

State of the Town Meeting

December 7, 2024

Town Meeting Study Committee Breakout Session Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction
- TMSC Charge & Timeline
- Town Meeting Participation
- Public Outreach Approach
- Feedback Received to Date
- Participant Feedback
- Wrap-up and Thank You

Town Meeting Study Committee Members

- Ariane Liazos
- Jennifer Morris-Gundy
- Kenny Mitchell
- Taylor Ortiz
- Andrew Pang
- Ben Shiller
- Andy Wang
- Sarah Cannon Holden – Town Moderator
- Jim Hutchinson – Select Board Representative
- Tim Higgins – Town Administrator, Ex-officio Member

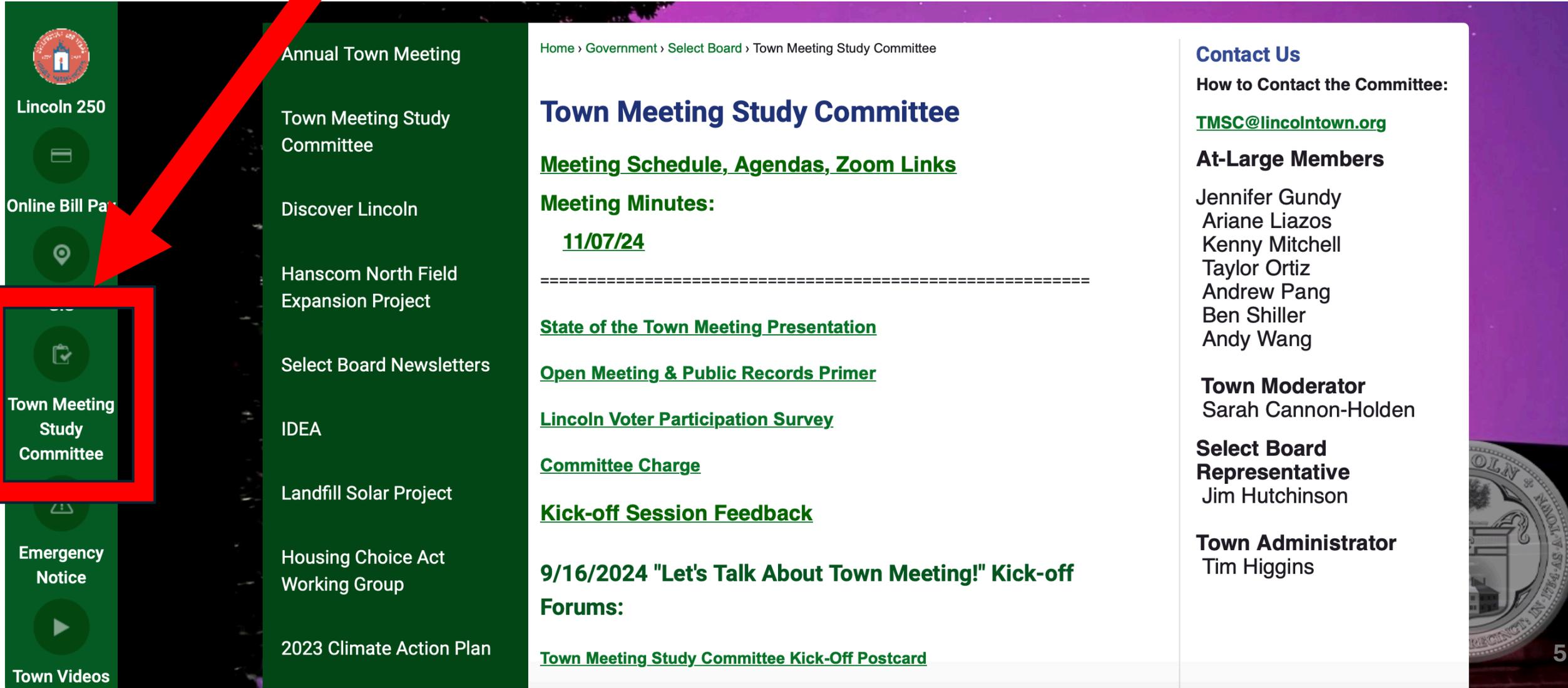
TMSC Charge & Timeline

- Conduct a thorough study of current Town Meeting processes and procedures, including those leading up to Town Meeting
- Educate residents on how the system currently works
- Learn from the experience and best practices of other communities and municipal experts
- Review Lincoln voter participation data versus neighboring towns
- Seek Town resident input, including a Town-wide survey
- Determine what's working well and identify recommendations
- Prepare a report for the Select Board and Moderator
 - Interim report: March 29, 2025
 - Final report: October 2025
 - Report to residents: November/December 2025 at SOTT meeting

Our Challenges

- Obtaining resident participation/feedback in public forums and survey
- Stay within the boundaries of our charge
- Constraints of current State law
- Navigating conflicting input from residents

Where to find the latest information? Town Website!



Lincoln 250

Online Bill Pay

Town Meeting Study Committee

Emergency Notice

Town Videos

Annual Town Meeting

Town Meeting Study Committee

Discover Lincoln

