meeting can last many hours, and for younger residents with young children that can be prohibitive
155. Assuming that Town Meeting is our town's legislature also assumes that town resident's are fairly informed and comfortable voting. Both of these are bad assumptions
156. you should be able to vote separately, a day or two after the meeting.
157. It serves no purpose.



158. Town meeting is not an appropriate forum for individuals to form their opinions on important matters. A 10 minute presentation on an important issue such as the Panetta Farrington proposal serves almost no purpose. Public forms with an opportunity for the deciders to actually process the input is the best way for boards to make good recommendations to town meeting, and for the public to be informed. But the public needs to show up at the forum.
159. I have left tm confused
160. Casting my vote
161. Not accessible to those with disability
162. Not everyone can spend all day at a town meeting. Times have changed, there needs to be a way to cast your vote outside of a Town meeting. People work and have other obligations. I can cast a vote without spending multiple hours listening to people argue.
163. Vote should be separate from discussions
164. It seems like the powers in the town have already decided what they're going to do before the meeting, and they only want the votes. No room for adjustments, and not open to hearing perspectives.
165. It's too hard to attend, impossible to vote, very inefficient
166. Due to the physical presence required, no
167. I wish we had meetings more frequently so that decisions could be given more adequate consideration without feeling crunched.
168. It feels like issues are decided, presented as such in hopes to get the desired vote.
169. No I believe town hall and the boards decide what they want and influence the vote
170. It is a burdensome way to vote. It's often not possible to take a whole day for town meeting, with family obligations and work.
171. See previous comments. those comments refer to all town meetings....2024 was particularly bad...illegal.
172. Town meeting forces decisions to occur at the same moment that decision input and deliberation is presented. These moments should be distinct. By accident, town meeting reinforces alternatives (e.g., LincolnTalk) as where discussion & consideration really occur.
173. Not enough young families representatives
174. Citizens are muzzled if they oppose the governing town boards
175. Ballot only
176. The timing and format excludes parents of young kids from being easily able to cast their vote or make their voice heard.
177. The presentations for HCA Zoning Bylaw were clearly biased by the town officials. This has created a lasting distrust of town officials.
178. TM is only designed to engage a very narrow percentage of the electorate that does not have families or other schedule conflicts.
179. It is a waste of time because you suppress dissenting voices. So just let us vote.



180. Everything feels preordained
181. It would be better to gain information beforehand through Select Board meetings, with citizen participation, and easier to vote as in a normal election.
182. Alternative perspectives are not heard
183. The lack of ability to cast and record votes digitally makes them inefficient. The protracted length of the two I've attended, included the first, caused people to leave without casting their vote, some people asking others to cast it in their stead. One woman wanted to cast a vote anonymously out of fear of retribution which sparked interesting but distracting banner on historical secret ballots.
184. need to have more time for citizen participation to hear alternative view points
185. The overly lengthy meetings, and requirement that one attend the entire meeting - just to cast a vote - is an onerous burden
186. I understand/like it in principal, but it is so long.
187. Too long, I want to vote and go
188. Limited public participation due to format and opposing viewpoints not adequately presented
189. The period of time allotted for residents to make comments is too long. After a while, comments become repetitive and do not add value, and sometimes I feel like people just want to have their say publicly. That period needs to be more efficient.
190. too long to attend, inconvenient scheduling
191. Not accessible form of civic participation given time commitment. We should be able to vote directly on key issues without attending town meeting.
192. Not efficient
193. While I appreciate the intent of the town meeting, I think it limits who can participate and does not allow for the time needed to evaluate the presented information and arguments that would need consideration to cast an informed vote.
194. too long- would like to separate discussion from the voting
195. Busy people can not take a full day to attend Town Meeting. Those who are not busy with work, kids, etc have higher participation. This is unequal and unfair.
196. It's too hard to vote
197. Only people who are free to spend all day at meeting are able to attend and vote
198. Voting should be done in a more efficient way that does not require all residents to stay until the very end.
199. Previous question asked for 3 TM purposes. No way to answer here if TM serves each of the separate functions..



Q12. Overall, given your experience, are you satisfied with Town Meeting?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Very satisfied	8.72%	43
Satisfied	17.04%	84
Neutral/No Opinion	15.21%	75
Dissatisfied	16.84%	83
Very dissatisfied	12.58%	62
Comments (optional). You may use this space to explain your answer.	29.61%	146
	Answered	493
	Skipped	73

Comments:

1. Thank you for bringing some sense to this Town. No mic comments. The only ones that matter agree with the Boards, the others are stupid and a waste of time.
2. Very Dissatisfied. Lincoln Town meeting is brutal. Booing, hissing, behind the scenes rumor spreading. One side gets 45 minutes with slides, a dissenting side gets 5 minutes, 2 with the previous presenters slides. The pro side rushes the mics three deep. When they all speak after the first one or two comments from a different perspective the question is called. This is not a Town Meeting. This is a cruelty hour.
3. Two improvements: automatic display of time limit on big screen: Mic no. 1 located on floor up front
4. Very dissatisfied. Why doesn't the moderator make the usual statement about decorum in debates. Do not applause or boo. When the crowd jeered the Lincoln newcomer the moderator joked. The moderator should have admonished the crowd, set ground rules about applause and booing, and given that speaker another minute. What happened there was cruel. Then when someone came to her defense they were booed too. The ridiculed speaker was in shock about how she was treated. Terrible. Town leaders condoned it and probably had a good laugh about it later. The moderator should apologise publicly and invite the person back to the next town meeting and promise to create and atmosphere of decorum.
5. Watching negatively impacted neighbors come up with an alternative plan, only to have them maligned and given 5 minutes of time at Town Meeting really soured me. It wasn't fair or democratic.
6. I feel we need to make more room to validate dissenting opinions . At the last town meeting, the debate was cut off before the dissenters had a chance to express their ideas because townspeople got tired of the discussions and voted to call the question. But all the Town Boards had a chance to give their opinions without being cut off. Could we do better? How about asking for



- dissenting opinions alternately with Town Boards once the introductory presentations are made? Our moderator gave the impression of being strict with the 2 minute limit with dissenters but lenient on presenters...
7. The town needs a real newspaper, which it hasn't had for many many years. that covers committee, town meetings in depth.
 8. Very dissatisfied. It's a one-sided proposition. Authoritarian. 10 leadership controls everything. The moderator is not treat people equitably. She enforces the rules very inequitably. Her handling of the hea vote was appalling. It wasn't embarrassing. The fact that a private organization was allowed to step up unannounced were others were shun and not allowed to. Clearly that was all prepared in advance. How else would those slides have gotten in to the computer? This is not democracy. People with big egos and agendas on a power trip. It's ugly. How do I really feel..
 9. First Parish Church has a hearing system that completely works for the hearing impaired. I wish other venues would do the same.
 10. Pros are overwhelming supported by town bureaucracy and Nos are suppressed and not allowed to speak
 11. Moderator needs to retire. People should be removed if they shout profanities at speakers
 12. Meetings are too long. Behavior of certain residents and how they conduct themselves at the meeting is deplorable
 13. Very dissatisfied. I may never return. What's the point? Even when the moderator gives an alternative view point the floor, it's already so stacked against them that it doesn't even matter. Residents are rude and mean to anyone who speaks up. I am honestly disgusted by the behavior that happened last night and even as a very active member of the community and someone who usually speaks at town meeting, I probably will never return. I'm actually considering moving away from this town because of how truly mean people are and how residents were treated last night. What's the point of staying in a town with astronomically high taxes, boards and committees that you have to be friends with someone to even get a seat on, and a town meeting where people pushing the main articles are allowed to make up complete lies about their opposition- and at the same time claim THEY are the victim. I don't want to be a part of this hypocritical town any longer.
 14. Again – the over-reliance on packing one side of a vote with multiple group endorsers, giving them ample podium time while exercising stinginess with dissent, intimidates anyone with a different opinion, and gives momentum to ideas that might benefit from more robust challenge.
 15. No - but its okay. I will not go again. Town Meeting seems to be a feel good moment for the powers that be who have already decided everything anyway.
 16. People vote for the president of the United States through either an absentee valor or at the polls, but in Lincoln, the only way to vote is to sit through a multi hour town meeting, which only serves the purposes of the few people on the



- town, committees and the rural land foundation, which is way too embedded in the town's decision-making policies for its own purposes.
17. I think town meeting is way too long and the information should be shared ahead of time. I do not agree with the public voting and think it creates many obstacles where people can not cast a vote as they wish.
 18. I think town meeting preserves an important tradition, encourages active participation in our small (and precious) community, and provides its citizens with insight into town government. I see a few problems with town meeting, including accessibility and AV capabilities. I do think in-person participation is a key component, but for some (parents of young children, elderly, those with limited mobility or illness) being in-person is sometimes not feasible at all. It would be helpful to be able to send a proxy to vote on your behalf. The other issue I see is AV capabilities. Having participated in all town meetings in the gym, sometimes we are just not able to hear those speaking on the microphone, or are not able to speak without being in the auditorium. I hope there is a contingency plan for it/when the in-person attendance exceeds the size of our venues.
 19. It's disgraceful. No decorum. Moderator has no sympathy. So many people shipped in from the senior living center that don't represent the people that live in this town each and every day. The thought that families don't matter - only elderly people. I don't get it - it's not democracy when it's always a stacked vote. I doubt all the elderly that show up will actually use the community center. Moderate speakers for both sides. This isn't democracy.
 20. The town meeting is one of the top community events. It brings everyone together to discuss important town issues. I wish there was a way to retain that feeling, while blowing up the voting process. It's really hard to get a representative vote in the town given the onerous procedures. I think limiting to 60s, not 120s, or having representative speakers, or breaking up the summaries in more ways - good luck and thanks for your work to improve this it's lovely but it's a mess
 21. You shouldn't have to dedicate a full day and sit through hours of contentious and often redundant debate in order to cast a vote. It prioritizes the participation of certain segments of the population with time to spare and no responsibility for dependents.
 22. Too long, outdated process, lack of virtual or "early voting" option for those who can't go in person
 23. Sometimes the meetings are too long and discursive and sometimes people who have not been paying attention or doing any preliminary work whatsoever to inform themselves ask basic questions that they should have explored before arriving at the meeting.
 24. The main problem for me is the length of the meeting. It is frustrating when say five people get up to make basically the same points which elongates the meeting. Also, as someone who is not comfortable speaking in large crowds I



wish there were a way of providing real time input perhaps by writing it and having it read. I am happy with the change to using clickers both because it speeds the voting process and because I like not having my opinion public especially in those instances where I may hold different views that friends or neighbors. I understand why meeting on the weekend makes sense (not looking forward to a weekday night meeting today , but I wish it were not always on the Jewish sabbath. If the meeting time could be shorter and started in the afternoon it would allow me to go to Sabbath services in the morning. I understand the Jewish population in town is small, but perhaps every couple of years at least the meeting could either be Saturday afternoon or Sunday. I have great respect both for town leaders and volunteers and all they do for this very wonderful community

25. Very unhappy the way town moderator runs TM. It is time for someone else to take the job If TM was run smoother and rules were upheld in a consistent manner TM would be less frustrating and chaotic
26. I am dissatisfied because the moderator's and committee members' biased inclinations.
27. People who travel for work, who have young children, or who otherwise don't have the luxury of spending hours at a meeting are disenfranchised. Can you imagine if we required people to sit for hours to vote for president, no absentee ballot available? That would never fly. This shouldn't either. I am so angry that I can't vote in matters I care about. The burden of town meeting is so much more onerous than requiring a voter ID. Shame on anyone who allows this disenfranchisement to continue.
28. The format is archaic
29. In theory I appreciate the meeting but because it runs for so damn long it inevitably results in people not attending or leaving early. It's exhausting. Last minute changes to the warrants are not a good idea either - drafting a proposal in front of hundreds of people is a waste of everyone's time. Have one meeting where you can discuss and debate the articles, and then another tightly run one to vote on them (or better yet vote by mail).
30. We need more rules about who gets to present from the podium and use slides etc.
31. It's okay but there are other things I'd rather be doing with my time and would prefer just being able to read materials on the issues and vote.
32. the meetings are too long, the coordination between the gym and auditorium is bad, the vote counting takes forever, the meeting is inefficient
33. I'd like to be able to have a voice in town issues without having to attend an all day meeting
34. I feel given the constraints that the town has they run a good town meeting
35. I am generally satisfied with Town Meeting, as I have learned a lot about the Town and feel that I am effectively contributing to the decisions that affect Town management, the Land we are responsible for, and the lives of my family



