

TOWN OF MARBLEHEAD
Meeting Minutes



Moderator's Committee to Report on the Costs of Implementing Article 44
Wednesday, March 15, 2023, 9:15 AM, Hybrid Meeting, Abbot Hall
Minutes taken by Amy Drinker

Present: Amy Drinker, Katharine Redmond, Laurie Blaisdell, Nancy Powell, Lynn Nadeau, and Pat Franklin

Remote: Jeff Shribman, Chair

Absent: Thatcher Kezer

Amy Drinker, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:15 AM.

It was noted that the sound system in the Select Board room was out of order so the committee's hybrid meeting was connected via a laptop using its camera and audio. This system was set up with the assistance of municipal staff.

Motion to approve the **February 8, 2023 meeting minutes**: After a motion and second to accept the draft minutes, Amy Drinker, Katharine Redmond, Laurie Blaisdell, Nancy Powell, Lynn Nadeau, Jeff Shribman, and Pat Franklin voted in favor.

Motion to approve the **March 1, 2023 meeting minutes**: After a motion and second to accept the draft minutes, Amy Drinker, Katharine Redmond, Laurie Blaisdell, Nancy Powell, Lynn Nadeau, and Jeff Shribman voted in favor. Pat Franklin voted present.

Review of the two sections of the Article 44 study committee's spreadsheet listing how and where municipal committees meet, and costs re: hybrid municipal committee meetings.

• 1. How and where municipal committees meet

Hybrid meeting capabilities

Abbot Hall: One room is outfitted for hybrid meetings (Select Board room)

Mary Alley: One room is outfitted for hybrid meetings (lower floor conference room)

Abbot Public Library: One room (at the Eveleth School); renovated Pleasant Street building will have three hybrid tech rooms.

Jacobi Center: Internet capability at the Jacobi Center is good. *No rooms are currently outfitted for hybrid meetings.* If one or two rooms (conference and dining room) are outfitted (cost of approximately \$6,000/room), it would cover ALL committees and boards for hybrid meetings that do not currently hold hybrid meetings *with flexibility for meeting dates/times across the municipality.* Staff to close the building would be supplied by the Park&Rec department which would be running programs at night concurrently, the caveat being that if Park&Rec can't find someone to staff the evening programs then the building would be closed on certain nights. This could cause hardships for committees that have scheduled a room at the Jacobi Center for their evening meetings.

There is availability for adding municipal meetings at Abbot Hall and Abbot Public Library, subject to availability.

The spreadsheet indicates the ten boards/committees identified in Articles 51/52 for hybrid/remote meeting formats.

The Article 44 Study Committee is identifying hybrid municipal meeting places where town boards and committees can meet. The alternative would be for a board/committee to use money out of its own current operating budget to equip a room in their own building to run hybrid meetings.

• 2. Costs re: hybrid technology for remote meetings

Spreadsheet line items will be divided into short term, long term, periodic/recurring, and other costs:

Jacobi Center estimate to outfit two rooms for hybrid meetings: \$6,000 per room

Mary Alley internet capabilities: there have been intermittent Wi-Fi issues.

(Eventually, there will be a "guest" log-in to the town's Wi-Fi system at municipal buildings).

Long term cost of \$350,000 to upgrade the municipal fiber optic loop is an estimate from 2019 (not necessarily reflecting the current economic climate and costs).

Many line-item costs are TBD (to be determined) including funding for training committees/boards to run hybrid meetings on their own. Costs for recording meetings and storage of those files have not yet been adequately investigated. All the line item costs, even the TBD costs, must be identified somewhere within the town budget line items.

There is no enforcement component of Articles 51/52.

Members recommended that Lynn Nadeau speak with committees who currently meet in person and do not hold hybrid or remote meetings to advise them of Article 51's proposed change to Marblehead bylaws Ch. 24 S. 1.

A question was posed by a committee member: If Articles 51 and/or 52 are approved, and there are appropriations necessary for implementation, how will this be achieved if the FY23-24 budget has already been approved in a previous Town Meeting article?

As previously noted, the hybrid rooms at Abbot Hall, Abbott Public Library, and possibly Mary Alley, can accommodate the three boards/committees covered under Articles 51/52 that do not currently run hybrid meetings (Recreation & Parks, Water & Sewer, and Harbors & Waters). To add one or two rooms at the Jacobi Center (at a cost of approximately \$6,000/room) would improve flexibility in scheduling use of hybrid rooms for municipal meetings.

To help the Finance Committee with its budget deliberations, a draft of the Town Meeting summary report and the Article 44 Study Committee's spreadsheet will be prepared for the Finance Committee for its April 10 warrant articles hearing.

Prior to the next Article 44 meeting, the spreadsheet on costs/where committees meet will be tweaked. Work on the draft summary report to Town Meeting (with accompanying slides) will continue.

Article 52 recordings and storage costs: there is a recording that is created during a Zoom meeting. But it has to be downloaded/linked to the town website for public access. Transcripts of meetings are not accurate and committees might choose not to make that the recording of record for their meeting. Recordings of meetings are not to be confused with minutes of a meeting. Per Open Meeting Law, minutes must be maintained and made available to the public upon request. Many committees/boards/commissions currently post their minutes on the town's website:

<https://www.marblehead.org/minutes-and-agendas>

Other business: none.

Public comment: none.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 4, 9:00 AM at Abbot Hall.

<https://www.marblehead.org/minutes-and-agendas>

By a **MOTION** and second from the committee, and voted unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 10:25 AM.
Meeting minutes submitted by Amy Drinker, committee recording secretary

NOTES:

Information regarding Massachusetts open meeting law can be found on the mass.gov website:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-meeting-law-guide-and-educational-materials>

<https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>

Updated guidance on holding meetings pursuant to the Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures

(now extended until March 31, 2023)

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/updated-guidance-on-holding-meetings-pursuant-to-the-act-extending-certain-covid-19-measures>

The Town of Marblehead ARPA Spending Plan as of October 12, 2022 can be found at:

https://www.marblehead.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif4661/f/uploads/2022-10-12_select_board_arpa_presentation.pdf

The 193rd General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts:

An Act to modernize participation in public meetings

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/HD3261>

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/SD2017>

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/H3025>

TOWN OF MARBLEHEAD 2023 TOWN WARRANT

https://www.marblehead.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif4661/f/uploads/2023_annual_town_meeting_warrant_final.pdf