Hanscom North Field Expansion Project

Select Board Newsletters

IDEA

Landfill Solar Project

Housing Choice Act Working Group

2023 Climate Action Plan

Home > Government > Select Board > Town Meeting Study Committee

Town Meeting Study Committee

[Meeting Schedule, Agendas, Zoom Links](#)

Meeting Minutes:

[11/07/24](#)

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[State of the Town Meeting Presentation](#)

[Open Meeting & Public Records Primer](#)

[Lincoln Voter Participation Survey](#)

[Committee Charge](#)

[Kick-off Session Feedback](#)

9/16/2024 "Let's Talk About Town Meeting!" Kick-off Forums:

[Town Meeting Study Committee Kick-Off Postcard](#)

Contact Us

How to Contact the Committee:

TMSC@lincolntown.org

At-Large Members

Jennifer Gundy
Ariane Liazos
Kenny Mitchell
Taylor Ortiz
Andrew Pang
Ben Shiller
Andy Wang

Town Moderator

Sarah Cannon-Holden

Select Board Representative

Jim Hutchinson

Town Administrator

Tim Higgins



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Q: Where do I find the latest information?

A: Town Website!

How to contact us?
TMSC@lincolntown.org

Library of Materials:

- [*Town of Lincoln's Town Meeting Bylaw*](#)
- [*Town Moderator's Primer*](#)
- [*Lincoln Comprehensive Plan 2009 - Governance Chapter*](#)
- [*Moderator's Association: Working Group Report*](#)
- [*Moderator's Association: Best Practices*](#)
- [*Moderator's Association: Information Guides*](#)

- **Studies from Other Towns**
 - [*Andover*](#)
 - [*Wayland*](#)
 - [*Weston*](#)
 - [*Acton-Area League of Women Voters Study*](#)

- **Related Select Board Newsletters**
 - [*October 21, 2024*](#)
 - [*June 3, 2024*](#)
 - [*March 4, 2024*](#)
 - [*January 8, 2024*](#)
 - [*September 1, 2023*](#)