- and other current and future residents. I think we could look at efficiencies (like voting clickers) and other ways to ensure our purposes are met in a reasonable amount of time.
36. I have an autistic daughter to attend to. Voting on topics that interest me happen randomly throughout the day. As I cannot be in person at town meeting, I feel my voice doesn't count. VOTE BY BALLOT PLEASE!!!! Make it count for all of us!
 37. Small minorities are making decisions for the entire town instead of everyone voting at a town election.
 38. Depends on the meeting topics and the way each meeting is run
 39. Strikes me as a modern day form of voter suppression.
 40. Positions in opposition to the Selects/Planning Board are not well represented, partially for lack of skill/resources on the part of the opposition, partially because of the effectiveness/innate position of authority of the Selects/Planning Board.
 41. I like having a town meeting but it is very poorly run. It is disrespectful of people's time and obligations.
 42. One of the worst run meetings I have ever participated in. There is no structure or control. It operates as if we are in 1776 and not 2025. It should be brief with summarized positions and a scheduled time to vote.
 43. Shouldn't need to sit through hours of commentary to make a vote on something. I've already made an opinion on before I arrived. I have a small child and it's difficult for me to sit there for hours when the only thing I need to do should last five minutes or less
 44. I'd really like to be able to attend and vote in a town meeting however the long duration is not manageable for our family to attend.
 45. Voting procedure antiquated
 46. Waste of my time
 47. Inability to participate or vote if scheduling conflict is a problem
 48. Dissatisfied. The process is TOO long and it excludes people who would normally vote (like me), but can't because of scheduling conflicts, particularly for those with families.
 49. See above. Voting should be separate from the meetings so that people with other obligations can vote without needing to sacrifice multiple hours or an entire day
 50. Satisfied- but want to add that while citizen/group comments and discussion are essential for a meaningful meeting, they occur too close to the actual vote to be fully absorbed and evaluated
 51. I was appalled at the tactics used at a recent Town Meeting to stifle or hamper presentations by any opposing groups. In my eyes as a newcomer to Lincoln that there was a preconceived notion of what the desired voting result should be and the discussions centered around that premise. A true democratic approach was not in evidence and the meeting only seemed to reinforce the



- schism that seems to exist within the town. At least this is what I saw in play as a newcomer to the open town meeting concept.
52. no accomodation for hearing impaired - smith gym better than auditorium but no voting in auditorium (maybe now with clickers?)
 53. Because of how one-sided it can feel, and all the self-congratulatory pomp, I'm tempted to stop attending. I know others who have given up, saying it's a waste of time.
 54. Time afforded to proponents, especially RLF, outweighs dissidents exponentially
 55. Voting could be much more efficient than holding up papers and manually counting multiple rounds
 56. Voting process has contributed to some very long town meetings. Hopefully use of clicker voting will help ease this.
 57. rigged, biased, undemocratic... only certain voices are heard
 58. Would like to see a NEW moderator. Current one been around way too long
 59. Somewhat satisfied
 60. I don't really have an opinion because this is the wrong question to ask. Are there aspects of the town meeting that are satisfying? Then I would think there are some attributes of the town meeting that are satisfying.. But in general as time becomes even more precious as I age, ironically, I just can't spend the time necessary for entire meetings.. So it's not that it's not satisfying, it's that it is so consuming and has such a rich opportunity cost that it does make it a lot of work.
 61. I appreciate the tradition of TM, but feel that format and structure should be changed to make it appealing and doable for more people. It's too long. I like the idea of separating discussion/debate and voting.
 62. Moderator needs to be better prepared.
 63. I am dissatisfied because TM is poorly run by the moderator, it makes the whole meeting very frustrating
 64. Satisfied, but glad voting is being streamlined and also made anonymous in the process.
 65. Waste of my time. Put all the items on a ballot and let people vote the day after the Town meeting
 66. We need a new Moderator.
 67. I hate participating, but can't not. Wish it could be revised-redesigned for user experience and better results
 68. There is no perfect process. I would tweak it to maximize votes of the people who come - when it has gone very long and people had to leave before the vote, that feel like a tragedy
 69. It should be shorter and have child care options
 70. Town meeting and voting should be separated. Vote one week after the town meeting.
 71. This requirement for physical presence to vote is puzzling at best and archaic



72. When you click comments your choice is unchecked. I would click very dissatisfied for the reasons given above. The process and procedures leading up to Town Meeting need to change and be more open. Town leaders are not honest with their desire to leave conservation behind.
73. somewhat dissatisfied, feel those who take issue with powers that be are not given adequate chance to speak
74. I like the idea of Town Meeting, but it should not be an all day affair. I was very put off at the last meeting when we thought we were voting on one thing and then there was a quick change. I don't think people understood what was happening.
75. We should maximize pre-work and use other channels to get people informed before the meeting and then time box the meeting, provide an agenda with times in advance, provide remote voting options - all so people who have multiple responsibilities can attend.
76. not satisfied with voting process - yelling out /no privacy
77. Everything is important in the meeting but it just takes so much time but I do it to respect the boards that work hard on these items
78. Town meeting is fundamental to our self governance. Management of the meeting and its issues needs to be more even handed. Clickers will help with the efficiency of the meeting.
79. Please find a moderator who is a bit more on the ball and has a stronger voice -- it's hard to hear her.
80. I want to vote on a private ballot- and voting by ballot would allow people who are sick, elderly, out of town etc. to vote. I think it's exclusive and unfair to make people vote in person at the town meeting.
81. Town Meeting is a very important part of our town's governance, and I very much appreciate all the time that volunteers put into getting ready for it. However, I am not satisfied with its current format, given the availability of new technologies and options for improvement. I am very thankful the Town Meeting Study Committee is doing their work to find ways to improve our Town Meetings.
82. I find the situation very frustrating because if i an unable yo attend a meeting or it is so freaking long that I can't sit through it all any longer, then i dont have the opportunity to vote. I am disenfranchised by this whole process
83. I would like to see those with opposing views on boards allowed to speak and explain why they voted against something.
84. Proponents have gotten 10-15 minutes, while opponents have gotten 5. I'd like to see what amounts to team presentations with equal time.
85. Dissatisfied. Way too much noise to signal ratio.
86. The town meeting does not make voting accessible for those who cannot come.
87. Town Meeting functions as a soapbox for presenters of the articles. It doesn't serve the needs of townspeople to be informed in a non-rushed manner to



consider major issues and their potential impacts. In particular, a *Special* Town Meeting doesn't have the benefit of a "State of the Town," and feels even more rushed. A *Special* Town Meeting in summer, in the evening, is difficult for elderly (who may go to bed earlier and/or don't drive at night), people with very young children, and working people.

88. unable to vote due to mandatory in person attendance
89. Although I truly believe that most of the people who 'run' TM are doing their best, there are many missed opportunities for running the meetings more efficiently.
90. Town Meeting should be divided into two parts: (1) debate and discussion, and (2) voting. Many people already have their minds made up when they arrive. They should be able to vote quickly and leave. Otherwise, you are disenfranchising people who have other obligations, like childcare.
91. If we had a specified comment/discussion time and specified vote time, we could better plan to both vote. I think tight timed presentations from each side on issues would be more effective. Each side should have the same time, slides, etc.
92. I have missed meetings due to family out of state issues and would like to be able to vote and attend on line. The meetings at the end of March are scheduled on my elderly father's birthday and each may be the last!
93. I know this isn't what the law says, but I don't like that you have to be present at that day and time to vote. Town meeting is too long for me to sit through to just vote on an issue that I care about. Also, I don't go to indoor group meetings since COVID. So I can't take part in town meeting voting.
94. My husband and I can never both attend and cast our votes because we have two young children (<4yo). Meetings can last for an absurd number of hours, unpredictably, so it is challenging and expensive to arrange childcare. If we had the ability to attend and vote virtually we absolutely would. We are very dismayed at the inability to cast our votes on matters that significantly impact our family budget and utilization of town services including the schools.
95. It appears to me that those in power in Lincoln make no attempt to be balanced and give everyone equal voice. Opinions that they disagree with are suppressed and treated with contempt. I have only attended the town meeting twice but I was appalled at the tactics that were used to manipulate the results.
96. Taking a full day or (multiple) evenings only advantages those with time on their hands.
97. Moderator is prejudiced and frequently incompetent.
98. I'm hoping Clicker Bites will help. I think we need a new town moderator.
99. 1. The Vote Clickers is a big improvement 2. Last town meeting ran efficiently 3. Last town meeting the historical debate/vote on town Minutemen was excellent
100. Neutral. Like I said, it's what we have, and I make the best/most of it.
101. This town is the worst I have experienced in apparent lack of an open process.



102. My experience has shown me that not all voices matter. This has been extremely disappointing and disillusioning. Even elected leaders have stood in the way of town residents speaking out. This is unacceptable and has impacted my willingness to participate.
103. Many people left standing at mics when someone calls the vote. Votes at evening town meetings which run past 9pm are not representative as 2/3 of the participants have left the meeting by the time the vote is called.
104. It is very hard to attend and dedicate the amount of time needed to get to the vote. I attend as an informed citizen there to vote, but it can be a very long day or night. It is also so hard on families even when LEAP provides childcare. Families are so so busy. Almost feels like it's designed to exclude them.
105. Too often diversity of opinions are squelched ahead of town meeting and easily dismissed at TM
106. Very dissatisfied - the meetings leading up to the vote should be used for the debate. The meeting itself would be a lot more efficient if that were the case. I also think the debates should be happening earlier because it's unreasonable to expect people to digest all of the complex info during the voting meeting.
107. Town Meeting itself is fine. I appreciate the work that goes into it, and the chance to hear my fellow residents' view on different issues. The way information is shaped and allowed or restricted is problematic, though - it seems that if the Town Administration wants a particular result, it will load up speakers from multiple boards and committees (even if those groups are not pertinent to the result) to endorse that result. Dissenting views are not given equal time, even if dissenting views is coming from an important board or committee. This mode feels like faux democracy, and is unworthy of Lincoln.
108. Way too long to attend
109. I could not be more dissatisfied. I just want to cast a private vote in a voting booth. I do not want to have to sit in a room for hours on end listening to people drone on and on about what they "think."
110. The outcomes are predetermined. Selects never give a pro/con on important decisions.
111. The moderator often appear appears uninformed or unable to manage the meeting.
112. See above. Too long. Inefficient. Should be a more efficient way to vote.
113. Yes - I have made it work for me but the format unquestionably makes it easier for some and harder for others to participate. The radical transparency of the voting process has a rich history that I commend but is very different from the way most Americans are used to voting - it is fully transparent as we act as legislators. Do I think we need to update our practices - yes. Do I think there is value in public debate - yes. Do I do most of my research in advance and attend primarily to vote - yes. Does everyone? I don't think so!!
114. Meetings are too long and both sides of issues should get equal time



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115. 1. the survey appears to not work. The choice I selected says "comments (optional). You may use this space to explain your answer." But when I select this, it doesn't let me select an answer -- it's supplementary; not either/or. Beyond that, democracy is messy. Local democracy is verbose, full of busybodies and redundant grandstanding. But it may be the best system we've got.
116. Somewhat satisfied. I wish the meeting were more efficient, but I appreciate hearing the various viewpoints. It would be nice if people would listen to the speakers and, when someone makes the same point they got up to make, not feel the need to make the same point again.
117. I don't think attendance at Town Meeting should be a prerequisite to being able to vote on town issues. The time and boredom threshold discourage me and probably others.
118. It serves no purpose. It disenfranchises people who cannot attend.
119. No. Only controlling groups show up but single dissenters feel ostracized
120. It's too long; it should have AND KEEP a timeline for the agenda; it should assume folks KNOW the issues & vote on them with minimal presentations from boards ; residents comments should be SHORT; opposition groups should have as much time as the official proponents
121. Too many interruptions/delays by procedural issues - lack of decisive leadership by town moderator who seems very confused causing unnecessary delays.
122. Again, there needs to be another option for voting for those who cannot attend a multi hour town meeting.
123. Wish you could attend remotely to vote
124. Moderator needs to control debate/comments more effectively
125. It's just too long! Comments need to more strictly limited
126. I have been to 2 town meetings, 1 was good, comprehensible, clear , the other was horrible because of technology failures(or human err with technology).
127. Have not attended yet
128. Dissatisfied. Too many decisions packed into one long meeting, and not enough genuine debate/discussion
129. Moderator is terrible
130. Ballot only
131. I understand the reasoning and tradition behind how town meeting is done, but I can't say I'm satisfied when the way it's done makes it nearly impossible for us to both vote without hiring someone.
132. With the exception of the TM when a sizable minority was not allowed to make a presentation with slides.
133. I've attended town meeting in both Concord and Lincoln, one as an observer. Shocking difference in moderators. Lincoln can do better.



