

Hello.

As part of the Town's efforts at continuous improvement, we posted a survey on the town's web site and asked attendees at town meeting to respond to the survey to help us improve Town Meeting. We feel it important that all Maynard residents had an opportunity to review the feedback we received.

As Moderator, I felt a responsibility to respond to how we might address some of the voter's concerns. Addressing these concerns will be a team effort by many of the town officials and committee members. In the survey you will see text in red italic signifying my responses.

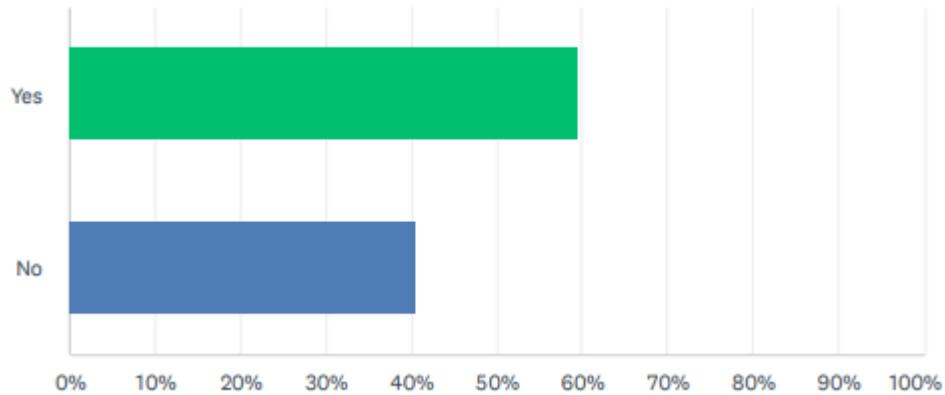
Thank you everyone for your survey participation and also thanks to the open mindedness of all town departments for improvement.

Dick Downey

Maynard Town Moderator

Q1 Did you attend the 2022 Special Town Meeting on October 24th?

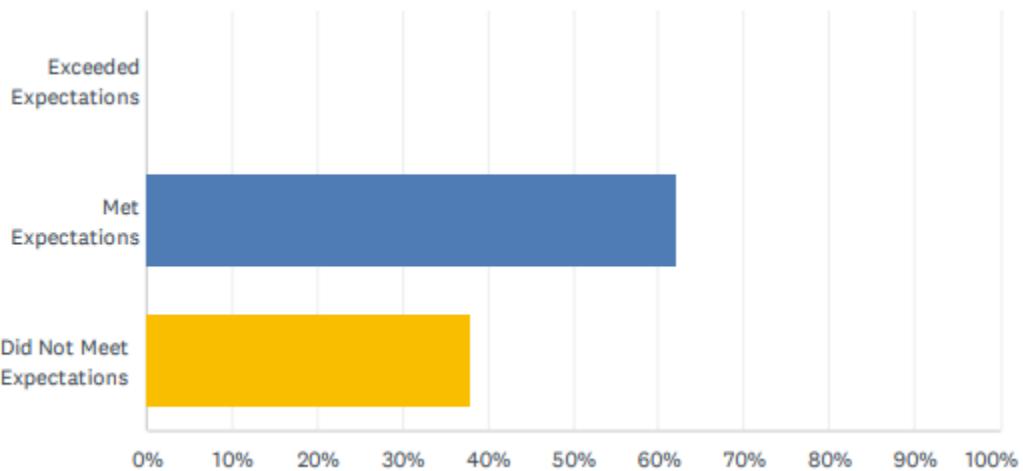
Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	59.52%	25
No	40.48%	17
TOTAL		42

Q2 How would you rate your experience at the Special Town Meeting?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 13



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Exceeded Expectations	0.00%
Met Expectations	62.07%
Did Not Meet Expectations	37.93%
TOTAL	29

Q3 What do you think should be improved at a future Town Meeting?

