

May 10-June 14, 2019

Town Hall Highlights: Douglas

Town boards and committees working together; additional members are needed

By Matthew Wojcik

Town Administrator

This time every year it is appropriate to remind registered voters of the importance, not only of town meeting, but also of the critical role volunteer citizens play in getting the Town Meeting Warrant prepared.

Town meeting directly connects residents with the services they pay for with their local taxes. All registered voters in town may participate. Voters may ask questions. Issues are debated in the open. Local government is undeniably accountable to the people, and that is most especially true in a

town like Douglas with the open town meeting form of government.

American capitalism and democracy together create an environment that fosters widespread progress – that's change in a positive direction for a majority of the people – provided that residents participate and compromise, when necessary. We don't live in a society that can leave well enough alone for years at a time. Prices change. Values change. The make-up of the community also changes. Attention must be paid each and every year to how gov-

ernment officials propose to provide the desired services at an affordable cost and acceptable level of quality.

If an item is on the town meeting warrant, it is because it has to be there. No other part of town government has the authority to make a decision on warrant items other than town meeting. One of the important tasks leading up to town meeting is to prepare the projects to be voted on to the point where a decision can be made based on all available and verified information.

That's where the finance

committee, board of selectmen, capital improvement committee and planning board come in. Each of these public bodies has a critical role in reviewing and improving the work of the town's day-to-day administration in preparing and explaining proposals. The finance committee has the added responsibility of bringing everything together in the end, providing information in the form of the town-wide flyer and recommendations based on their

analysis of each item.

The finance committee in particular needs additional members to step forward and assist in their work. If you have an interest in being a part of this vital group, please reach out to the town moderator, Keith Menard, to discuss your possible appointment.

Town Meeting is an important, necessary, transparent and efficient way to set the course for local government every year. If one chooses not to participate, then one must live with the

outcomes created by those who do. Abraham Lincoln is credited with saying this in a creative way:

"Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters."

Please consider joining the finance committee and support the institution of open town meeting. It's your sacred right to have your voice heard and counted. It's up to you to make sure it is.