134. Town meeting usually feels like residents are rubber stamping articles that are already decided for us. Every step leading up to town meeting minimizes public opposition, so only the town approved view points have a chance of passing.
135. I felt that the length of the meeting is unnecessary. Using a more efficient voting method will be very helpful in this regard. Speakers are typically well informed and that's helpful. Comments from the floor range from helpful to not at all helpful and our time consuming but necessary. Where we can make the process more efficient, without losing the educational aspects of the process, should be explored.
136. Very dissatisfied. Town meeting is too long and exclusive. Too difficult for people with other obligations to attend. The process of calling a vote is too arbitrary.
137. TM increasingly has deterred civic engagement by opposing/alternative opinions
138. Given the proliferation of ways to learn about a topic before a vote, it seems wasteful for residents to need to sit through hours of discussion - when they have already made up their mind.
139. It could be more productive, informative, and inclusive
140. It is far too inefficient and more needs to be done to ensure that those with other responsibilities, children, work etc can participate
141. Dissatisfied: It is challenging for voters to give up multiple hours at one time and thus participation is not representative of the entire town.
142. The time allowed for comments is too long. Requiring people be present but not scheduling the vote at a particular time forces citizens to sit through the entire comment time, which is punishing for citizens who want to vote but have family to take care of, responsibilities or commitments during meeting times. The effect is disenfranchisement.
143. Hearing other voices than town committees is important, but hearing the same opinion over and over again is counter productive - both voices against and for a particular warrant. Someone the soap box needs to be limited
144. We would like to make it easier to vote
145. I would prefer a process that follows the pattern of the state elections with written for/against arguments and the ability to vote without a full day commitment.
146. Very dissatisfied in particular with processes and procedures at 2024 town meeting.



Q13. Do you think Town Meeting would benefit from any of the following changes? Choose all that apply.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Shorter time limits on presentations	44.82%	212
Brief “pro/con” summaries for each warrant article should be printed in the warrant	73.36%	347
Every significant issue should have some information about the pros and cons formally presented at Town Meeting. (For example, this could be accomplished by dissenting members of a board presenting an alternative view or by a group with a prepared presentation about an alternate viewpoint.)	53.91%	255
Short videos explaining warrant articles posted on the Town’s website and Lincoln TV	28.54%	135
Subsidized transportation to/from Town Meeting	13.95%	66
Well-publicized childcare	33.40%	158
Other (please specify)	27.48%	130
	Answered	473
	Skipped	93

Comments:

1. Pro and Con mics like other towns - will never happen in Lincoln. Don't trust 2 but I checked it. If the Town did the pro and con summaries it would undermine the con intentionally. No cons in Lincoln allowed.
2. Small image speaker included in corner of Big Screen
3. 1) after yesterday- there MUST be pro and con mikes at Town meeting. That would have prevented yesterday’s ridicule. It also would end the Lincoln practice of experience towness stacking the mics three deep with pro comments and then calling the question after one or two opposed comments, while many stand at the mics never having a chance to speak. Disgraceful. 2)Apology for what transpired on 6/25/2025 at the hands of the moderator with the support of town boards.
4. Alternatives should get equal representation, without all of the committees coming together to endorse their support ad nauseum
5. I don't think you have to change anything, except unlock more bathrooms so seniors on walkers and all participants have quicker access!!!
6. Town leadership should present just the facts without spend without selling without sugar coating. They don't do any of those things. It is gross.
7. town meeting is too archaic for a town this size.
8. An up-to-date hearing system for the hearing impaired. Consider us a handicapped. Then Perhaps you will take this seriously at ALL such locations in town. Bemis Hall is the worst.
9. Why were people allowed to campaign in the building? Did you tell the dissenting opinions they could campaign in the building too?



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10. I think that a brief pro/con summary would be great but difficult to do because someone will also think that the material was biased.
11. Voting on another day/ time than the meeting so it's more accessible to a wider variety of people who can't or won't sit through the awful display of what town meeting has become.
12. Pro and Con mics so there can be some balance of opinion from the audience. Also admonishment rather encouragement from the moderator not to boo people.
13. Private ballot voting or mail in vote options if you can't attend.
14. Get rid of presentations
15. I do think the childcare is well-publicized and we are lucky to have it. It would be helpful if there was some sort of a bell or alarm that sounded when a vote was being taken in case we've had to leave the auditorium/gym.
16. Cater to those with kids under 4 eg play area
17. Every town meeting that I've been too has been stacked. There's no effort from the moderator to let dissenting speakers have a chance - tonight's speakers were 90% yes. As the moderator you have the power to ask to hear an equal amount from the 'no' side. Every time it feels like a group has been formed to rush the mics to get an unpopular and contentious vote passed ahead of time. You're not giving it a fair chance. It's stacked.
18. I think you should just limit each meeting to one vote one topic. No more than 1.5 hrs. But hold 4 per year of necessary
19. Online elections (such as Election Runner format) open after town meeting debate is complete. We would have to register in advance and would get a link to cast a vote.
20. Voting online or not town meeting
21. Make it optional. Separate voting. Please let me vote in my town.
22. Separating the voting time
23. Absentee voting
24. Having childcare alone is not sufficient. Sometimes meetings go well past childrens' bedtimes which is extremely problematic and stressful for both the children and the parents (not to mention the covering caregivers).
25. Split the debate portion and vote portion to different dates.
26. Vote on different day, simpler voting formst
27. Better organization; clear procedures set out in advance; shorter time limits on comments; supplemental materials available in advance on town website
28. Provide zoom option to listen
29. Times that make it easier for parents to attend
30. I do not know how to access "Lincoln TV." I don't have cable. So, anything you put there should be available on the Town website.
31. If we are forced to vote at a town meeting rather than an election, we should at all times vote by clicker



32. All information should be posted online and there should be brief pro and con written summaries for people to read if they wish
33. A scheduled time to vote so people can actually have their vote recorded. I should not have to sit and listen to people go back and forth for hours.
34. Vote by ballot of a different day
35. Voting should be able to be conducted online
36. The town leadership (Selects, Planning Board, etc.) should focus more on building consensus and less on trying to get things done by "pushing" ahead. I understand they're all volunteers and work very hard. But they seem to feel that their goal is to reach a good decision and get that enacted. They act like management not statesmen. I believe conclusions could have been reached for the last 4 or five divisive issues that did a much better job of balancing interests and reaching compromises.
37. Times for each vote published ahead of time, so we can show up, vote, and leave. Or allowing us to vote before public debate.
38. A vote not tied to the meeting. For example a scheduled time to vote by ballot in a more advanced way vs hand raising.
39. Vote the day after the meeting
40. How about equal time and opportunity for both sides of an issues, especially if the issue has to do with zoning.
41. Zoom or remote option
42. Childcare is helpful, but if meetings are in the evening, this doesn't work for our family with young children. And children also have scheduled activities on the weekend, which then excludes us parents from being able to cast a vote.
43. separate voting!
44. There should be equal time limits for any pro and con opinions.
45. TM would benefit from efficiency outside of presentations: no delays for technical/sound issues, firm 2 min limit for comments, starting on time
46. Community building opportunities, fun & educational, in hallways
47. Private, accurate, faster vote with clickers
48. Have a specific time for voting.
49. Balanced presentations from both sides of all issues. Not treating private entities as public officials. Online voting ability to all people.
50. Clickers and also looking into remote participation which I know is a can of worms....
51. Not as long so people can attend and still manage the rest of their day
52. Break for lunch closer to lunch time instead of letting the morning session run into the afternoon.
53. Requirement of presenters to communicate how many committee meetings they have attended. I feel there is a large catch up element to town meeting because folks didn't engage properly.
54. alternative voting options other than only in person voting at TM
55. Don't waste our time with performances of school kids.



56. Do a survey to determine the best dates and times for greatest participation.
57. Have people vote the day following the meeting
58. Improved meeting management and greater neutrality by the moderator. I feel the Moderator unfairly and unevenly controls who / which groups is / are given a voice at the meetings.
59. remote voting
60. Strict time limits for people's comments at the mic
61. Better moderation
62. Especially shorten presentations on issues with narrow impact. Sometimes niche decisions have 20+ min presentations
63. Use zoom and online or proxy or email voting for this who cannot be physically there which is such an archaic construct
64. I think Town Meeting should have presentations there with the people who are voting. Don't count on people reading props and cons. Also, I don't trust the Town Boards to write their own pros and cons. They are not honest for the most part.
65. "Dissenting views" (maybe better characterized as "other views") should be given equal time or at least sufficient/substantial time after long exposition of the view of the powers that be
66. There should be equal time allowed for presentations. If someone chooses a shorter time so be it.
67. better voting procedures
68. When the presentations are too short there are too many questions and much of the (unprepared, largely because they are lazy) audience is confused. There is a sweet spot on a presentation on any topic, but in general the time needs to be adequate to properly explain the issue, and presenters need to be as succinct is possible within those limits.
69. Let people vote by ballot over a few days!
70. Clickers to streamline in-person voting.
71. Absentee voting!!
72. As I mentioned previously, move the info presentations to a different day than the vote.
73. Above, a short video could be helpful IF they include summaries of pros and cons
74. in absentia voting similar to government elections
75. More efficient moderation - the process often seems indecisive and unpredictable.
76. Voting electronically on line. OR no votes at Town meeting and issues settled at the poles.
77. Divide into two parts, probably two different days: (1) presentation and debate day, and (2) voting day. If I've already made up my mind, I don't want to sit 8 hours to wait to vote.
78. People should read about issues beforehand then we all just vote.



79. allowing organized groups that disagree with official positions to make a presentation
80. Videorecording of session for those to view (assuming vote is on a separate day). Allows more access and flexibility for residents to digest the information they need to be informed, e.g., be able to view sections multiple times, pause to integrate other viewpoints, digest new information
81. We should be able to vote on line or with absentee ballots
82. i think the explanations of the issues should be done ahead of time, and voting only at town meeting
83. VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE AND VOTING. I am surprised this is not an offered option on the list. We no longer live in the societal structure of the 1700s when the in-person process was established. We need to make use of today's technology to enable all taxpayers to vote on town matters.
84. Childcare for under 4?
85. All votes in the last hour of the day at a scheduled time. Debate and amending before then.
86. When residents get up to speak, perhaps having a pro and con line and then taking turns so there are equal presenters of information for both sides of the arguments. At least when we run out of time, the same number from each opinion has an opportunity to speak
87. All issues should include a "none of the above" option unless the town has voted at an earlier time to go forward with a particular project. The vote should not allowed to be called if people are standing at the mics waiting to speak. Meetings should not go beyond 8 pm (nor start before 8 am). The vote should be considered not by those who remained at the meeting and voted, but by the largest total of eligible voters having attended the meeting. A vote is not representative if at the middle of a meeting 500 people were in attendance, but by the time the vote was called, only 100 people remained. I would then consider that a majority of voters was not present at the vote and therefore the vote, by definition, did not represent a majority of people in attendance at the meeting but only at the end of the meeting. Perhaps all voting should follow on the Tuesday after the meeting and no votes be made at the meeting.
88. Greater respect for and execution of democratic process rather than leaders and moderator tipping the scale which I have witnessed repeatedly. Accountability from leaders and elected leaders.
89. Childcare needs to actually cover the age range of kids and the whole time that the meeting lasts. Normally it's only older kids and not for the full-time. So parents end up missing the vote, which is the whole reason most attend.
90. Find a way that the entire town can vote. The Town Meeting makes the process feel rigged by insiders.
91. If dissenting views are aired, they should be aired by the dissenter, and NOT presented and characterized by a representative of a proponent group. Slanting the playing field is wrong.



92. I have found the pro/con stuff pretty good already. I wish there were a mechanism to discourage redundant speechifying. Even a simple reminder like "please don't step to the mic if somebody has already said it."
93. It would be enormously helpful if it was acknowledged that town meeting was designed and implemented so long ago - at a time when it suited wealthy, land-owning men ONLY - that it is no longer functional or fair in today's modern world. Also, it is time for a new moderator who is representative of the more modern times we live in.
94. Stop with comments! The forum is for questions not cheerleading!
95. Reliable vote count methodology.
96. Really, it comes down to people wanting to make this work and putting in their own effort - not the people making it happen working harder.
97. It needs to be shorter. It's ridiculous
98. attendance not required to vote
99. Allow dissenting viewpoints time to present on equal footing.
100. the comments from the voters are often lengthy and repetitive, and the same people get up over and over, this is the biggest time suck in the whole process.
101. Child care expensive. Need at home option.
102. Strict times on the agenda
103. All of the above are wonderful suggestions but also, I would add Effective Leadership during Town Meeting
104. Designated time when voting occurs so I can vote and leave.
105. Shorter comment periods
106. Online participation
107. Accommodate people with disabilities
108. Remote voting
109. Ability to attend and vote virtually
110. A
111. All parties should give their information /opinions no matter how long it takes - 2 days if necessary...so that all oral arguments get heard before votes are taken..
112. Zoom possibility plus vote by mail
113. An electronic discussion place explicitly for discussion BEFORE town meeting. Not LincolnTalk. Something for the purpose.
114. Allowing opposition. an opportunity to provide print outs and ten minutes to present their views with access to meeting screen
115. Journalism
116. Childcare for children under 4, some kind of hybrid/remote participation, or separate debate and voting.
117. Implement voting clickers for all votes ASAP.
118. Completely separate debates, which should happen in-person, and voting, which is separate. If amendments are made, then voters rank the versions they most prefer.