Updated 11/25/24

Clicker Voting Instructions

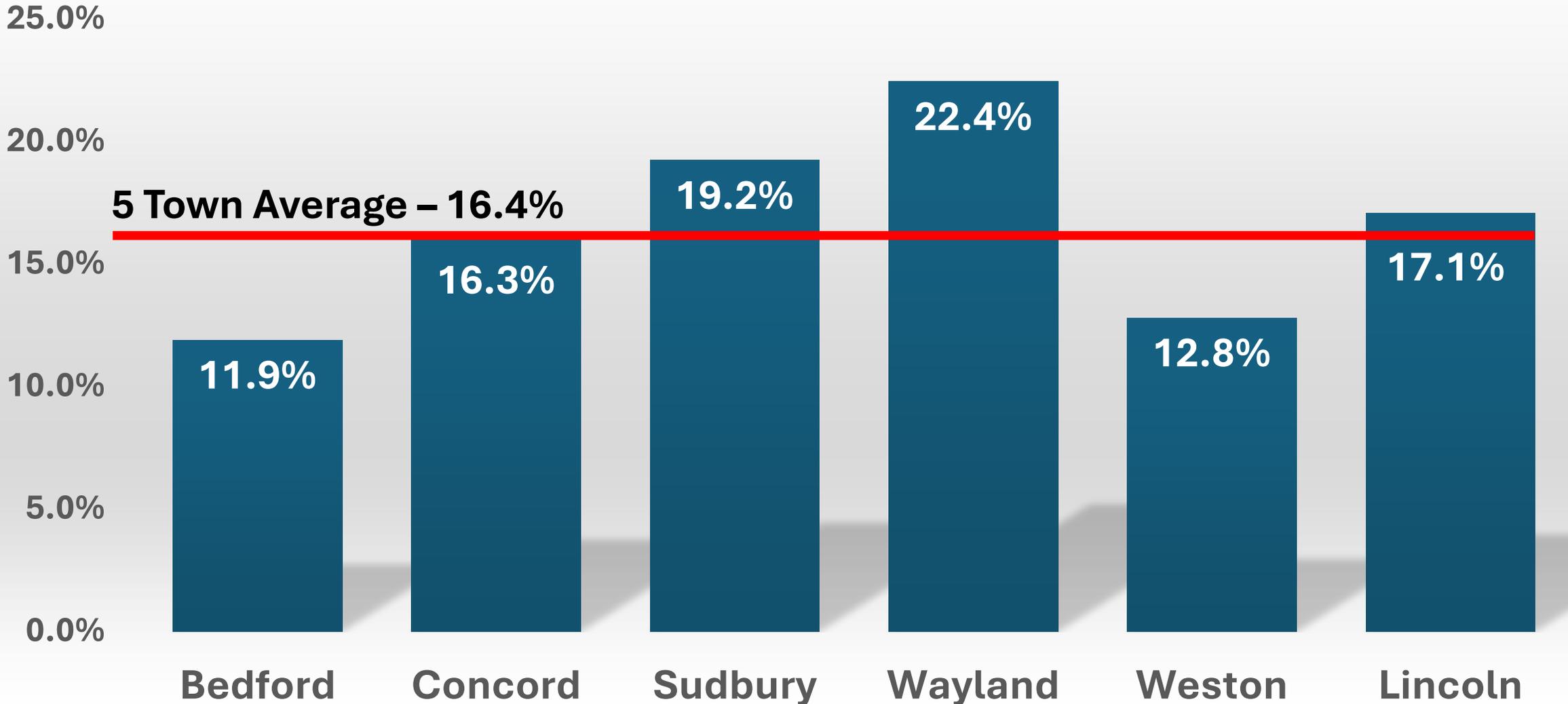
- **No "on" or "off" button** - hit any of the buttons to wake up the clicker
- **Clicker will automatically "sleep"** if you haven't touched a button for a while
- **For voting, press the button of your choice**
- **If you change your mind while voting is still open, just hit the new button you prefer**
- Only the **last button you press** before voting is closed **will be recorded** as your vote
- The **number on your clicker screen will show your final choice**



Which town had the highest average percentage of registered voters show up at THE POLLS over the last ten years?

