

# Report: Moderator's 2014 Survey of Town Meeting Members Lexington, MA

**Report publication date:** September 3, 2014

**Survey data collection period:** June 2-25, 2014

**Distribution:** By email (or postal mail for those without @lexingtontmma.org email addresses) to all 189 elected Town Meeting members + 9 at-large members






**Survey type:** Unique emailed web link to anonymous on-line survey. (For those without email, paper survey mailed with stamped return envelope for anonymous submission.)

**Response rate:** 150 respondents (76%)

**Acknowledgement:** The Moderator is indebted to Barry Orenstein and Beth Masterman for their assistance with this survey.






# [Question1] Overall Satisfaction

Overall, how satisfied are you with the way the 2014 Annual Town Meeting operated?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Very satisfied		50.3%	75
Somewhat satisfied		37.6%	56
Neutral/no opinion		6.7%	10
Somewhat dissatisfied		4.0%	6
Very dissatisfied		1.3%	2
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>149</b>






## [Question2] Electronic Voting

Overall, how satisfied are you with the new electronic voting system?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Very satisfied		78.0%	117
Somewhat satisfied		16.7%	25
Neutral/no opinion		4.0%	6
Somewhat dissatisfied		0.7%	1
Very dissatisfied		0.7%	1
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>150</b>






## [Question3] Electronic Voting - Check In

How satisfied were you with the length of time required to check in and receive your handheld voting device each night?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Very satisfied		53.7%	80
Somewhat satisfied		32.2%	48
Neutral/no opinion		3.4%	5
Somewhat dissatisfied		10.7%	16
Very dissatisfied		0.0%	0
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>149</b>




## [Question4] Electronic Voting - Check Out

How satisfied were you with the length of time required to turn in your handheld voting device each night?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Very satisfied		61.3%	92
Somewhat satisfied		26.0%	39
Neutral/no opinion		7.3%	11
Somewhat dissatisfied		4.7%	7
Very dissatisfied		0.7%	1
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>150</b>

# [Question5] Electronic Voting - Ease of Use

How difficult or easy was it for you to operate your handheld voting device?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
It was easy from the start.		97.3%	145
I had difficulty initially, but by the end I was comfortable using it.		2.7%	4
I continued to have difficulty operating the unit throughout the meeting.		0.0%	0
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>149</b>

## [Question6] Preparation - Meetings and Hearings

Did you attend (or watch on LexMedia) any meeting(s) or hearing(s) of the following boards and committees in preparation for the 2014 Annual Town Meeting?

	Yes (attended or watched on LexMedia)	No	Total Responses
<b>Budget Summit (joint BOS, SC, AC, CEC)</b>	34 (23.9%)	108 (76.1%)	142
<b>Board of Selectmen (BOS)</b>	65 (44.8%)	80 (55.2%)	145
<b>School Committee (SC)</b>	50 (35.2%)	92 (64.8%)	142
<b>Planning Board</b>	47 (33.1%)	95 (66.9%)	142
<b>Appropriation Committee (AC)</b>	17 (12.2%)	122 (87.8%)	139
<b>Capital Expenditures Committee (CEC)</b>	13 (9.5%)	124 (90.5%)	137
<b>Community Preservation Committee</b>	27 (19.6%)	111 (80.4%)	138

## [Question7] Documents

How helpful were the following documents in preparation for and during the 2014 Annual Town Meeting?