119. Free childcare for the entirety of town meeting, shuttle that goes throughout town and the parking lot to make it more accessible for those who do not drive or are unable to walk long distances, no more one sided FAQs on the town website that use fear mongering and biased statements to scare residents, dissenting views given equal access to town resources such as the website, an alternative to LincolnTalk and the Squirrel that isn't biased and doesn't moderate residents
120. Pre-town meeting moderated/mediated discussions.
121. more detailed Fin Comm presentations and discussion of long range financial plans
122. SHORTER OR VIDEO PARTICIPATION
123. Split the voting day away from the debating day - would help increase voter participation
124. A rule requiring 1 hr in the stocks plus \$100 donation to Pierce House for each instance a person says that SOTTs and Town Meetings dont represent the true will of the people. Those who show up ARE the legislature expressing the will of the people.
125. Remote option or fixed voting time
126. Ability to vote remotely or by proxy
127. Shorter meetings.
128. Yes, to all!
129. I want to vote on the issues without attending town meeting. I should be able to review a brief summary of the issue and then vote. Voting should take less than 20 min.
130. Clicker votes have now been tried. We need more fair processes and procedures to allow the fair treatment of all viewpoints.



Q14. Would you prefer that Town Meeting votes were conducted:

Answer Choices		Responses
During the Town Meeting after each warrant article is discussed (current format)	36.53%	175
At a scheduled time on the same day as the Town Meeting	14.61%	70
At a scheduled time on a different day than the Town Meeting	35.07%	168
Other (please specify)	13.78%	66
	Answered	479
	Skipped	87

Comments:

1. A system that will allow secure remote voting as well as in person voting. There is way too small of a percentage of the electorate making huge decisions.
2. Equal time time for pro and con. Then do a ballot at another time. Only those at town meeting can vote creates bias.
3. People shouldn't be penalized from voting if they cannot attend
4. Votes should be through absentee ballots or at a polling place.
5. A scheduled time with private ballot
6. Online elections (such as Election Runner format) open after town meeting debate is complete (open for 24 hours). We would have to register in advance and would get a link to cast a vote.
7. Clickers or online during a longer window
8. Virtual and/or early option
9. Conduct like all regular state and federal elections. A day of vitibg with early and absentee voting options.
10. voting open in town hall for a couple of days after the town meeting via paper ballot or computer so you don't have to be physically present at town meeting to vote
11. Virtually and separate say
12. At a scheduled time along with early and mail-in voting.
13. Either similar to state elections or online and separate from the town meeting itself to accommodate each citizen's personal schedules
14. Always good to make this as accessible as possible, both at the meeting and also next day online with mandatory watching of videos with details and pros/cons of articles for those who couldn't attend?
15. Online or early voting at Town Hall/by mail
16. Please make the vote digital and at a set time.
17. Allowing absentee voting
18. Same day, but allow early voting



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19. Being able to cast a ballot would be ideal. It allows for anyone who wants to vote to be able to at a time that works for them. This is most democratic. Otherwise, a scheduled time on a different day than the Town Meeting.
20. Votes should be done by ballot so that people who cannot attend in person due to the myriad of reasons that exist, aren't disenfranchised. For example, I know numerous people who have had longstanding travel plans for late June and will be away for the STM. It feels as if the Selects chose this date specifically to get a low turnout.
21. It would be great to figure out a way for people to be able to vote electronically, at their convenience. This would be the most democratic approach.
22. All attendees should be able to vote after the meeting from home. Those in attendance have their names taken down so they could be checked when voting.
23. Online at a specific time so that not only the rich can vote
24. definitely not by show of hands. Send ballot in mail for Lincoln residents only to vote.
25. I think the key here is at a scheduled time so that people know when they have to show up to do their voting. If they want to learn more, they can spend the day and do so. And it's up to them if they want to do the learning and take the time before the vote and day of the town meeting versus if they want to just do it all during the town meeting. So again, the key is schedule the vote. So that it is efficient. And then information has to be disseminated in multiple ways. As people consume information and understand things in diverse ways.
26. Multiple voting days at scheduled times
27. at a ballot box like regular national elections at the school
28. vote by paper ballot on alternative day/week
29. Via private ballot conducted in the same manner as elections for public office are conducted.
30. Electronically!
31. I think a scheduled vote is an interesting idea. I'd like to talk to towns that do it this way and hear about how it works.
32. Needs to be done through an online forum sent to the cellor email on record post mtg - several low cost platforms exist
33. During the Town Meeting after each warrant article is discussed - with Clickers and including alternative view presentations.
34. have not previously considered vote at a time other than at the conclusion of discussion, but it seems like perhaps a good idea, even a short chance to consider the pros and cons presented at the meeting before voting
35. I don't know
36. Like a presidential election- provide early voting opportunities!
37. Virtually
38. in absentia voting similar to government elections



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39. By electronic voting outside Town meeting by each registered voter.
40. I would voting to take place at the polomg booths on a different day after Town Meeting. I'm not surprised you didn't list that as a possible preference.
41. At more than one scheduled time so that more citizens would be able to vote. Perhaps day of voting AND voting at Town Hall a few other times. Or voting my mail in addition to voting in person.
42. Needs to have it on a different day for a period of time-that way people could watch a video of town meeting and then have a chance to vote when they are able
43. Ballot, or if not possible, at both town meeting and another time to give all residents the opportunity to vite
44. with a remote option
45. Most of these issues should be voted on in the normal voting process.
46. Not sure the best resolution and the current practice is not supporting democracy or offering a fair process. Recent proceedings have caused me to leave feeling unease and disbelief at how the process was managed.
47. By secret ballot
48. Voting should be by ballot or other means that allows the entire town to vote.
49. Option for voting outside of Town Meeting would be ideal. There are many topics I'm following and interested in, but can't make the meeting. The next best is the scheduled time on different day than TM.
50. we obviously don't want to disincentivize attendance, as back-and-forth is crucial to democracy. I would like to suggest remote voting, AFTER (not before) the meeting, as a possibility. With video of debate uploaded, and available for a week.
51. Non on site, in person voting. Just like ballots for local and federal elections.
52. Should be able to vote without sitting thru the meeting. Most already know how they're going to vote.
53. Particularly significant items should be voted on at a specific time.
54. This is difficult, I think if the accommodations in question 13 are in place, then there are few reasons for someone not to attend town meeting, as it would be shorter, more efficient, there would be transportation and childcare, and people should come to the meeting fairly well informed. IF all of that were in place, then I would still prefer the current format. Having people run in just to vote on an issue they have not heard any debate about seems less than ideal.
55. don't know
56. Information and discussion done at town meeting, video is fine, written fine, but no public vote. Ballot vote
57. At a predictable scheduled time
58. I think for major votes at a later time so everyone has the ability to vote
59. Ballot only



- 60. The same way we cast all other ballots: At another date via in-person and mail-in ballots. Use Ranked Choice Voting to rank all the possible outcomes for each issue.
- 61. Substantially more residents show up to vote on ballot articles than do at town meeting. This is because it's easier to schedule 10 minutes in a 12 hour window to vote (plus early and absentee voting). We should encourage residents to be well informed- but trust them to do so by offering ballot voting on town meeting articles
- 62. ideally, the pro and con videos would be posted well in advance of the meeting to be able to watch, then have a shortened version for discussion at the Town Meeting
- 63. Electronically or by mail
- 64. I'm torn, in theory a scheduled time would ease participation, but it also promotes people's information bubble
- 65. Consistent with regular voting with option for voting at town hall over several day period.
- 66. Doesn't matter - want to inform myself by reading something and then voting.

Q15. At the 2025 Annual Town Meeting, the Town approved the use of clickers (automatic polling devices). How would you like to see them used?

Answer Choices		Responses
All votes	72.65%	356
Some votes	22.45%	110
No votes	4.90%	24
	Answered	490
	Skipped	76

Q16. Which types of votes should use clickers? Choose all that apply.

Answer Choices		Responses
Never	0.00%	0
For controversial or contentious issues	47.71%	52
For matters requiring a specific minimum vote (e.g., two-thirds or simple majority) such as zoning or motions to call the question/end debate	52.29%	57
When a voice vote is unclear	74.31%	81
As determined by the moderator	35.78%	39
Unsure	12.84%	14
	Answered	109
	Skipped	457



Q17. What do you think is the value of using clickers? Choose all that apply.

Answer Choices		Responses
Efficiency	87.50%	399
Anonymity	64.04%	292
Precision	63.60%	290
Other (please specify)	8.55%	39
	Answered	456
	Skipped	110

Comments:

1. We need independent security checks on system software. All systems can be hacked.
2. I do miss seeing folks stand up to show their vote, but you can't beat the efficiency of the clickers
3. Are they really accurate? We were asked about 4 questions without any warning or explanation. Guarantee some clicked the wrong answer because it was confusing
4. I don't know the clickers
5. Clickers are valuable as listed above only as long as they are functioning and all votes are accurately registered.
6. regarding anonymity, nobody has the right to see how I vote. Currently I am forced to stand up to be counted.
7. unsure
8. none
9. Accuracy NOT precision.
10. Major views should be a ballot
11. Fairness and making sure all votes are counted.
12. Needs to be some way to verify your vote has been counted - some feedback from the clicker to the individual
13. Respecting the voters instead of bullying them with social pressures and intimidation
14. Anonymity is most important
15. it's better than show of hands to eliminate non Lincoln residents, provided clickers are handed out to residents only
16. Anonymity would eliminate the pressure some voters feel from neighbors and local organizations
17. X
18. Speed
19. Fairness and truth
20. all three, efficiency, anonymity and precision
21. Eliminating any chance of bias on "close calls" made by the Town Moderator.
22. Should be an app. All this should be virtual



23. Please use this technology to preserve and enrich democracy.
24. Peace of mind that no shaming or retaliation will happen from neighbors who disagree
25. Avoid peer presdure
26. Fairness - it is UNFAIR to have to wait so long to have people manually (or maybe "woman-ually) counted and to have to have votes NOT be private. Every year several people tell me that they did not vote the way they wanted to because they felt shame or embarrassment to do so. This is a REAL problem and it is enormously UNFAIR>
27. Avoid public pressure and shaming
28. Accuracy
29. I appreciate for some folks, they provide anonymity. Personally, I prefer the voice vote. I stand by my informed decisions.
30. N/a
31. Not a fan
32. A little concerned votes can be manipulated electronically
33. speed and honesty
34. Access
35. I think anonymity is a disadvantage. One should not be afraid to stand up & be counted.
36. speed of voting! I am not sure of the impact of anonymity, but it is interesting to see who stands up to vote in favor and those are often cues for others
37. I'm not sure how clickers function. I think presence should not be required to vote.
38. Don't know
39. I don't know

Q18. What do you think is the most convenient time to hold Town Meeting?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Weeknights	22.61%	104
Saturday	50.43%	232
Sunday	13.91%	64
Other (please specify)	13.04%	60
	Answered	460
	Skipped	106

Comments:

1. Does it matter? The Moderator says get out of here quick and encourages booing if even someone new to Town, not familiar with the rules. Does not come to their defense. Select Board and moderator laughing.
2. Weeknights, with vote separate



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3. If the Moderator is going to say lets get out of here quick and encourage newcomers to be booted it doesn't really matter when you have it - you'll get just the people you want to attend, the people that vote with the Town and RLF.
4. Weeknights but not during popular vacation times. The most recent special meeting was held between end of school and start of camp - a popular time for families to take vacation
5. The problem with the weeknight is people called the question without giving time for pro and con points of view. The moderator said they were finishing in one night. Everyone wanted it over with, which on the one hand makes sense since the powers that be decided it all ahead anyway.
6. Get rid of town meetings for Christ sake
7. With childcare provided. The elderly crowd has their buses- we need childcare, which LEAP graciously offers.
8. Mix between the options on a rotation so everyone presence happens overtime
9. Perhaps broken in to two shorter/ time limited meetings. eg Saturday or Sunday afternoon (perhaps alternating) and a weekday evening (
10. Virtual, weeknight, 1-hr limit, 8-9 PM
11. N/A
12. Saturday or Sunday
13. virtually and without binding votes
14. I am open to evening town meetings
15. Voting should not occur during town meetings but should occur during the following three days after the town meeting
16. Weeknights but you'd need to meet on multiple nights in order to have enough time.
17. Who knows- each day has pros/cons
18. Any day is fine, but votes should be handled like all other voting.
19. Late evening after 7pm
20. All of these are hard for parents of younger children. Ideally we could vote in the same way as a standard election
21. During the day
22. There is no convenient time. Schedule it far in advance and stick to it.
23. There isn't one. If voting must happen in person, people will be excluded no matter what. Hold the meeting for information purposes and public comment whenever, record it and make it available a week prior to ballot voting.
24. Any time when those who are home-bound could vote without being in attendance
25. Never
26. A remote option would be beneficial
27. don't need one
28. I don't know
29. Find a time when parents of school age kids can both attend; or give one parent two clickers for proxy voting.