1. Concord
2. Sudbury
3. Wayland
4. Weston
5. Lincoln

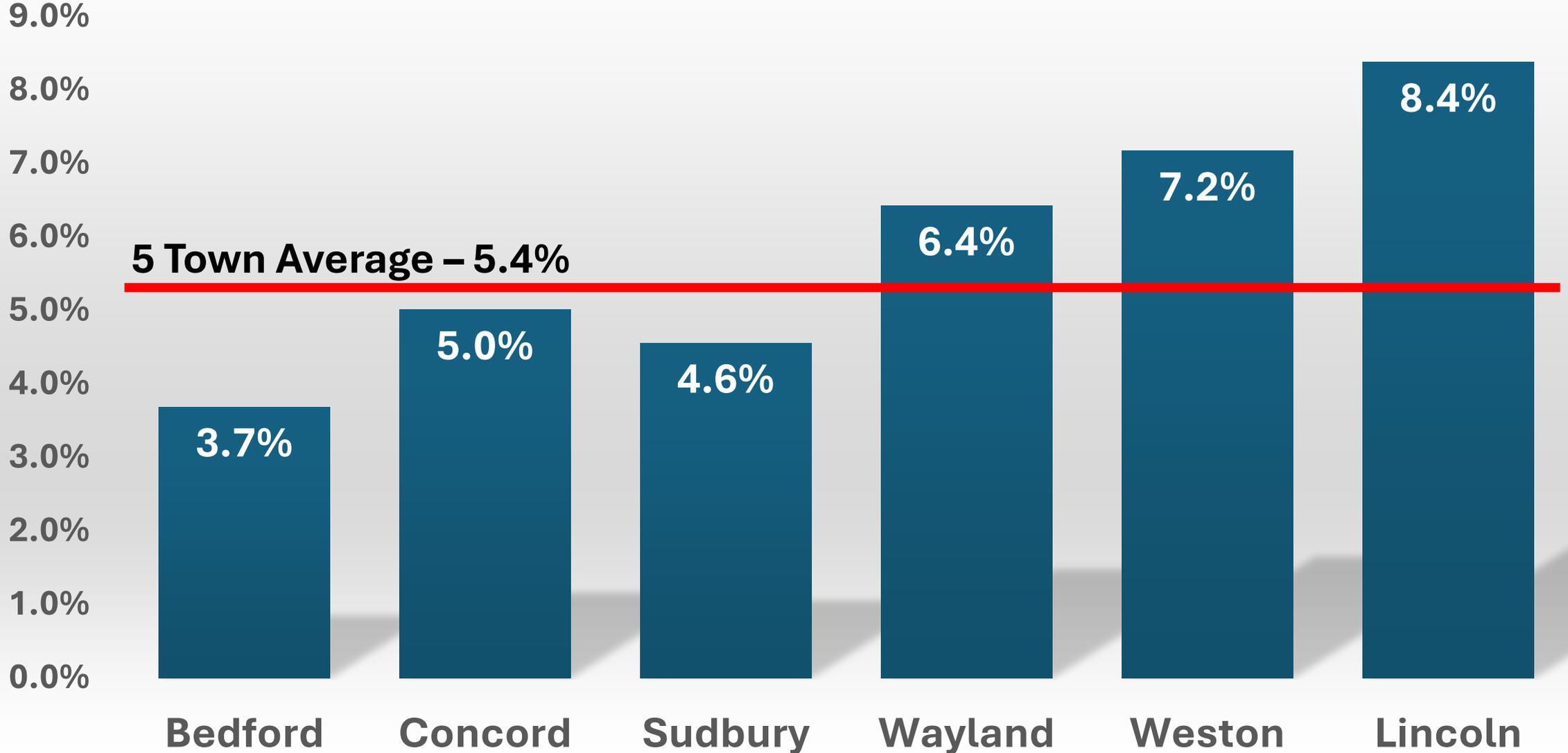
Town Voting Participation 10 Year Average (2014-2023)



