

TMMA Executive Committee Meeting

Minutes for October 9, 2024

Virtual Meeting (via Zoom)

Attendees:	Precinct	Attendees:	Precinct
Bridger McGaw	6 TMMA Chair	Wendy Manz*	4
Sarah Higginbotham*	5 TMMA Vice-Chair	Andy Friedlich*	5
Brielle Meade	8 TMMA Clerk	Joyce Murphy	5
Bob Avallone	8 TMMA Website Manager	Meghana Khanolkar*	7
Valerie Overton*	1	Benjamin Lees*	7
Tanya Gisolfi-McCready*	1	Betty Gau*	8
Avram Baskin*	2	Todd Burger*	9
Ruth Thomas*	4		

*Denotes Precinct Officers

The Chair Bridger McGaw called the meeting to order at 7:32pm as quorum was confirmed.

- I. **Welcome and Opening** - Bridger McGaw opened the meeting and asked members to update their Zoom name to include their precinct number. He noted our next meeting would be the Info Session later in October, followed by Special Town Meeting in November (there will be no TMMA Executive Committee meeting in November).

II. Officer Reports and Updates

Clerk's Report—Brielle Meade submitted the draft minutes for the September meetings to the group for review and approval over email. The September minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report—Noah Michelson was not in attendance and will present the Treasurer's Report next meeting.

Website Manager's Report— Bridger McGaw noted there is one new member from Precinct 1, and Bob Avallone requested that someone email him the information so he can make the update on the website. Bob will also add links to the Town's Town Meeting website for Special Town Meeting 2024-1 (<https://www.lexingtonma.gov/2102/Special-Town-Meeting-2024-1>) and to the Warrant (<https://www.lexingtonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12924>).

Email List Moderator's Report—Vicki Blier was not in attendance. Bob Avallone noted one issue with the pilot Groups.io account with reply and reply-all functions that was brought up this month. This is the only issue that has been raised during the Groups.io pilot test. He proposes that we switch from Google Groups to Groups.io after this Special Town Meeting (STM). Bob is looking for approval from this committee tonight to work on this transition with Vicki directly after STM in November.

- Bridger McGaw discussed putting together a transition plan, including messaging and emails to members about the transition and how it will work.
- Benjamin Lees asked if we would be able to move the Google Groups archive messages over to the new Groups.io account. Bob indicated that the Google

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messages would not move, but folks would be able to look through the Google Group archive at any time.

- Avram Baskin asked Bob to summarize the added value of making this transition. Bob explained the problems we have been having with the Google Group regarding receiving messages and the lack of direct-add of members in Google for folks without a Gmail address. Google also does not have any support services when we run into issues. Groups.io may fix the lost messages issue (there were no issues during pilot testing) and allows directly adding members, along with a customer support helpline.
- Meg Khanolkar suggested we put FAQs together about why we are transitioning and how it will work for members. Bob will talk to Vicki Blier about putting this together.
- Bob Avallone made a motion that TMMA transition its Google Group discussion list to a Groups.io account directly after STM, along with precinct groups and an executive committee subgroup. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

III. **Lexington High School Building Project Update** – Bridger McGaw provided an update on engagement with the LHS project. He asked members to reach out to their constituents and make sure people are learning about the project and getting engaged.

IV. Project Updates

- Precinct 1 and 3 elections to address resignations – Bridger McGaw informed the group that Precinct 3 will vote to fill a seat on October 17. The Precinct 1 election already happened and Cristina Burwell was elected as a new Town Meeting member.
- Warrant is approved – Bridger McGaw noted that the warrant for Special Town Meeting 2024-1 was approved on Monday and has been posted on the Town Meeting website <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/2102/Special-Town-Meeting-2024-1>. Special Town Meeting will begin on Wednesday, November 13, and will be conducted in a hybrid format.
- Special Town Meeting Warrant Information Session – Sarah Higginbotham reported there are nine articles on the Warrant, and Articles 7, 8, and 9 are identified as the ones that would benefit from an information session.
 - Article 7 requests an appropriation for design funds for construction of athletic field at Harrington; Article 8 (Citizen petition) is to adopt a non-binding resolution to delay the MSBA filing for the Lexington High School building project; and Article 9 (Citizen petition) is to adopt a resolution to begin the design process for a crematory at Westview cemetery.
 - TMMA will host an information session for the proponents of these articles to present and for TM members to ask questions. It will be all virtual, in a meeting style (not webinar), and is tentatively scheduled for October 22 (early to avoid conflict with the national election).