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30. Weeknights virtually
31. Frankly it's never convenient. Maybe it would be better to change it year to year so the same folks don't always get shut out (though I know this would totally stink to organize)
32. Voting needs to be virtual and clickers for those present
33. Don't have a preference. If I can make it I will try to attend.
34. One never knows what days may be convenient given everyone's changing schedules, and that's another reason why absentee voting is key
35. Weeknights, if there is a time limit. Late could be hard for elderly, working people, and those with young children.
36. online on a weekend
37. Depends on length of meeting. Would welcome any non-working hours for discussion and debate with a separate day and set time to vote that maximizes resident accessibility, e.g., transportation options, childcare availability
38. Doesn't matter. Just need to have it videotaped or summarized for people who can't make it so they can vote as well.
39. Whatever day/time is chosen, virtual attendance and remote voting must become an option.
40. All times will be inconvenient for some folks. I'm retired so flexible. Poll folks who work, have kids, etc.
41. who knows
42. Overflow time can be on a week night if needed
43. Either weekend day
44. I don't know. I try to arrange my schedule around it but I don't think you can serve everybody if they don't make a priority of it.
45. There is likely no time that will be convenient for all. Saturdays select a certain crowd that leaves many out.
46. Within limited time frames: Weeknights only between 6-8pm; Saturdays between 9am-1pm and Sundays 2-5pm.
47. With time limits
48. allow voting after the meeting
49. What are we doing About access for people who cannot attend in person? Their votes are equally important
50. I repeat but citizens should be able to vote promptly and not held hostage by the extreme amount of time required to attend.
51. It doesn't matter if voting is separate
52. Need an option for voting for those who are unable to attend the meeting.
53. Each option has pluses and minuses
54. Virtually
55. There is no convenient time, but Saturday mornings are okay.
56. It is not about when; it is about having sufficient notice. The imminent special meeting is a great example of "not enough time".
57. Remote



58. Or Never. What a waste of time. Put out a deposition paper for each article Pro and Con and just let us vote.
59. Never.
60. Depends on how long they run.

(See Section 4 for Respondent Characteristics)

Q25. Do you have other comments you want to say to the committee?

1. The Moderator should post an apology on the town website and say that what happened at yesterday's Town meeting was deplorable. Apologies for allowing booing and cheering and let people know that will be done differently in the future. How cruel that meeting was to that new person, new to Town. Pretty cruel to a bunch of people actually. Its like a sport for the RLF, Town Boards - hope you had a good time.
2. More thought about tie-in from the Gym in needed
3. Town Meeting needs to change. It feels very broken when only one side gets enough time to present, all of the boards, committees, and RLF rush in to support the one side, and opposing views are marginalized, biased against, and left with little time to mount a response to begin with. Lincoln deserves better.
4. "---- is an outstanding moderator that keeps the agenda moving and manages the public comments with great skill. She is very impressive! I am very happy that, in a country where citizens have little control over decisions made in Washington, Lincoln still maintains the Town Meeting form of resident participation in our government."
5. Thank You! Lincoln is a wonderful Town to Live In ! Keep Affordable Housing Affordable!!!
6. A a small minority of the electorate show up to tell meeting. Roughly 15% in yesterday's STM. That is not the way democracy should work. He establishment bands and their impossible to overcome it's critical that a secure method of remote voting is allowed to get a true accounting. The town meetings are beyond the moderators ability to perform appropriately.
7. "A perfect hearing system exists - don't you think it time to address this issue town-wide?"
8. Everyone seems to what everyone to agree and support the leadership. In business we want diversity of opinion an debate. It makes us more successful. Smart people don't come as a result.
9. Last nights Special Town Meeting was excellent. Very well done. I think having the two minute limit on public comments is excellent, and having the clock on the big screen helps drive that home.



10. Our town "leadership" gives the appearance of running a dictatorship, seeming to want zero discussion. This appearance has grown worse, and town "leadership" is destroying the social fabric of our town.
11. The current meeting format disproportionality serves the older population of Lincoln. For families its often only possible for one parent to attend. It is a huge commitment to spend an entire Saturday at town meeting for members of the community who are not retired. Meetings can be streamed remotely but you cannot participate in the vote remotely. I would participate in more meetings if I had the option to watch the meeting remotely and vote onsite (or by mail) at a specific time.
12. The moderator needs to be replaced with someone with a stronger voice and set clear rules at the beginning of the meeting.
13. Keep up the great work. I think that Town Meeting has improved. The clickers are a big step forward. I know that our town's type of Democracy allows everyone an opportunity to speak up. But boy is that painful. I'd like to call the question NOW. I really don't see a way around the problem of every crazy idea being voiced. It's the nature of the beast. The two minute time limit must be enforced. It's a huge help.
14. "I thank the work this committee has done already, by allowing dissenting voices at town meeting to have the floor, and clickers allowing anonymous voting (speaking of which, no one should be allowed to leave the auditorium or gym without returning their clicker. Last night RLF supporters left their clicker with other residents and left the meeting. This was able to happen because the box to return clickers mid meeting was only at the entrance of the building, and residents could easily leave through other doors or without returning a clicker. This isn't a reason to stop using them- they are a massive improvement over standing to vote. But ensuring that residents return them on their way out of the voting room would solve this issue.) These two changes are a huge improvement.

But it seems that this town meeting process may be too far gone to have enough meaningful changes to make it equitable and open. The 2 minute time limit is ridiculous when presenters are given a 15 minute time limit and almost double that.

The committees who agree with the article should just have their statements on a piece of paper or QR code. It doesn't make sense to waste 20-30 more minutes of peoples times hearing these statements that have already been said in their meetings and on LT/Squirrel/Town website. It just makes the meeting longer. Residents voices are the least important part of this town, and the two minute limit only reinforces that view. Additionally, the race to the mic to speak so the "pros" don't allow the dissenting voices a chance to be heard before the vote is called is not only undemocratic, it also makes it so those who are older and walk slower, or have disabilities have less of a chance of being heard. There should be a pro mic, a dissenting mic, and a neutral/undecided mic- this would give a



wide variety of view points, not just the same speech 20 different ways that pile on to the committee that ALWAYS endorse and the 20-30 minute presentation that is ALWAYS one sided.

I truly am so upset by the way this town handles town meeting that I likely will never return, and am considering moving to a town that is run better with more open view points (and lower taxes!)"

15. Last night's STM was a big improvement over last year's TM; the clickers were excellent, the 2-minute timer a huge advancement, and the moderator more respectful of differing views than she has been in the past. I do think the moderator needs to refresh her knowledge of rules, though.
16. I appreciate the work of the Town Meeting Study Committee. You are trying to make progress. There is a machine behind the scenes that is stronger than what happens at Town Meeting. For the Town to be democratic, it may rely on Town Meeting to be more setup for pro and con sides to share at Town Meeting so that the behind the scenes culture is more honest and open. You need to somehow stop the booing and encourage acceptance of different viewpoints and not perfect people.
17. Town meetings have led to decisions about the city which are not in the best interests its citizens. The voting process is undemocratic and always serves the The limited few that work in town, government and connected developers, such as the RLF. We're well into the 21st-century. It's time to eliminate the town meeting process, which might have made sense 200 years ago, but is completely outdated now.
18. let all speakers speak from front of hall
19. Please don't change the format of Town Meeting.
20. I think town meeting can be held for sharing information and debating, but I Strongly feel there should be a set time for Voting and anonymous voting. This is a broken system at the moment with age gaps, available schedules and peer pressure
21. You are self important. Let the people vote as is convenient for them.
22. Our moderator is awful. We need a better solution than Lincoln talk.
23. I think that the clickers worked well this evening.
24. The council on aging should be ashamed of themselves, as well as the group running the meeting. I figure that about 60-70% of the people there are shipped in. If kids could attend, the vote tonight would have been 'no'. I can almost guarantee that. It was so rude of you to cut the mic on that woman who got up as a first timer. She was obviously nervous. Give her a little slack. The fact that people cheered when you cut off the mic is beyond troubling. I heard very little on the 'no' side of things. I ended up voting 'no' because if you didn't know that Trump is high on tariffs, you're not paying attention. He was the same in his first term. This was mismanagement, not some new thing that popped up. The older guy who said that people could give up their \$1000 gym membership is so out of touch with what families have to navigate weekly in



- this economy. \$1000 covers groceries for my family of four for just under a month. My 'gym' is picking up after my kids daily. He's probably going back to the senior living center and will be fed a nice breakfast tomorrow while I ditch frozen pancakes out of my freezer for my kids. Those people don't represent anything for me except a huge nuisance. If I saw them at all the other town events we go to, I'd feel differently. Stop busing in people who don't represent the full community. You're stacking the vote and its obvious.
25. I know you all are trying to include everyone which is great! but I think those with kids under 4 (and so can't do childcare with leap) are literally the only ones who have no easy way to attend :(I'm happy to chat if you'd like, text me at (510)384-0285
 26. Maximize transparency and efficiency. They should not be mutually exclusive.
 27. Find ways to experiment with some of your ideas in lower stakes ways ... Mini meetings or small votes. Don't be afraid to try something new and unconventional! We need change but it has to preserve the charm and community of town meeting. People say these things shouldn't be quaint they should be efficient. Really imo they should be about bringing people together as much as they are about making decisions
 28. "Private parties like RLF shilling for Civico should not be permitted to speak from the podium.
 29. Dissenting opinions should have the same amount of time to present from the podium."
 30. Thank you for the thought being put into changes to Town Meeting that may be warranted.
 31. The meeting are WAY to long and tedious. If ideas/plans have been adequately prepped and broadly socialized, the votes should be after only a brief pro and con speaker or summary. The length of the meetings is a significant deterrent to participation. I have also been openly critiqued for voting to "call the question". That is very inappropriate and off putting. They thought the elongated debate was wonderful - I did not.
 32. No.
 33. A 3 hour meeting on a weeknight is really difficult to make and will result in a much smaller representation of Lincoln being able to vote on important issues.
 34. There is a great need for increased transparency and civility in the discussions of town meeting issues. It is also very important that the barriers to participation in voting be eliminated so that all residents have an opportunity for their voice/vote to be counted.
 35. It's very difficult for families with children under 4 to have both parents participate and vote.
 36. Thanks for serving on the committee. It helps to have a transparent process and to be open to change. I am sure newcomers can find it tiresome to hear often about "the Lincoln way."
 37. Thank you for doing this survey!!



38. "Minutes of all board meetings should be available to the public so that information from these meetings can be reviewed and understood, especially if the meeting could not be attended in real time.
39. Our Town Meetings can be more efficient when ALL information is available BEFORE the meeting for careful consideration by the voters without the disruption of new information pertinent to voting of the day being presented AT the Town Meeting.
40. Towns people not associated with the "inner circle" of board members are often dismissed and true consideration is not given to questions/comments raised. Selection of new board members should be open to all interested parties, not hand-picked by active board members. A resistance to new "unkown" people with pertinent skill and knowledge is apparent and unfortunate. "
41. There needs to be a more diverse representation of viewpoints on town committees; diverse viewpoints need to be encouraged. There seems to be a cliquy group that decides important matters for Lincoln.
42. Thanks for tackling this issue.
43. Please make the voting accessible. Separate from town meeting. I'm sure there are state requirements you must stay within, but if you legally have to keep town meeting and voting together, then have a meeting time, optional meeting attendance, and a voting time so people can just show up and vote, half hour total commitment, you know when it starts and ends. But seriously, there must be a way we can lawfully have an absentee or early vote option? Please fix this. So many peers are in my position. I really wish I could vote. Thank you for this survey.
44. All votes should be ballot box, not at the town meeting
45. I'd like to participate politically in the town but the format right now is a big barrier
46. Please please please listen to the complaints here - especially if we are to make this town a diverse and welcoming place, we must make voting more accessible. Saying that you can only have your vote counted if you can afford to spend an entire day holed up in an auditorium is discriminatory towards parents, caretakers, people with jobs, and those who must travel for work, to name a few.
47. The current format is antiquated. Debates and critical thinking should be given the time needed, but also recorded, transcribed and summarized for those who can't make them. The vote should happen at a later date (a few date options actually), quickly and efficiently.
48. Town is often run by people who have time because it's mostly volunteer nature, and those people often do not reflect the majority of townspeople
49. Thanks for all of your hard work!
50. One of the things that makes the meeting take so long is public commentary that doesn't change enough peoples' minds to affect the vote. Use the clickers



