

Warrant Article Questionnaire

Citizen Petitions Articles

Article 41	Date Form Completed: 03012020
Article Title: Reform of the Electoral Process	
Sponsor Name: Paul E. Connolly	Email: connolly70@verizon.net

Question	Question
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it is intended to be voted on by the Finance Committee.
Response	<p>Move that the Town vote to approve the following resolution:</p> <p>WHEREAS The Town of Natick, in accordance with its Charter, Chapter 3, Section 3-1, holds a preliminary election before the regular Town election, only when that action is necessary, in order to limit the number of persons seeking election to a particular Town office to a number equal to twice the number to be elected; and</p> <p>WHEREAS The reality of the situation in Natick today is that when candidates for a Town office are considering running for election, if a preliminary election would be triggered thereby, they are discouraged for a number of reasons: (1) Few voters are conscious of a preliminary election taking place; (2) Some voters say that the “extra” candidates should have withdrawn because of the cost to the Town for the preliminary election; (3) Candidates find it very hard to get voters to listen to their campaign message and ideas in January and February; (4) Turnout for preliminary elections in recent years has been very poor; and</p> <p>WHEREAS The elimination of preliminary elections in Natick without any other change is an overly simplistic solution; and</p> <p>WHEREAS The method of ranked-choice voting for the Town election may be an alternative solution that handles a range of situations from one person to be elected to many persons to be elected to an office and where there may be few candidates or many candidates; and</p> <p>WHEREAS There are various ways to implement ranked-choice voting, which need to be investigated; and</p> <p>WHEREAS The goal is that all candidates elected have received votes from a majority of those voting for that office, whether that is achieved using first choice votes only or when subsequent choice votes are incorporated into the calculations in turn; and</p> <p>WHEREAS There are changes to the Charter to be considered; and</p> <p>WHEREAS There are changes to the ballot and the election software that need to be understood;</p> <p>THEREFORE RESOLVED That the Town, by vote of Town Meeting, supports continuing efforts</p>

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	<p>that can lead to implementation of ranked-choice voting at Town elections as a replacement for preliminary elections; and</p> <p>RESOLVED That the Town requests the Town Clerk to serve as liaison with group(s) working on the various efforts described in this resolution.</p>
2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the required Motion?
Response	Obtain Town Meeting vote of support for continuing efforts to lead to reform of the electoral process
3	What does the sponsor gain from a positive action by Town Meeting on the motion?
Response	Personal satisfaction that the Town is supporting the continuing efforts
4	Describe with some specificity how the sponsor envisions how: the benefits will be realized; the problem will be solved; the community at large will gain value in the outcome through the accompanied motion?
Response	As outlined in the text of the resolution
5	How does the proposed motion (and implementation) fit with the relevant Town Bylaws, financial and capital plan, comprehensive plan, and community values as well as relevant state laws and regulations
Response	N/A
6	<p>Have you considered and assessed, qualified and quantified the various impacts to the community such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Town infrastructure (traffic, parking, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbors (noise, traffic, etc.); <input type="checkbox"/> Environment and green issues (energy conservation, pollution, trash, encouraging walking and biking, etc.);
Response	N/A

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7	<p>Who are the critical participants in executing the effort envisioned by the article motion?</p> <p>To this point what efforts have been made to involve those participants who may be accountable, responsible, consulted or just advised/informed on the impacts of executing the motion?</p>
Response	Volunteers are anticipated
8	<p>What steps and communication has the sponsor attempted to assure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interested parties were notified in a timely way and had a chance to participate in the process, that <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appropriate town Boards & Committees were consulted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required public hearings were held
Response	The purpose of the warrant article is to communicate to all in the Town and enlist support of Town Meeting.
9	Why is it required for the Town of Natick AND for the sponsor(s)?
Response	Voting for Town officials is one of the responsibilities for all in the Town.
10	Since submitting the article petition have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?
Response	No
11	What are other towns and communities in the Metro West area, or the Commonwealth of MA doing similar to what your motion seeks to accomplish
Response	Few towns in the Commonwealth have preliminary elections. (Towns with partisan voting do hold primaries.) This proposed motion is intended for Natick.

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12	If this Warrant Article is not approved by Town Meeting what are the consequences to the Town and to the sponsor(s)? Please be specific on both financial and other consequences.
Response	Probably no efforts to reform the electoral process will go forward.