Answered: 37 Skipped: 5

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	<p>Cross posting notifications across all Maynard town pages with enough notice for parents to lock in child care.</p> <p><i>Lots of folks commented on not being aware of the meeting or finding out about it through non-traditional methods. Our normal procedure is to post it on a sign in front of town hall, to the town web, place in the Action newspaper, and on the Town's Facebook page as well as an announcement on HyperReach (aka: Reverse 911 and Robocall). Nevertheless, We plan on further promoting Town Meetings such as making more people aware of HyperReach for Mobile phones, texts and email so that more people get updates. We shall also ask people who read the Town's FB to resend the announcement to other Maynard residents. We will use the portable electronic sign as well.</i></p>	10/31/2022 10:49 AM
2	<p>For one, the moderator should not use his ability to have the last word on an article to endorse any article...how is that constitutional?</p> <p><i>Good Point. I did have some concerns myself. A few folks made comments about the Town Meeting being legislative and the SelectBoard being administrative. There was the implication the Selectboard was usurping power of the Town Meeting who should dictate certain things. I didn't want voters to be left with the wrong impression of each group's responsibilities. Town Meeting establishes policy and sets the financial pot of money, but it is the responsibility of the administrative branch of government thru the SelectBoard to run the day-to-day activities. I shall be more careful of any comments by me in the future></i></p>	10/31/2022 10:34 AM
3	<p>I did not attend because I'm at risk of complications or death from covid and I saw nothing about precautions. Additionally, I've attended most town meetings since I moved here.</p> <p><i>This is a difficult area for the town. We don't have a ready answer for how things will be at the next meeting in May, but we will put the concern on our check list.</i></p>	10/30/2022 7:59 AM
4	<p>Sound amplification is very challenged. I heard about half of what was said, and I know the young people were trying hard to make sure the microphones were adjusted.</p> <p><i>Please see #15. We will be looking at the possibility of setting up PA speakers in the rear of the hall for better sound distribution. Also, as moderator I shall ask people to speak directly into the microphones.</i></p>	10/30/2022 7:22 AM
5	<p>Get more citizens to attend. What enticements could be used? The sound system needs to improve. Some students seem shy about accurate aiming of the Mike's. I was not far behind the left mike & it was often hard to hear the speaker. Consider those with hearing aids. Maybe have 1 or 2 stand & stretch breaks during town meeting.</p> <p><i>We shall update our check list to train the students about microphone placement in addition to the comments above in Item #4</i></p>	10/26/2022 9:54 PM
6	<p>It is often hard to hear comments and questions from the voters. People need to be reminded often to speak up and speak into the microphone.</p> <p><i>Please see #4</i></p>	10/26/2022 8:14 PM
7	<p>Great job overall. Would like each meeting to begin with a report from FinCom and/or Finance director with executive summary of current fiscal year status and major upcoming budget positives or challenges especially at ATM when budgets are to be voted on</p> <p><i>The FinCom holds a pre-meeting session about a week in advance of the Town Meeting to go over all the articles. They review what research they have done and why they recommend, or not recommend for each article. Attendees are encouraged to ask questions. To give the same level of detail at the Town Meeting could prolong the meeting to potentially two nights. This was how things were back in the 70's and 80's. Most Voters have been clear that they want meetings kept to one night. From the Town's perspective the second night was difficult getting a quorum.</i></p>	10/26/2022 4:43 PM