- to take a "straw poll" of those whose minds are already set (with an option for "not sure / want more debate"); if a required majority to pass or fail a measure are already "locked in" then just proceed to the question and save time for issues where discussion or debate can actually influence the outcome.
51. I think we need to keep residents informed about the details of the issues in an easy to access location, so we can review in advance of the meeting. When there are dissenting opinions (and various groups emerge with alternative ideas), we should also have a way to hear those viewpoints. I know that you don't run Lincoln Talk, which is problematic for many of us who just don't want to try to parse through its funky presentation -- part sales and part "where's my cat." Then, after wading through all that, the comments on issues are disjointed and do not follow a logical thread. So I would say it is counterproductive. It all takes time - to review and analyze, so the more pro and con information we can get in advance of the meeting -- FROM official sources, or concerned citizens -- in an accessible way, the better. Thank you.
 52. The way current voting is done it eliminates a large population of the tax payers solely due to having to be present. Having children who will be directly effected by what is being voted on yet the parents can't go because they have to take care of those children is a really big problem.
 53. We must fix the voting issues. We cannot have factions stuffing the auditorium, such as will happen on June 25, 2025 when 95% of the town cannot attend. Town elections without a certain percentage of registered voters should be invalid.
 54. Please make it easier for people to vote, not harder. The current format is very undemocratic because it suppresses voter turn-out. Few people have the luxury to spend an entire day waiting to cast their vote. Minimally, the votes should be scheduled.
 55. It is a tough job to run town meeting. I a not sure how I would approach the possibility of more individuals doing it, or for a shorter term or what....maybe something to discuss or ruminate on. And I think with so many of the people there I might want to include something small that unites everyone... a poem or short piece by a member of the community? anything...that acknowledges the together aspect of the job...anyway. Thank you.
 56. Abolish the discriminatory practice of binding votes at town hall meetings.
 57. "Maximize participatory democracy.
 58. Do NOT encourage one issue voting and/or voting without hearing the deliberation"
 59. Town meeting is an outdated way to conduct the process. It was begun when only white, male, wealthy landowners could vote. Haven't we evolved past this? Since MA law requires town meeting, we could at least let people vote privately at a different time so that town meeting attendance is optional and so that voting is conducted in a way that allows for everyone to participate.
 60. Thank you



61. I believe that the worst thing to happen to this town and its functions is Lincoln Talk. I do not subscribe because it allows a too easy avenue for people to vent and argue. I do think that the Lincoln Squirrel is a valuable resource. In regards to videos, I do not want to be subjected or influenced by slick videos and presentations on either side of an issue. The warrant can list the pros and cons.
62. The town moderator is terrible. While she's improved over the years, she's makes frequent mistakes and has to be corrected by town counsel or others or she consults them and doesn't understand (or at least can't clearly present to the audience) what the official/legal requirement are, etc. And more importantly, she frequently states in a confusing/inaccurate manner what vote or question is about to be decided. She is unable to clearly articulate the issue. The audience has to ask for clarification or other people on the stage have to speak up with re-statements. She drives me crazy. Also, I don't know what her powers are but whoever is running these meetings needs to do a better job of giving the different positions equal time. And who is running the meeting needs to enforce that balancing. A lot of the problem of unsatisfying, divisive decisions really has to be solved BEFORE town meeting but to the extent that different positions exist, they should be better presented. At the 2 meetings where the state-mandated housing issue was discussed/decided, it was shameful the way the opposing positions were shut up. I couldn't believe that the two Planning Board representatives who had opposing views were NOT allowed to read their letter; that the RLF changed their offer AT THE MEETING; that the opposing views were NOT given podium time; etc. All done in the name of needing to get things resolved because a LOT of time had been spent working/discussing this. It is no doubt frustrating and exhausting to all involved in getting to a Selects/Planning Board conclusion. But that doesn't mean that there isn't merit in better incorporating the opposing position in the final conclusion. Almost half the votes were in opposition. The result could hardly be called a compromise or a balanced, nuanced blending of ideas from both sides. Thank you for your efforts to improve things. Good Luck!
63. The current format makes it almost impossible for working parents to participate meaningfully. We just can't sit through long meetings/ sometimes full day meetings because our children's needs and our work lives are not that flexible. Most single parent or two parent working households struggle to just get informed and make it to a polling place. To have to leave before a vote even takes place on an issue I care about is maddening, to say the least.
64. I haven't been in this town long, but it seems to be governed by a 'clique' of people. I think they are all well intentioned, but at times do not seem to realize that their opinions and goals are not those of many in Lincoln. I also think they tend to be relatively privileged in that they have the time to devote to town governance and therefore don't see the very real obstacles many of us face in participating, even when we want to and attend every town meeting as I have since moving to lincoln.



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65. "It's hard to believe that in 2025, some of our town's most important decisions are still being made using a system that feels more at home in the 18th century—when the only way to cast a ballot was by showing up in person and being the loudest voice in the meetinghouse. While that method may have served its purpose centuries ago, it doesn't reflect the needs, realities, or values of our community today.
66. Many residents have work, caregiving responsibilities, health limitations, or simply cannot rearrange their schedules around a single in-person vote. Major decisions that impact the future of our town should be made in a way that allows for broader participation—through early voting, absentee ballots, or remote participation.
67. If the current system can't be changed locally, then we should urge the state legislature to update the law so we can bring our civic process into the 21st century. Democracy works best when it's accessible to everyone—not just the few who can make it to the meetinghouse at the appointed hour."
68. Almost every parent I know complains about town meeting and the inability to attend and vote. Yes, there is free childcare, but with kids sports, activities or planned events I've never been able to attend a town meeting for the entire time. It can take hours to get to a vote which makes it so you have to be there all day to cast your vote. Again, next to impossible with kids schedules. Why can't we have town meeting be presentations and debate and then all votes on a specific voting day like voting for state measures and elected officials? Every time I mention this to someone else I get told about Lincoln tradition and feel alienated and like only people who can spare an entire day deserve the right to vote.
69. Thank you for this survey and trying to increase access to the town topics so more members of the community can participate.
70. "Votes should move to ballot.
71. Limit town meetings to 2 hours max with summarized positions in advance.
72. Town should not bias voters like they did with the Housing Choice Act (very clearly pro). "
73. It's too hard to come for the whole day to vote - if presentations were on one day and were live-streamed or recorded and the vote was later, that would be great. There are always schedule conflicts because of kid schedules.
74. I don't believe town meeting should change. Some people are unhappy with certain outcomes so they blame process including town meeting format
75. Make town meetings efficient by summarizing issues in full beforehand with presentations limited to one for each side. Absentee ballots for sure. Unable to attend in person or length of meeting should not penalize someone for not voting in person
76. Please update the Town meetings to take advantage of the internet age of communication
77. "Why ask demographic questions?"



78. Allow early/absentee voting. "
79. I admitted early in this survey that I have attended a scant number of town meetings even though we have lived here for 15+ years and part of that is because we worked on Saturdays. The other part is that, as I also mentioned, I never felt welcome as a renter who lives in an apartment. Most of my interactions with town officials have been interactions I never want to repeat. I attended several planning board meetings and felt that my presence was annoying to the members and they really did not want to hear from residents who had a concern or differing opinion. That being said, it would be great to find a way to involve more residents who don't own homes but live in the town. There is always a problem with communication when it comes to abutters, especially renters. When it comes to most communication about town matters the delivery method needs to be considered, for example, how do new residents even know about this survey if they don't know about the Lincoln Squirrel or the top secret Lincoln Talk. How about a flyer with QR code at Donelans or the post office. Also, why don't some of the people who have been doing the same job for eons start to look for their replacement and share the vast skills and knowledge they possess? Lastly, one of the questions asked if I had children under 18 which is important, but what about the families who have been here for years and the kids attended school here. My child went to preschool, elementary, and middle school here and then went to LSRHS. There should have been a question including them, because those families matter and show a commitment to our town, a town we love.
80. Thanks for all your hard work. Maybe consider some deliberative democracy approaches?
81. As mentioned before, only being able to vote at a town meeting excludes a lot of people who would otherwise vote. This is first and foremost. And having to sit through the debates and discussions for hours on end before getting to vote makes it impossible for so many. The process as it is takes too much time, which many people don't have to give, even if they find the topics important and would otherwise vote.
82. Thank you
83. I have opinions on the upcoming town meeting items (Panetta land and community center), but I think I heard on LincolnTalk that the last town meeting was extremely long, so I will not be attending/voting. I would be more likely to vote if it didn't mean spending the whole day in a packed auditorium.
84. The committee is not diversified.
85. "Thank you all for doing the work to form this survey!"
86. The introduction preceding the survey is a forbidding block of type. It would encourage readers to engage if it were broken into shorter paragraphs."
87. thank you



88. Is it possible to use absentee ballots for major votes to allow ALL voters to have a say not just those who might have conflicts. To my knowledge there was no provision made to assist seniors who can't/don't drive at night.
89. Thank you for your work!
90. Thanks for your work.
91. Thank you for your work. This is necessary, important work. I'm sick at heart for the toxic divisions caused by broken trust and unskillful town leadership. It is hard to hear flat out lies at committee meetings—specifically from our moderator, who seems incapable of running a meeting and expresses bias in favor of her priorities and affiliations constantly—there is a sense of entitlement that is nauseating. She is unreliable in her role. Beyond that, Selects, in particular -----, lied through omission or simply outright during the HCA process. She misused the Special Town Meeting to manipulate the message and the public in order to push her personal agenda. It was a win at all costs approach—scorched earth. I see much of what happens in town as a classic “pissing contest” among despots and cronies. I feel that more than selling and defending issues, they are promoting themselves and their egos. If they really cared about the town and the culture of the town, they would be more welcoming of collaboration and compromise. To see the same tactics used by the Trump administration on full display here locally is sickening—disinformation, “truthiness”, special treatment for cronies and family, purposely crafting division in town and demonizing anyone with a different perspective. Also, I'm disgusted by the pandering to people's sense of privileged white guilt by borrowing social Justice themes (that have little to actually do with the practical issues at hand) to virtue signal to each other and other towns—meanwhile marginalizing people who live in the most economically diverse parts of town (Lincoln Station and near Rt 2 for example). It's like a cult mentality. And for all the lip service that Lincoln gives to valuing education, it seems like emotion and attachment are throwing objectivity and critical thinking skills out the window on local issues. Its hard to unsee what has been revealed in the past two years in Lincoln. I've always been a congenial, generous, outgoing person in town—but there are now people here I simply will not speak to. People like ----- who in a Select meeting leading up to last years town meeting, in response to a petition with 330 signatures requesting podium time for an alternative view point, said “No—and I don't think these people should be allowed time at the public mic either—we already know what they think.” and to which ----- added, “yah—and who are these people anyway?” That sums up the problems pretty well. As the old phrase goes, “the fish rots from the head down” and it is town leadership that has fostered this toxic culture through the misuse of town meeting and meetings (idiot button “listening sessions”) leading up to it.
92. Deep respect for the time, talent, and patience of those who serve on Town committees.



93. The meetings are too long and onerous to working families
94. We have rarely been able to make it to Town Meeting, despite having lived here for 25 years. This relates to real scheduling conflicts. It's not a matter of prioritization. We find the voting process to be disenfranchising, because we are so rarely able to make a vote, and would love to see some sort of electronic or other ballot process implemented that permits people more flexibility on when to vote.
95. "I do not support changes that would grant equal presentation time, podium access, warrant space, or official materials to those opposed to a motion at Town Meeting. The purpose of Town Meeting is to deliberate on motions as proposed by their sponsors. It is both reasonable and appropriate that the formal presentation time and supporting materials reflect the intentions of those bringing the motion forward.
96. Opposing views already have a meaningful place in the process through public comment and floor debate, and that balance ensures transparency without compromising the clarity or coherence of the proposal itself.
97. Giving formal warrant space or equal presentation rights to opposition risks confusing the purpose of the meeting and diluting the responsibility of motion sponsors to clearly present their ideas for a vote."
98. Lots of folks don't like town meetings, they think it's antiquated. People choose to live in Lincoln because we want a place where we're preserving historic New England values, and I strongly believe it's ok to not change that. If you're the sort of person who gets annoyed when you're stuck behind a school bus or hay wagon then you're probably the same sort of person who is annoyed at a slow town meeting and maybe there are other towns better suited to your life choices.
99. Thanks
100. wish that all voices were heard and boars like RLF didn't have soooooo much influence
101. I think some accommodations should be made for residents who cannot attend the meeting in person - perhaps via Zoom
102. The country is in enough of a mess right now. Please be part of the solution instead of the problem. Private is private. Public is public. All voices should be heard. All residents should be able to vote even if they can't afford to be there in person for many hours.
103. Preserving town meetings and more open discourse is more important now than ever before.
104. Please eliminate show of hands to vote to regain trust in the system. Allow counter arguments with same amount of time allocation to have fair debate. Put time limit and schedule for each issue to make town meetings efficient and time sensitive. Have mail in ballots sent to Lincoln residents the town taxpayers ONLY.