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful	Did not read	Received too late to be helpful	Total Resp.
<b>Appropriation Committee Report(s)</b>	75 (51.0%)	59 (40.1%)	2 (1.4%)	9 (6.1%)	2 (1.4%)	147
<b>Capital Expenditures Committee Report(s)</b>	77 (51.7%)	56 (37.6%)	2 (1.3%)	10 (6.7%)	4 (2.7%)	149
<b>Community Preservation Committee Report</b>	84 (56.0%)	51 (34.0%)	2 (1.3%)	12 (8.0%)	1 (0.7%)	150
<b>Planning Board Report(s)</b>	70 (47.6%)	62 (42.2%)	1 (0.7%)	12 (8.2%)	2 (1.4%)	147
<b>Lexington Public Schools Budget Book</b>	45 (30.4%)	67 (45.3%)	12 (8.1%)	22 (14.9%)	2 (1.4%)	148
<b>Town Manager's Budget Book ("brown book")</b>	67 (45.3%)	56 (37.8%)	6 (4.1%)	17 (11.5%)	2 (1.4%)	148
<b>Written materials by article sponsors</b>	57 (38.5%)	82 (55.4%)	4 (2.7%)	2 (1.4%)	3 (2.0%)	148
<b>Final text of motions</b>	85 (57.8%)	52 (35.4%)	5 (3.4%)	1 (0.7%)	4 (2.7%)	147



## [Question8] Presentations

How helpful were the following presentations during the 2014 Annual Town Meeting?

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful	Did not hear	Total Resp.
<b>Appropriation Committee oral reports</b>	88 (61.1%)	48 (33.3%)	8 (5.6%)	0 (0.0%)	144
<b>Capital Expenditures Committee oral reports</b>	90 (61.2%)	51 (34.7%)	6 (4.1%)	0 (0.0%)	147
<b>Planning Board oral reports</b>	88 (60.7%)	50 (34.5%)	7 (4.8%)	0 (0.0%)	145
<b>LPS Superintendent's oral report</b>	71 (49.0%)	58 (40.0%)	12 (8.3%)	4 (2.8%)	145
<b>Town Manager's oral report</b>	99 (68.3%)	45 (31.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.7%)	145
<b>Board of Selectmen oral reports</b>	87 (59.6%)	54 (37.0%)	5 (3.4%)	0 (0.0%)	146
<b>Community Preservation Committee oral reports</b>	85 (57.8%)	54 (36.7%)	5 (3.4%)	3 (2.0%)	147
<b>School Committee oral reports</b>	63 (43.8%)	66 (45.8%)	12 (8.3%)	3 (2.1%)	144

## [Question9] TMMA Activities and Resources

How helpful were the following TMMA activities and resources in preparation for and during the 2014 Annual Town Meeting?

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful	Did not read/use/attend	Total Responses
<b>TMMA bus tour</b>	45 (30.4%)	24 (16.2%)	5 (3.4%)	74 (50.0%)	148
<b>TMMA information book</b>	70 (47.3%)	61 (41.2%)	10 (6.8%)	7 (4.7%)	148
<b>TMMA information sessions (in person)</b>	65 (44.5%)	37 (25.3%)	4 (2.7%)	40 (27.4%)	146
<b>TMMA information sessions (on LexMedia)</b>	14 (9.9%)	17 (12.1%)	4 (2.8%)	106 (75.2%)	141
<b>TMMA Yahoo email group</b>	53 (36.1%)	67 (45.6%)	13 (8.8%)	14 (9.5%)	147
<b>TMMA website</b>	27 (18.5%)	67 (45.9%)	16 (11.0%)	36 (24.7%)	146

# [Question10] Time Allotment - Presentations

How did you feel about the time allotted to the following presentations at the 2014 Annual Town Meeting?

	Too long	Just right	Too short	Don't remember	Total Resp.
<b>Town Manager's budget presentation</b>	7 (4.9%)	129 (89.6%)	1 (0.7%)	7 (4.9%)	144
<b>School Superintendent's budget presentation</b>	19 (13.2%)	113 (78.5%)	5 (3.5%)	7 (4.9%)	144
<b>Minuteman Tech budget/district agreement presentation</b>	20 (13.9%)	110 (76.4%)	6 (4.2%)	8 (5.6%)	144
<b>Articles 27/28/29 Zoning ByLaw - For-profit educational uses in neighborhood bus. district</b>	50 (35.0%)	87 (60.8%)	1 (0.7%)	5 (3.5%)	143
<b>Article 30 Zoning ByLaw - Medical marijuana treatment centers</b>	41 (28.5%)	94 (65.3%)	1 (0.7%)	8 (5.6%)	144
<b>Article 8 Community Preservation Committee budget &amp; projects</b>	20 (13.9%)	109 (75.7%)	4 (2.8%)	11 (7.6%)	144





## [Question11] Time Allotment - Debate

How did you feel about the time Town Meeting spent on debate of the following topics at the 2014 Annual Town Meeting?