8	Sound system seems distorted to me so it's difficult to hear speakers. <i>Please see #4</i>	10/26/2022 10:15 AM
9	I think we need to consider new ways to enable people to participate in our town government. We have really useful new technology available. I think we should work on making it possible for Maynard citizens who cannot spend hours and hours in an auditorium on a specific evening to attend, speak up, and vote on local issues. <i>Town Meeting has specific requirements that we must follow per state law. The Massachusetts Moderators Associations has a subcommittee that is looking at how a remote Open Town Meeting may be structured so that one could attend and vote from home over the internet. At this time, we have not been able to come up with an algorithm that would securely identify registered voters. If and when we do come up with one, it must be approved by the State Legislature. Current projection is probably at least 5 years away.</i>	10/25/2022 8:40 PM
10	More accessibility for working families of young kids. A Monday night at 7pm doesn't work. Should have a virtual component or ability to send out and mail back ballots to vote on special items. <i>Town meeting is meant to be interactive by definition and is different than a town election where fixed ballot questions can be voted upon. Please see comments about remote meetings in #9 above</i>	10/25/2022 7:58 PM
11	on article 5 I was for it then against it and was eventually for it. Explain the articles better <i>Sometimes we deal with an issue so much that we assume certain things and don't realize that the audience doesn't have the background information to understand what seems obvious to us. We shall try to be more aware of that and make better prepared presentations.</i>	10/25/2022 6:52 PM
12	Volume of people asking questions. Perhaps have the Moderator repeat the question. <i>Please see #4</i>	10/25/2022 6:41 PM
13	Please get the word about town meeting, including robo calls, a banner or electric sign in the middle of town <i>Please see #1</i>	10/25/2022 5:15 PM
14	Sometimes residents are given too much time to go on and on vs getting to the point of their question. <i>Although unstated, I generally allow each person 3 minutes at which point, I ask them to get to the point. It is a balancing act that I believe is fair.</i>	10/25/2022 5:05 PM
15	I was there, but in the past barriers have been: the late hour, no child care, lack of adequate advertising/awareness. The leadership in this town needs to make *everything* more accessible. That includes publicizing meetings and information widely, capping the time these meetings take, warrants with plain language translation (like the state does for ballot questions), adequate and advertised child care, providing *multiple* forums for asking questions and discussion, and flexible, accessible voting. <i>See #1. See #7. Re child care, it is provided by the Maynard High School National Honor Society students and has been referenced in the HyperReach announcement. We shall put it on our check list to promote it more fully. Regarding capping the time, our cutoff time is 11:00 pm should the meeting go that long. We have streamlined the meeting as best as we can without affecting the voters' ability to ask questions and make comments. Secret ballots are alternated to reduce dead time. Presenters are asked to be on stage prior to their articles so no time is lost walking back and forth, etc.</i>	10/25/2022 4:45 PM
16	Quicker Electronic Voting <i>Fifty-one towns out of 259 have adopted Electronic Voting (EV). It is somewhat expensive. Nevertheless, our Town Clerk has submitted a request for Maynard to adopt it. The Mass Moderators Association have members who have adopted EV and are willing to help us evaluate the pros and cons.</i>	10/25/2022 4:25 PM
17	some way to provide concerns/questions ahead of time <i>Please see #7</i>	10/25/2022 3:39 PM

18	<p>It could be made more accessible, if we have to have a town meeting - my preference would be virtual, my second choice would be outdoors, and my last choice would be masks required. I'm immunocompromised, as is my child. I don't want to be at a big indoor event, and my child couldn't use mass, indoor childcare if offered.</p> <p><i>Please see #3. As you may know we have had outdoor meetings during the height of COVID. We have lucked out with the weather, but that is always a concern, and the cost is considerably more expensive than indoor meetings. We are looking at suggesting masked and unmasked people be separated to different sides of the auditorium however that has legal issues that we will be looking into.</i></p>	10/25/2022 3:13 PM
19	<p>Better audio.</p> <p><i>Please see #4</i></p>	10/25/2022 2:24 PM
20	<p>Live stream the meetings so busy families and parents of young children can attend and vote remotely. Over-representation of senior citizens typically skews the vote on issues involving our school age children, making Maynard an undesirable place to raise a family.</p> <p><i>Please see #9</i></p>	10/25/2022 12:55 PM
21	<p>More publicity - town banners, robo calls, etc. Also while COVID is still everywhere, should be designed to be low risk.</p> <p><i>Please see #1 and #9</i></p>	10/25/2022 12:32 PM
22	<p>Timing (on a night of an NFL game wasn't ideal) and access appear to be a challenge for some residents. I noticed the event being recorded but there was no web conference broadcast happening... If there actually was a broadcast happening, I didn't see anything about it online (website, twitter).</p> <p><i>Please see #9. We are also putting on our check list to look at minimizing conflicts with other events. Because of the legal restriction currently on remote meeting, we have intentionally refrained from having a simultaneous broadcast of town meeting to boast attendance at the meeting. We do have a delayed broadcast the town meeting on WAVM.</i></p>	10/25/2022 12:15 PM
23	<p>Allow voters to vote from home or vote early</p> <p><i>Please see #9</i></p>	10/25/2022 11:57 AM
24	<p>Virtual attendance option, remote/mail-in voting.</p> <p><i>Please see #9</i></p>	10/25/2022 11:23 AM
25	<p>I think attendance could be improved, but I'm not quite sure how. I think there are lots of newcomers to Maynard who might want to be engaged but aren't aware of these meetings, or</p> <p>how important they are. I also wonder if secret or majority ballot voting could be done electronically, like the way many college courses operate with voting or selecting answers to a question.</p> <p><i>Please see #1 and #16</i></p>	10/25/2022 10:04 AM
26	<p>More explanation of the articles. It wasn't very helpful when most of the people just read the printed text. Only one presenter seemed to take the time to explain things.</p> <p><i>Please see #11</i></p>	10/25/2022 9:50 AM
27	<p>See Facebook posts on Maynard friends and Family. The comments say it all.</p>	10/25/2022 9:46 AM