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- Andy Friedlich asked Sarah to check with Kelly Axtell if any additional requests for appropriations will be coming up under any of the annual articles, and if so, consider if we should reach out to town staff (e.g., Carolyn Kosnoff) for more information as needed. Sarah will check with Kelly.
- Bridger McGaw emphasized the importance of the Town Meeting webpage (<https://www.lexingtonma.gov/2102/Special-Town-Meeting-2024-1>) for disseminating information. He asked the group to put the October 22 information session on our calendars; once confirmed with Kelly Axtell, this will be publicized to the TMMA list.
- Next Steps for the New Member Orientation Working Group –Andy Friedlich reported that the group has not met yet and he will nudge the members and try and schedule a meeting.
- Bylaw review and updates – Bridger McGaw hosted discussion of the previously shared memo on bylaw updates.
 - Andy Friedlich asked if this process will require an article on the 2025 Annual Town Meeting and if we should invite Deborah Brown to our next meeting. Bridger replied that this should be inserted by the Select Board, so there is no hard deadline for submitting an article proposal.
 - There is a need to fix the “glaring errors” (i.e., not using Roberts Rules).
 - There is the issue of “new information” needed for moving reconsideration. We need to change the bylaws if we want to continue to have the Moderator require new information for reconsideration.
 - Bob Avallone asked what the next steps after this discussion would be.
 - Betty Gau asked why the Moderator is using the “new information” standard and would like to understand the background on this before we suggest changes.
 - Benjamin Lees mentioned he feels members are too quick to call the question. Regarding reconsideration, he does not feel there should be the requirement for new information and thinks folks should be able to consider something again when they realize the significance of a vote. He feels it should be left to the discretion of members and not in the Moderator’s power to decide what is new information and what is not.
 - Avram Baskin disagreed with Benjamin and does not want to introduce a practice that just takes us back to the same debate over and over again.
 - Wendy Manz supported Avram’s perspective: many issues are contentious, but it is the obligation of Town Meeting members to pay attention, make wise votes, and inform themselves. There should not be a “total open door” to reconsideration or we may end up re-hashing again and again to “catch people up.” We should ensure the Moderator has the ability to move Town Meeting along at a reasonable pace.
 - Todd Burger thought it reasonable to require new information for reconsideration, but wondered if the determination of whether there is new info or not should be left to a vote of the body rather than a decision made by the Moderator.

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- Benjamin Lees asked if the “new information” piece was in the bylaws at some point. Valerie Overton wrote in the chat that the Moderator told her it was tradition to require new information.
 - Ruth Thomas and Betty Gau wonder if the “new information” piece comes from Roberts Rules or Town Meeting Time.
 - Benjamin Lees would like to see data on reconsideration motions – how many in the last decade, how many were successful, etc.
 - Avram Baskin supports changing wording to say new information is required, but says there are other mechanisms, like referendums, or bringing the article back after 3 years, that can work too.
 - Bridger McGaw gave examples of the police firing range and of the center playground bathrooms as processes where new information wasn’t made available. Benjamin asked to also see examples of good use of reconsideration.
 - Bridger summarized two important thoughts about how to resolve the reconsideration issue: codify what we are doing now or leave it ambiguous. He appreciated the discussion.
- TMMA Connect! Ice Cream Social – Sarah Higginbotham indicated that Vicki Blier leads this effort, and there’s no update right now. Betty Gau expressed interest in helping plan for this event.

V. New Topics

- Hybrid TMMA Meetings – Bob Avallone discussed holding these TMMA Executive Committee meetings in a hybrid format (instead of all virtual). He mentioned using the Parker room to hold the hybrid meetings.
 - Benjamin Lees mentions he is not usually in favor of hybrid style meetings.
 - Bridger McGaw said he is on many committees and the remote nature of this meeting is important to him and his ability to participate. He would prefer to keep it on Zoom, possibly doing the March one after new members join, in person, but the rest virtual.
 - Todd Burger also suggested that the meeting before Annual Town Meeting and before Special Town Meeting be hybrid and the rest of them be virtual.
 - Betty Gau is on a committee that tried hybrid, and it hasn’t worked well. Having everyone in the room or everyone virtual works better than hybrid.
 - Brielle Meade thought a single fully in-person meeting in March would be nice and that leaving the flexibility of fully virtual meetings the rest of the year would be the best, especially for parents of school-aged children like herself.
 - Andy Friedlich agreed with Betty that hybrid meetings are difficult for both people attending in person and people attending virtually.
 - Sarah Higginbotham suggested a single in-person meeting in May right after Annual Town Meeting might be the best. It would work well to get subcommittees going and coming off the momentum of seeing people and meeting in person for Town Meeting.

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- Bridger McGaw will add this to the January meeting agenda to consider.
- Andy Friedlich spoke with the police chief who indicated he would be happy to host a tour for Town Meeting members.

Folks can reach out to Bridger McGaw with ideas at any time if they have any additional topics to add to future agendas.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm. The next Meeting will be on December 11, 2024, at 7:30 PM conducted online via Zoom.