	Too long	Just right	Too short	Don't remember	Total Resp.
<b>Article 4 FY2015 Operating budget</b>	16 (11.0%)	93 (63.7%)	26 (17.8%)	11 (7.5%)	146
<b>Article 23 Minuteman Tech district agreement</b>	14 (9.5%)	106 (72.1%)	12 (8.2%)	15 (10.2%)	147
<b>Articles 27/28/29 Zoning ByLaw - For-profit educational uses in neighborhood business district</b>	62 (42.5%)	70 (47.9%)	5 (3.4%)	9 (6.2%)	146
<b>Article 30 Zoning ByLaw - Medical marijuana treatment centers</b>	73 (49.7%)	60 (40.8%)	4 (2.7%)	10 (6.8%)	147
<b>Article 8 Community Preservation Committee budget &amp; projects</b>	25 (17.4%)	102 (70.8%)	5 (3.5%)	12 (8.3%)	144
<b>Article 10 Municipal capital projects &amp; equipment</b>	21 (14.4%)	97 (66.4%)	17 (11.6%)	11 (7.5%)	146

## [Question12] Article 4 Motion




By tradition, the Moderator reads the motion under Article 4 (Operating Budget) line-by-line, in its entirety. The Bylaws would allow motions to be submitted in writing and for the maker to announce, "I so move." How do you think the Article 4 motions should be handled in the future?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Continue the present practice of reading the motion line by line		48.3%	72
End the practice of reading the motion line by line and simply say "I so move"		30.2%	45
Not sure		16.1%	24
No opinion/doesn't matter		5.4%	8
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>149</b>

## [Question13] Meeting Duration






The 2014 Annual Town Meeting (and the accompanying Special Town Meeting) lasted 7 nights.

Please indicate your opinion of the meeting's length:

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Too long		37.6%	56
Just right		59.1%	88
Too short		3.4%	5
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>149</b>

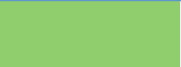



# [Question14] New Member Workshop

Please indicate your opinion of the Moderator's workshop for new Town Meeting Members:

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Helpful with the right amount of information		14.4%	21
Too much information at one time		2.1%	3
Too little information/Not helpful		0.0%	0
I am a new Town Meeting Member and did not attend		3.4%	5
N/A		80.1%	117
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>146</b>

# [Question15] Process and Parliamentary Procedure - General Understanding

In general, how would you rate your understanding of our Town Meeting process and parliamentary procedure?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Excellent		42.0%	63
Good		49.3%	74
Fair		6.7%	10
Poor		2.0%	3
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>150</b>



# [Question16] Process and Parliamentary Procedure - Specific Understanding

Please rate your understanding of each of the following:

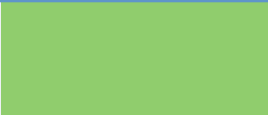


	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total Resp.
<b>The difference between an article and a motion</b>	91 (61.5%)	45 (30.4%)	10 (6.8%)	2 (1.4%)	148
<b>How to make a motion</b>	72 (48.6%)	54 (36.5%)	18 (12.2%)	4 (2.7%)	148
<b>How to amend a motion</b>	64 (43.8%)	54 (37.0%)	22 (15.1%)	6 (4.1%)	146
<b>How /when to call the question</b>	89 (60.5%)	44 (29.9%)	10 (6.8%)	4 (2.7%)	147
<b>When to rise to make a point of personal privilege</b>	65 (44.2%)	54 (36.7%)	20 (13.6%)	8 (5.4%)	147
<b>When to rise for a point of order</b>	62 (42.5%)	39 (26.7%)	32 (21.9%)	13 (8.9%)	146
<b>How to serve notice of reconsideration</b>	64 (43.5%)	42 (28.6%)	26 (17.7%)	15 (10.2%)	147
<b>How/when to move reconsideration</b>	55 (37.4%)	46 (31.3%)	28 (19.0%)	18 (12.2%)	147