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105. The level of personal identifying information requested made me uncomfortable. Making all of those questions optional would have been better.
106. Consider eliminating town meeting altogether and moving to the system, used by the state for ballot questions.
107. I worry about residents who don't get their way, hijacking the Town Meeting process. I think the Select Board has done a very good job in recent hearing all and not letting the loud but in the minority folks take over! Important that residents are aware of the laws, regulations, and human decencies that affect Town government!
108. Absentee voting. Or voting in person independent of the meeting (like a normal election). I have a 2 year old (and 5 and 8), she will not sit through hours of meetings, Leap does not watch 2 year olds, therefore I do not go to town meetings and my vote is not counted. Easy fix: meeting Saturday, vote following Tuesday.
109. Separating discussion from the vote is a terrible idea - I'd rather go to a representative town meeting than pursue this idea.
110. "You'll never please everyone, but thank you for taking the survey. In fact, I wouldn't even worry about the majority vote in the survey. Instead I would challenge you to focus on gleaning from the survey results... And comments...how to make the most voices heard and how to include the most people...as the goals. When you review the survey results and you should ask the survey consultant to help identify what is needed to make more people participate and find out why. Is it fiscal responsibility? Is it to
- 111.
112. Be social, is it to keep and maintain Lincoln The way it is, is it because they're one topic people... Are they just supporting friends.."
113. If you could separate the presentations from the voting, one could watch the presentations online from home and then come in for an hour for the voting. That would be much more convenient for most. Even better if the voting could be online, but I understand that is not legal at present.
114. Thanks for the survey. Good idea.
115. Nobody should have to go to a meeting on a Sat to vote and have to leave 4 hours later and not get a chance to vote. Don't like standing for a vote - should be personal and done at a ballot box at the school. Most of us are smart enough to know how we want to vote with little explanation of each side.
116. "There is no substitution for this form of government to make it palatable for everyone - the timing will not align for some group of people each time. Democracy is not easy and requires patience and engagement throughout the year.
117. I find Lincoln talk to be toxic at this point and this is beyond your committee's mandate but its impact on our community is harmful and is overly demanding of committees. Not sure why anyone would want to run for office in this environment.



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118. I believe that to be more inclusive in the present day we need to allow for votes outside of town meeting (paper ballots similar to general elections).
119. I love Town Meeting, mostly just as it is. But Saturdays are tough for families because of activities. If votes were scheduled for a specific time, towards the end of the day on a Sunday, ie the end of the weekend, that might help.
120. Good luck. Study committees have been tried before to little or no change...
121. Speakers from the audience must be allowed to show slides within their allotted time for speaking. This is a serious free speech issue. The moderator is violating the Mass Constitution.
122. Glad you are doing this :-)
123. When the town voted on low and middle income housing, there was a surprise, supposedly compromise proposal which swayed the vote, but which no one knew about beforehand. There were speakers who were clearly plants from one side of the argument. We were bamboozled! It was a disgrace really.
124. Thanks for your effort.
125. In the past, we are not able to hear the person on the stage that is in charge. And the projected maps and things on the stage are not clear.
126. Please fix the system so more people vote without having to waste a whole day in a town meeting
127. "The the three actions that I feel would have the greatest impact at town meeting are:
128. 1. Adopt electronic clickers for all voting (for greater efficiency, accuracy and anonymity
129. 2. Ensure that the interests of all residents are fairly represented. Not just those of the Select and Planning boards.
130. 3. Improve the moderator's ability to manage the meeting and their neutrality"
131. Glad these questions are being asked. The old way is outdated and ineffective. We have too many modern tools/methods/resources at our disposal to make all this work better. Let's modernize!
132. Along with changes to the Town Meeting format serving Democracy, the town tax payers NEEDS leadership transparency.
133. I did serve for 10 years on two town committees and was very involved in town government. Residents can't expect to be spoon fed the issues - they need to do their work throughout the year.
134. Don't make changes just for the sake of change
135. Hoping you're consulting with experts/ professionals that specialize in user experience design. Ideo, for example, is industry leading in private sector for employing thoughtful techniques to make experiences and information work properly.
136. Please make sure the article 3&4 of 6/25 special town meeting is voted on 6/25
137. Incremental changes are good. People want to change TM because they disagree with the results, but that is not the right motivation. "Convenience" and



- direct democracy shouldn't be considered common goals. Better moderation will really help TM!!
138. Thanks for your work on this!
139. Presentations and rebuttals should be efficient and to the point.
140. "We should reform all
141. Our governance to reflect the reality that we live in a tech driven world - these processes were designed decades ago. We need younger enlightened blood with fresh thinking in all town leadership especially the con com which is one of the most arduous and quite frankly biased"
142. Yes. These have been voiced in conversations with ----- and -----.
143. Town meeting is biased toward older residents. It is difficult for families to get one adult to the meeting. Getting both parents is almost impossible.
144. Thank you so much for your work. You are the most trusted committee in Lincoln at this time. Thank you.
145. Town meeting debate is useful and interesting, but sometimes goes too long. Knowing when certain topics are going to be up for vote will allow residents with other commitments (eg for young parents, pickup and dropoff of children for their activities) to come to vote on topics of interest to them.
146. I hope you will open up discussion to views of those other than powers that be (I don't mean to disparage the powers that be by using this term, I go into a discussion respecting their point of view.)
147. Thank you for your time! One of these days I will get back to volunteering.
148. No.
149. Thank you for the survey and I am in favor of many of the changes proposed! To modernize and for equity reasons.
150. We need to be careful with dissenting views presentations. Town presentations are vetted for accuracy by town staff and (as applicable) town counsel. Giving equal footing to unvetted statements makes no sense and is a disservice to the town. People not familiar with the process for town meeting prep within the town boards and committees will not and have no way to understand the immense gap in preparation and accuracy between a town presentation and a dissenters presentation,
151. One of the point of standing vote is, I think, a public show of your vote. That is the way it has always been and should continue. If voice vote is not clear then clickers.
152. The town must preserve our town meeting form of government. To make it successful it should be open and run in an even handed way, respecting different perspectives. Making it more efficient can reduce some of the drudgery (use of clickers).
153. Thank you for considering voting by ballot- much more democratic than the current archaic system.
154. Thank you for doing this work! I'm also very happy that you are doing a test to allow a representative from a dissenting viewpoint present at the upcoming



- Special Town Meeting. I think this is an important first step to healing the fractures in our town that occurred in 2023.
155. They discussion at town meeting. I have an influenceds my vote. I would hate to see that stop.
156. Very happy to be able to participate in this important form of democracy. Thank you!
157. "The first ay the rezoning issue was handled at last meeting was atrocious. Not allowing respected citizens like eph flint to speak was shocking. Overall, it felt like 'the fix was in' and that has left me completely disenchanting with our whole town meeting process
158. Additionally, my mother in law also a lincoln resident is elderly and bot comfortable sitting through long hours of meetings. So that leaves her entirely unable to vote on issues of concern to her. Isn't that voting discrimination based on age??! We need to make some changes in our town process!"
159. I hope we continue to have town meetings. It is a good example for the most part of a democratic process and allows all to participate.
160. I really dislike the ceremonial thanks at the beginning of the meetings (fence counter?). Move it to an hour before the meeting (like the Oscars) or at the end of the meeting. It's a complete waste of time for people who don't have the time.
161. Kudos to the town employees and volunteers.
162. Thank you for trying to make town meeting efficient.
163. Thank you very much for serving on the TMSC! Your time, thoughtful consideration, and outreach to improve the Town Meeting process are very much appreciated! There are many factors that get in the way of attendance, so having TM split up into more than one day (one weeknight and a Saturday, for example) might enable more townspeople to attend.
164. "Please determine ways for voters to cast votes that will represent the Lincoln community more broadly and inclusively, including though not limited to:
165. * Use of the clickers to cast votes in every instance
166. * Town Moderator allowing both Pro and Con voices to present at the front of the meeting, in similar timeframes
167. * The ability for attendees in the Reed Gym to vote
168. * Designated/set times for TM votes on specific articles
169. * Every TM has available childcare services/support
170. * Every TM has available to/from transportation/shuttles"
171. Please make town elections more accessible for voting in absentia. Not everyone has the luxury of time or physical ability to attend in person
172. This town has been disenfranchising voters by making them wait hours to vote, and also by having the standing vote. People can't wait hours to vote, and many don't vote because they don't want their vote to be known. Voting should be on a different day, and clickers should be used for ALL votes.
173. Develop a way for those on zoom to vote.



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174. town meeting is an outmoded, outdated way to do things and in this day and age a form of voter suppression. We seem to be stuck with it due to MA law, but we can at least let folks cast private votes separate from the meeting. Also time for a new moderator
175. Really appreciate the work the committee is performing. I feel confident whatever this group decides will push democracy in the right direction. Kudos!
176. Thank you!
177. No
178. There should be term limits for the moderator. She needs to retire.
179. I understand the benefits of open discussion and encourage that, but as to not disenfranchise voters who cannot stay an indefinite amount of time to the vote, I think moving to equal presentations for each side of an issue with each group having the same resources e.g. slides, time, along with a single voting time at the end of the meeting would encourage more participation. Other open talk forums could be held ahead of time for those who want to participate in talking through issues in an unstructured way.
180. i wish there would be a section in the auditorium for people who wear masks to all sit together.
181. I am very surprised and disappointed that virtual attendance and remote voting do not appear to be under any consideration here. The future of Lincoln are young families, yet the current process all but assures at most 1/2 participation of households with young children. This is fundamentally discriminatory disenfranchisement. We have the technology; please let us use it for the good of the town.
182. I hope the results of this survey are taken seriously and interpreted honestly.
183. Please hold an election for a new moderator like other towns
184. The moderator should be more neutral and know all of the rules and technology. She is clearly a nice woman, and it's awesome that she has been willing to take this role for so long, however, something needs to change.
185. In general I do not support people who are against a motion getting to make a formal presentation. They need to get organized before hand and use the microphone like everyone else.
186. Thank you to the TMSC. I am following the "con" presentation debate closely and worry we are following a "both sidesism" path that has led us to our current fascistic state. Not every "con" side is legit or valid. I also worry about truth and accuracy and "citing studies" or the like is not necessarily the path to truthfulness. There are lots of awful, misleading, biased studies out there. You can find one that basically says anything (vaccines = autism, for example).
187. Thank you for reevaluating the town meeting process. I sincerely want the process and level of respect for residents to improve. I have been ashamed and disgusted to have experienced some of the clearly biased antics at recent town meetings. I am currently searching for alternate communities for relocation.



188. From my personal perspective, this town appears to ram through whatever it wants with such subterfuges as having town commissions and boards "support" the things that somebody, not sure who, wants passed. The town appears to do as much as it possibly can to force an outcome. Town meeting in this town is the most undemocratic process I have ever experienced.
189. The decision makers in the town represent a closed shop. Once a committee makes up its mind it appears as if no feedback is wanted. And, please stop spending money at the rate it is being spent. Lincoln from the time I started living here in 1973, has become a town of the uber wealthy and let the less affluent be dammed by the wants of this group
190. Special town meetings during summer vacation months should be prohibited.
191. I would like to see a new unbiased Town Moderator. I was quite disappointed in the last Town meeting. Also, ALL town residents should have the chance to cast a vote regardless of attending TM.
192. It is time to have balanced, efficient meetings with limits on presentations from both pro and con sides. The moderator also needs to be forceful on time limits for comments which are sometimes off topic and eccentric.
193. Thank you for this important work!
194. I understand that MA law requires town meeting. But this does NOT mean it is a good or fair way to do things. It also does not mean that it is "the purest form of democracy" as many argue. It is a process that was implemented for wealthy, able-bodied MALE landowners, and these factors make town meeting unfair and biased. It is also not fair to force voters to have to listen to interminable comments that do nothing to enlighten or inform. Also, I do not understand why we have to have the same moderator year after year. I hope that even if we cannot disband town meeting, we can at least find a way for more people to actually VOTE and to do so PRIVATELY. Thank you.
195. Even on this survey, the questions about serving on committees is problematic, since it's assumed only the old guard's opinions matter. People with young children find it difficult to go to all day meetings, only to hear the 'party line' repeatedly. This is not democracy, it's theatre to appear like direct democracy.
196. We need a moderator who understands the power of that position and who will recuse him or herself on issues affecting their family. And who treats all residents fairly.
197. I appreciate the town taking the time to listen to concerns and to make this process easier. It's sad to see how little participation there is for such important issues and I think Town Meeting voting could account for a lot of that.
198. I say this as a liberal white dude in a marriage with an ESG professional brown-skinned woman, raising a mixed child. But when it comes to race and gender, I "prefer not to say," because it's not relevant here. Or, rather, it is. But so is SES, and a million other factors.
199. Please do something to improve and encourage engagement and participation. The town is very divided and needs some means to bring it