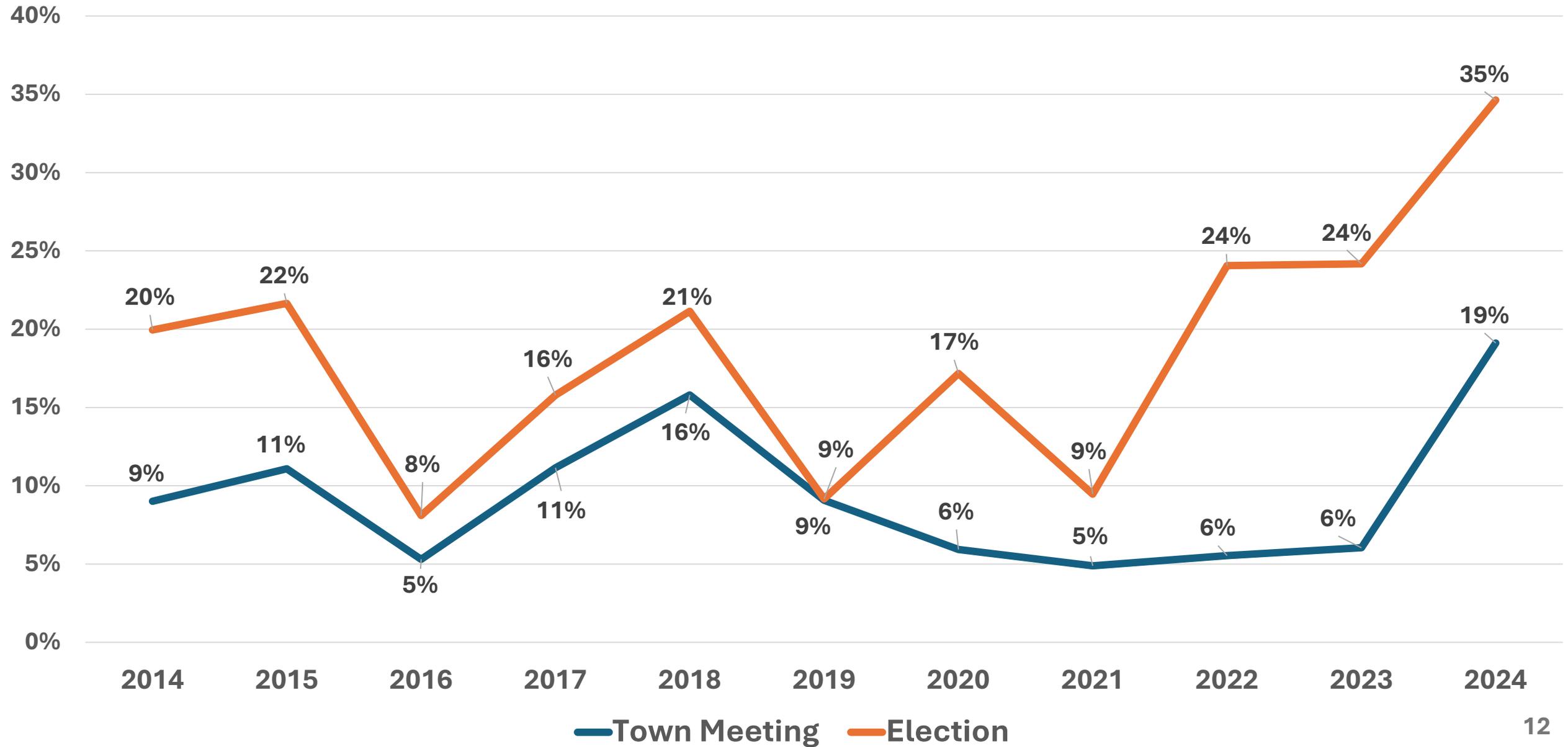
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Town Meeting Participation 10 Year Average (2014-2023)



Town of Lincoln Annual Participation %



What causes the spikes in participation?

1. Girl Scouts sold cookies at those meetings
2. Twisted Tree offered lunch
3. Weather cooperated
4. Kids' sporting events canceled
5. Expensive capital projects or zoning changes on the Warrant

Public Outreach & Engagement Plan

- Attend the Town Meeting Study Committee (TMSC) meetings
- Speak with any member of the committee
- Dedicated e-mail for public comments: TMSC@lincolntown.org
- TMSC dedicated webpage
- Periodic updates on communication channels throughout Town
- Periodic Select Board updates
- Town-wide survey (outside consultant) & occasional public forums
- March 29, 2025, Annual Town Meeting update

Feedback Received to Date

:Padlet

Jennifer Glass + 48 • 2mo Frozen

Let's Talk About Town Meeting

Do you love it just the way it is? Would you like to see major changes? What are your recommendations? How do changes get made?

Search Sign up

What currently works well about the Town Meeting Process?