**[Question17] Moderator**  
**At the 2014 Annual Town Meeting,**  
**did the Moderator consistently:**

	Yes	No	Not sure/don't remember	Total Resp.
<b>Apply the 3-minute time limit at the Yes microphone?</b>	126 (85.7%)	7 (4.8%)	14 (9.5%)	147
<b>Apply the 3-minute time limit at the No microphone?</b>	126 (85.7%)	7 (4.8%)	14 (9.5%)	147
<b>Apply the 3-minute time limit at the Citizens' microphone?</b>	120 (82.2%)	12 (8.2%)	14 (9.6%)	146
<b>Apply the 2-minute time limit at the Question microphone?</b>	114 (78.1%)	17 (11.6%)	15 (10.3%)	146
<b>Alternate among the Yes, No, Question, and Citizens' microphones?</b>	133 (90.5%)	8 (5.4%)	6 (4.1%)	147
<b>Require participants to refrain from personal attacks?</b>	135 (91.8%)	7 (4.8%)	5 (3.4%)	147
<b>Require participants to keep remarks/questions relevant to the topic of the motion?</b>	119 (81.5%)	16 (11.0%)	11 (7.5%)	146







# [Question18] Participation - Attendance

Regarding your own participation at  
the 2014 Annual Town Meeting:

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
I attended all 7 nights of Town Meeting		63.1%	94
I missed 1 or 2 of the 7 nights of Town Meeting		34.9%	52
I missed 3 or more of the 7 nights of Town Meeting		2.0%	3
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>149</b>



# [Question19] Participation - Speaking

Regarding your own participation at the 2014 Annual Town Meeting, select all of the comments that apply:

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
I felt comfortable participating and expressing my views.		52.3%	78
I did not speak and wish that I had.		9.4%	14
I am not comfortable expressing an opposing or minority view.		6.7%	10
I did not speak, or spoke little, because others had already expressed my views or questions.		49.7%	74
I did not feel well prepared to speak.		0.7%	1
I did not speak at Town Meeting because...(see Appendix 1)		6.0%	9
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>149</b>

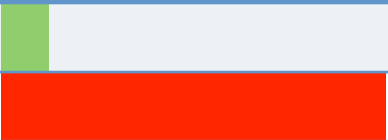
## [Question20] Constituent Contact

Did you receive questions or input from constituent(s) about any of the Articles on the 2014 Annual Town Meeting Warrant?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		67.3%	99
No		32.7%	48
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>147</b>

## [Question21] Constituents and Voting Record

Have you received any questions or comments from constituents about how you voted on particular issue(s) at the 2014 Annual Town Meeting?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		9.5%	14
No		90.5%	134
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>148</b>



## [Question22] Reason for Serving

Please complete the following statement.

I serve as a Town Meeting member because: *(See Appendix 2.)*





## [Question23] Good Use of Your Time?

Do you feel your participation in the  
2014 Annual Town Meeting was time well spent?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		92.3%	132
No		7.7%	11
<b>Total Responses</b>			<b>143</b>

# [Question24] Years of Service





How many years have you served as a  
Town Meeting member?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
1-2 years		16.3%	24
3-9 years		36.1%	53
10-19 years		18.4%	27
20+ years		29.3%	43
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>147</b>



## [Question25] Continuation of Service

Do you plan to run for Town Meeting again when your present term is up?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		57.4%	85
No		5.4%	8
Not sure		35.8%	53
N/A - I'm an at-large Town Meeting member		1.4%	2
		<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>148</b>

## [Question26] Additional Feedback

Please offer any additional feedback or comments you would like to share with the Moderator and/or the TMMA.

You may also use this space to expand upon any of your previous answers. *(See Appendix 3.)*