- together, not pull it further apart. With the right updates (technology, flexibility, transparency), maybe town meeting can help with that. Thanks for trying to do something.
200. I am unhappy with the way the Town is spending money/taxes but don't feel that sitting in a multi-hour debate will make any changes. I follow town concerns on other platforms and it's already exhausting. ultimately, I feel our only alternative is to move out of Lincoln, which is the situation with many seniors.
201. The Town Meeting is not suitable for today's families. Voting must take place separately.
202. I feel strongly that the current system disenfranchises working people and those with young families. The vote time must be scheduled at a given time and ideally, anonymous. Debate should be allowed but limited as it adds little value, but opposing views should be allowed an equal say and pros/cons should be included in the pamphlet (as Mass does on ballot initiatives).
203. I serve on many volunteer committees in Lincoln - none official Town Comms - but so appreciate the hard work and time others give to the Town. I so appreciate trying to make everyone happy but honestly roll my eyes at townspeople who are new to this or just love to complain and feel Town Meeting is just 'thrown together' - There's history here - democracy and inclusion for folks willing to put the effort into the whole tradition. And it's a great thing! Thank you again!
204. I appreciate and respect the work you do. You can't make everyone happy, and probably never will. It does seem that accessibility is the number one complaint we hear (child care, day/time, work, etc). But again, there is no way to serve everyone. Thanks for your service.
205. I would like to move to the exclusive use of clickers. It was very odd that they were not used in place of counting individual votes. That defeats the purpose of having them, in my opinion.
206. one last time: Please may I vote without attending the entire meeting and having to rely on friends to call me in when the vote is imminent, its absurd.
207. There's considerable groupthink and moral pressure in town to support warrant articles that are not completely vetted, with committees endorsing warrant articles that don't match their missions. There is also an us vs. them mentality, that matches national politics. I'm deeply disappointed in Lincoln.
208. Opposing/conflicting proposals and views should have equal presentations, not a "sanctioned" one and an "opposition" one.
209. You've studied this enough: get the clickers & put time limits on discussion; voting should be separate. Town Meeting in the current format is EXCRUCIATINGLY boring
210. I love the concept of Town Meeting. I would like to see several zoom presentations about highly controversial issues, each of which focuses on a



- particular side of the issue. I also think there needs to be a way to include more seniors and others who want/need transportation.
211. Please do not alter Town Meeting from its current form.
212. Thank you for your diligent work on this issue. There is no right answer but you are asking the right questions.
213. It will be a long time before forget how Michelle Barnes, Chair of Trustees of LLCT, stole a march on us the citizens, with that clever and dishonorable maneuver. Not worth it. Sows distrust and disillusionment with the democratic process.
214. Make tm more accessible
215. Lincoln is a very small insular community. It seems dedicated to to self preservation.
216. Town Meeting is usually just too long. I love the presentations by the committees but whenever there is a controversial vote, people just comment on and on. And the great majority of us already made our mind up and are not going to be swayed. Can we have a separate debate night the day before the vote for those that find that helpful?
217. Sometimes louder voices are heard more, so opportunity for written communication and voices less likely to speak up should be considered.
218. Keep meetings as short as possible
219. Thank you for your time to explore and report back on this issue.
220. Be more open to allowing people to speak.
221. Town meeting is incredible inaccessible and difficult to attend for those of us with small children. It really caters to a select group and does not allow for diversity of input. It would be better if it could be attended virtually and voting were more accessible
222. "It is very frustrating when presentations change the nature of the warrant (like what happened with the Zoning vote at the last meeting - a last minute switch to the details about the Mall was made at town meeting). When things change on-the-spot in terms of information, there is not enough time to deeply consider the implications of the new information, gather additional thoughts, etc. I felt very frustrated after the zoning vote. Additionally, by cramming the community center vote into the same meeting as the zoning vote, I felt that the community center issue did not get fair attention. Many people had already left, the room was fatigued, and the question was called while there were still so many people at the microphone who had not had a chance to speak (myself included). The town is bitterly divided over these issues, and a major part of the reason (I think) is that the town meeting is not meeting the needs of true deliberative debate. LincolnTalks should be able to supplement the debate, but it is often so toxic (and it sometimes gets [understandably] shut down as a result). And so - we are left without a forum for whole-town discussion leading up to Town meeting.



223. I wish we spread out controversial issues over multiple meetings - no more than ONE controversial issue PER meeting. I'm okay with having more meetings to accommodate that. And/or, I think we should separate the vote from the discussion. If town meeting was simply to enable informed debate and discussion, and then the vote happened the next day, people could at least think about what they had learned at town meeting and making a more rational, carefully-deliberated decision. Our meeting format makes us prone to rushed, emotional decisions... not a great situation.
224. Finally, I wish we would enable Zoom participation. The upcoming meeting is happening at a time when many people are on vacation or away (it's after school ends, and before camp begins). Even while on vacation, I'm sure many people would Zoom in to listen, debate, and vote. The short-notice for the meeting, and the in-person requirement essentially makes me feel disenfranchised. In order to come and vote, I have to cancel my vacation. I am going to do that, because the issues at hand matter to me. But honestly, that's not okay. I am going to hurt our hard-won family time and lose deposit money (already paid, non-refundable) in order to attend town meeting. And I'm not sure it's worth it - does my vote even matter? I was recently told by a very prominent town figure that all of the important discussion happens in small community meetings BEFORE the town meeting, and by the time we get to town meeting, it's essentially too late. I'm rescheduling our family vacation because we believe in democracy - especially now - but this entire situation is very, very frustrating. We have Zoom tools - why aren't we using them?
225. Thank you for the opportunity to share these thoughts, and for conducting this survey. I appreciate the work that went into it, and I appreciate the space to share my frustration and (hopefully constructive) ideas. Thank you!"
226. Its great to have committees like yours, but it doesn't solve the problem of most of the town officials doing what they want to do behind people's backs, and therefore keeping us uninformed, covering up details, and mis-representing what we are supposed to vote on. This town could have clear, above-board policies about our town.... but our town leadership has instead turned over its once clear vision... of a bucolic town that is a joy to live in...to developers, greed, hand-offs, secret alliances, and one-sided town meetings where the opposition barely gets to speak. And thats where we are today.
227. By in large I have been happy with town meeting. The school outcomes were troubling for years. It was a poor decision to pass on the money. I feel the last vote and process re The mall zoning was poor. It felt like an agenda was being forced.
228. I am completely dismayed at town politics.
229. "Think more broadly than the moment of town meeting. The real issue is what happens leading into town meeting. We need a way to receive information and digest alternative ideas, fairly and with time to discuss and ""sleep on it"". There



- is not enough space in one session to educate / deliberate / decide. That's not how people think.
230. e very strict about enforcing time limits on speakers
231. I don't believe you will listen to me so I am not bothering to complete this
232. I appreciate that you are evaluating how town meeting is conducted, I'm hoping changes can be made that maximize participation and consideration of different viewpoints
233. Your efforts are much needed and also appreciated. Thank you!
234. Thanks!
235. "Please separate the discussion and the voting. That is the most important change. Discussion should happen in-person, and residents can propose as many amendments as they want.
236. Then allow residents to rank the possible versions of a warrant using RCV, and allow voting both in-person and by mail. We need to find ways to get voter turnout from 10-15% to 50-75%. Voting by mail will help!"
237. We should be able to vote on who should sit on the various committees rather than have them appointed by the Lincoln politburo. We should also be able to throw out incompetents like the FinCom person who paid \$4 million to Hanscom schools that we did not owe and has done NOTHING to get that money back. You people think that everyone in Lincoln is wealthy. We are not. Please stop being profligate with our money. I dare you to publish these comments.
238. "I appreciate the work your committee is doing to make town meeting represent multiple view points and be more equitable to all residents.
239. My biggest concern is the direction the town website is taking by posting long biased FAQs on articles in an attempt to get them passed easily.
240. Additionally it would be a great step forward if ALL towns and boards recorded and held their meetings hybrid, especially fincom. This would allow all residents to participate more easily throughout the year and will let them become informed year round, not just the few weeks leading up to town meeting. "
241. Former concom member.
242. Overall, I like the way Town Meeting works....and the continuation of the historical process. But I would like to see more formal opportunities for differing opinions on major issues to be presented....such as the state does in its election publications.
243. I think that Lincoln needs to think about how to adapt to the future, nit just in Town Meeting, but in management and administration. The next few years will see very expensive cost increases due to state and federal programs having funding issues. Lincoln needs to get smarter about a number of issues and analyze information to a greater degree. The town needs a careful review of costs and all budgets.
244. I think you do a wonderful job, contributing, endless amounts of time and effort that is not always valued as it should be.



245. Please allow alternative voices to be heard. Please ensure town website is factual and unbiased. Right now it is very biased.
246. This is a very important committee, I think the outcomes, particularly the ability to separate the processes: Attend Town Meeting vs. Vote on Town Meeting Issue are essential to making our town more equitable.
247. the TMSC is doing important inquiries into the TM process and welcomes all the input it can get. Voters need to do much more information gathering long before TM. We need to understand TM is a legislative process with committees, debate, differences of perspectives - and then a final vote. The actual TM is not the place for a major informative debate on a complex issue. Hours and months of work happen ahead of time. Voters need to be involved early on.
248. I hope that the committee requests to expand charge to look at all aspects of good government-appointment process especially
249. Online participation would be very helpful.
250. I think the ambiguity around the actual time votes are taken make for a wholly inefficient system, that disenfranchise people who cannot afford to take a whole day out in order to vote. Whether that be for reasons of job security, illness, family situation or other reasons. In this day and age of information - I would hope that the residents of the town are not wholly relying on a presentation on the day of the town meeting to make their decision.
251. Dissenting views have the opportunity to present their position during debate. Using the podium for anything but dissenting board members does not seem to be in line with the spirit of town meeting.
252. Thanks for conducting the survey. IMO, the biggest issue is the last moment counter proposal after months or years of consensus building. Number two issue is people referring to The Lincoln Way, which has led to poor decisions with big economic impact on taxes over the last 20 years.
253. She had been wonderful and was just reelected but we need a new moderator. For efficiency's sake.
254. I appreciate the spirit of town meeting (viewing presentations, hearing comments) but the reality is that it is hard to spend the entire day, and then usually only one parent can go. I appreciate the recent childcare accommodations and think this will make it easier to attend in the future. I would welcome the opportunity to sign more support letters, or even have a public place to post a blurb about why I hold a position. LincolnTalk can get a little feisty. A message board/bulletin would be better for this purpose. Maybe open a digital board where people can post their comments for/against, and then give a summary of comments in the pro/con presentation? I would feel heard and hear other residents, and it might reduce the number of resident speakers at town meeting because they also hear/are heard.
255. Thank you for considering making changes! Firm cutoff of comment time by moderators would be great, so we stop hearing repeat comments



256. Thank you for taking the time to help make our town meeting more fair, efficient and effective!!!
257. Free or at least more plentiful food town meeting. Free coffee in the morning. These would be relatively minor expenses and could hope to encourage participation.
258. Town meeting skews towards people with a lot of time in their hands. It can be woefully inefficient due to outdated practices. I've seen the moderator and town officials repeatedly confused about what the rules are and what exactly is being voted in. Frankly I'd like to see a new moderator. I've heard select board members saying that the requires people to attend to vote is important because the town meeting is our legislature and be insensitive to the real practical obstacles that prevent parents, military members and working class residents who need to work from attending. This is inequitable and needs to be addressed by doing everything possible to help people be able to participate and have a vote.
259. As a small community, I believe we should get a many citizens to vote as possible. Currently, I feel like only a minority of people vote and thus decide all the issues for the rest of us. Making town meetings and votes more efficient and structured would help increase citizen participation.
260. Use town website better to inform on warrants, more hybrid meetings, have votes separate from meetings to allow for more participation
261. None
262. online voting
263. I believe town meeting excludes many from having a voice. Voting should be available to all town residents at town hall over several days to increase access.
264. Thank you for your very considered approach to this topic and all topics. I appreciate your commitment to providing many varied opportunities for many residents to participate in town direction
265. A few conversations I have had with town residents makes me think that there is growing dissatisfaction over the town meeting process. In addition, concerns have been expressed about "small group agendas". I am unsure what the real issues are.
266. Attendance at Town Meetings is alarmingly low. Even the widely debated school building proposal drew only 18% of voters, around 900 out of 5000. The key issue, in my view, is identifying effective strategies to boost turnout.
267. People balancing work and kids do not have time for time meeting. We need to be able to get informed on issues and vote quickly. You are losing the votes of this cohort by having this long town meeting process.
268. Thank you!
269. Why can't we schedule the votes. I can arrange my kids' activities around the voting times if I knew what time the vote would occur.



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270. "Town Meeting has become un-representative in that only residents with the time and means to spend all day at the meeting are able to vote on important issues. This is not 1725, 1825, or 1925. It is 2025 and time to change how Town Meeting operates.
271. There should be one day of informing the public when interested parties can make their case and debate, which should be published online for review live or later viewing, and another day for voting. Ideally, voting could be done throughout the day as we do on the 2nd Tuesday in November."
272. Attendees need to understand action options if meeting or moderator decisions perceived as unfair.