Ben S 3mo

Requiring people be present to vote. Having people vote without attending just results in people voting without information, probably will lead to worse outcomes.

3 1

Ruth Ann 3mo

I like the multi- phase voting. It helps reach consensus on complex issues. The use of clicker voting should make it much quicker

7 0

Jonathan S 3mo

For some topics, Town Meeting can be a good way to learn about an important subject you don't already know about and get feedback from viewpoints that might not have been accounted for by the groups presenting the topic

What could be improved?

Bob Domnitz 3mo

Comprehensive rules for conduct of town meeting should be codified and adopted by vote of town meeting.

15 0

Laura Guarnotta 3mo

Length - I would like town meetings to be shorter. I usually have other commitments or need to watch or drive my kids on the days of meetings so can't attend. Also it's just really challenging to stay focused for that long, especially without any food available. Voting - I would prefer to vote anonymously.

7 0

Reliable Snail 3mo

Voting needs to be private. I know many people who did not go to town meeting because they didn't want their friends to know how they were going to vote

List 1 - 3 topics you think the Town Meeting Study Committee should explore.

Andy Wang 2mo

Areas of Interest for Town Meeting Study Committee:

- **Accessibility and Participation:** Ways to make Town Meetings more accessible, by considering how to engage people with families, scheduling conflicts, mobility issues, hearing impairments, etc.
- **Process Transparency and Inclusion:** Ways to improve the Town Meeting inclusivity, such as allowing dissenting voices to present, providing clearer guidance, and ensuring transparency regarding the financial interests of speakers.
- **Modernization and Efficiency:** Ways to improve the Town Meeting process, both before and after the meeting, to make it more efficient, leveraging new available methods for communication and meeting operation (e.g. clickers)

Other questions

Dependable Re

How can you cor exercise isn't just padelts were dur was collected, an it. In fact, it had input into a padle this feedback to community?

1 0

Lynne Smith 2

How will the Stud recommend that not members of

1 0

Electronic Voting

- Use clickers to save time
- Anonymous voting to reduce social pressure
- Public voting: transparency, “stand and be counted”

Inclusivity and Accessibility

- Make more accessible for
 - Families
 - Those with mobility issues
 - Those unable to attend in person
- Suggestions
 - Childcare
 - Transportation
 - Remote participation

Transparency and Fairness

- Clear guidelines for presentations
- Allow dissenting voices to be heard
- All viewpoints given equal time and consideration
- Explore conflict-of-interest policy (financial, other)

Improve Meeting Efficiency

- Split the meeting into two sessions: discussion and voting
- Tradition of one meeting, opportunities to build community
- Reduce the length of meetings
- Better manage the time for speakers

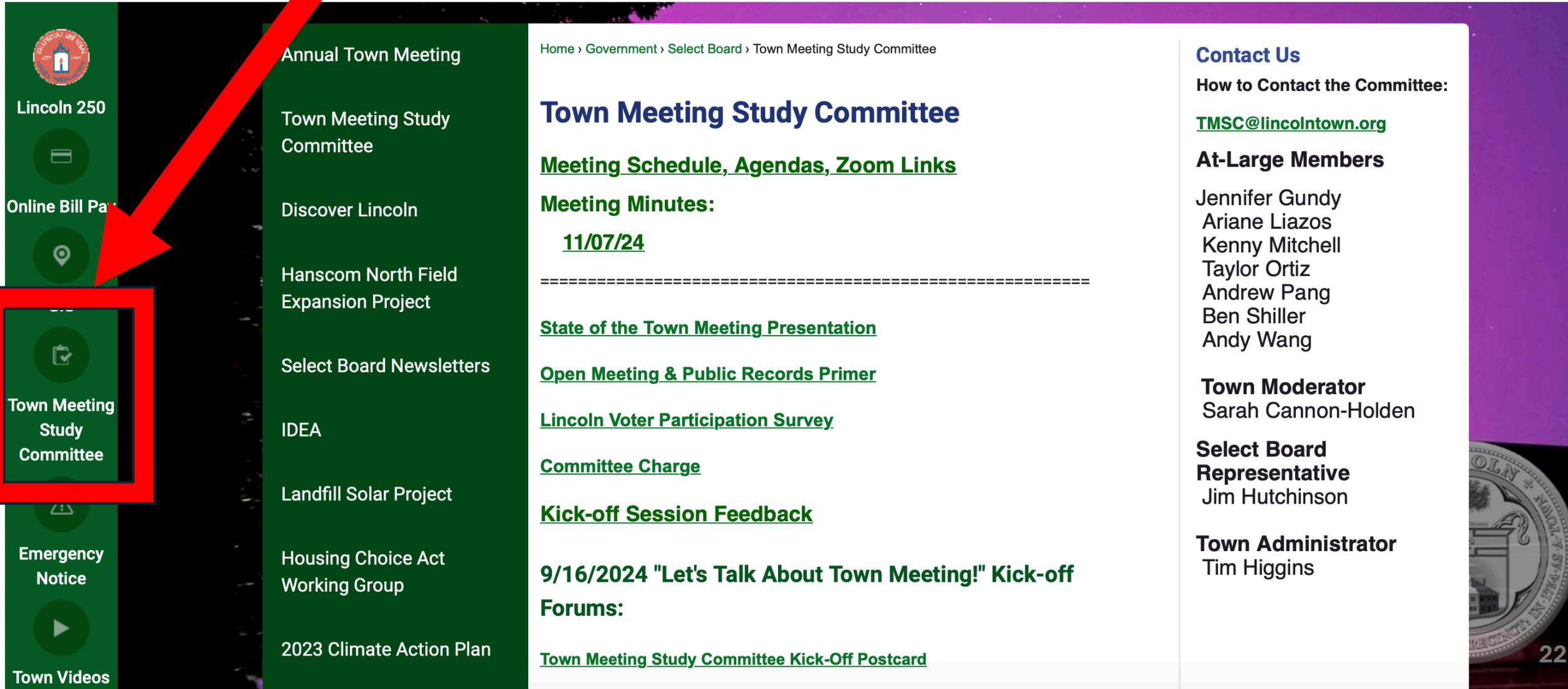
Civility and Respect

- Concerns about the tone and conduct of discussions leading up to and at Town Meeting
- Code of conduct to ensure respectful and productive dialogue

Participant Feedback – We want to hear from you!

- What is on your mind?
 - What is working well?
 - How can Town Meeting be improved?
 - Questions about the work of the Committee?
 - What should we include in our work?
- Write comments on handout and turn in on your way out!
- Email us: TMSC@lincolntown.org

Where to find the latest information? Town Website!



The screenshot displays the website's navigation menu on the left and the main content area on the right. The menu includes links for 'Annual Town Meeting', 'Town Meeting Study Committee', 'Discover Lincoln', 'Hanscom North Field Expansion Project', 'Select Board Newsletters', 'IDEA', 'Landfill Solar Project', 'Housing Choice Act Working Group', and '2023 Climate Action Plan'. The 'Town Meeting Study Committee' link is highlighted with a red box. The main content area shows the breadcrumb trail 'Home > Government > Select Board > Town Meeting Study Committee', the page title 'Town Meeting Study Committee', and several links including 'Meeting Schedule, Agendas, Zoom Links', 'Meeting Minutes: 11/07/24', 'State of the Town Meeting Presentation', 'Open Meeting & Public Records Primer', 'Lincoln Voter Participation Survey', 'Committee Charge', 'Kick-off Session Feedback', and '9/16/2024 "Let's Talk About Town Meeting!" Kick-off Forums:'. A 'Contact Us' section on the right provides contact information for the committee, including the email TMSC@lincolntown.org and lists of members and representatives.

Home > Government > Select Board > Town Meeting Study Committee

Town Meeting Study Committee

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What is your primary source for town-related information?

1. Select Board Newsletter
2. COA&HS Newsletter
3. Lincoln Squirrel
4. LincolnTalk
5. Friends & Neighbors