28	<p>The timing during the week doesn't work for working families. Have meetings on Sat morning at Fowler. The moderator is unnecessarily and harshly critical if ppl don't follow exactly how he wants and the attitude of the SB and Town officials speaking is often condescending. Change personal approaches. Fin Com plays such an insignificant role and just goes along with Town Officials, there is no way to accommodate the needs of immunocompromised individuals, there was no street sign at the intersection advertising the meeting to promote turnout, the meeting is only formatted to support the needs of able bodied individuals without kids, most matters try to take powers away from voters who become more disenfranchised with process, and new ideas are genuinely not appreciated without the need by SB or Fin Com to "rebuttal" with their preferred approach. DPW needs to keep his answers more concise and less fluff. He loses ppl trying to sound like the smartest person in the room.</p> <p><i>Annual Town Meeting time is set by Charter/ByLaws which is also the template for Special Town Meeting. We were allowed special dispensation during Covid which has now expired. We will ask the Charter Review Committee to perhaps allow alternative dates and times. Please see other previous comments</i></p>	10/25/2022 9:38 AM
29	<p>Have it on a Saturday 10-4 or provide a babysitting service.</p> <p><i>We shall ask the Charter Review Committee to look at altering time and date requirements for Town Meetings. One can read the Charter and ByLaws on the town website. Please see #15</i></p>	10/25/2022 9:35 AM
30	<p>Town meeting needs to be made more accessible. Working individuals, parents of young kids, and many others are not able to attend because of the timing and format of the event. In the 21st century, it is necessary to reform this form of government that remains inaccessible for so many.</p> <p><i>Please see #9 and #10</i></p>	10/25/2022 9:29 AM
31	<p>Clearer language about the issues to be discussed. Shorter meetings.</p> <p><i>Please see #11 and #15</i></p>	10/25/2022 9:24 AM
32	<p>Holding TM on weekend, daytime, with lots of very public notice, with townwide cooperation about not scheduling conflicting events for families/children. Scheduling at least 6 months in advance as best as possible. Making childcare availability clear and widely advertised (I heard some people didn't know). Make the premeeting (FinCom) discussions more widely in public awareness and continue to hold those in recorded and hybrid setting so everyone can see them or catch up. Town Meeting banners. During Covid, which seems to be forever, a better way for people who need to be especially careful and masked to keep safe. Town Hall knows Covid is not over... so for indoor TM, masked to the left, unmasked to the right? Dunno... Many complaints about the audio quality, difficulty of hearing the Town Manager and DPW head, because they speak fast in the echoey space. (This goes for hybrid SB meetings as well; audio need to be better). Was concerned that the Moderator may have crossed the line between informing and lobbying on one article...but have great respect for his judgment in the main. We need to make TM safe, accessible, and sexy!</p> <p><i>Annual Town Meetings dates and time are set out in the ByLaws which give over a year's advanced notice. Special Town Meeting have certain requirement laid out in the Charter/ByLaws. The just completed Special TM was announced in Mid July. Please see #22, #2 and other previous comments.</i></p>	10/25/2022 9:07 AM
33	<p>The sound system was totally inadequate for those of us sitting near the rear of the auditorium. It would have helped if speakers on stage had spoken more directly into the mic. Also do not let audience offer opinions—only ask real questions. Disappointment that no procedure offered for question #5 if requests are to be made thru SB.</p> <p><i>Please see #4. I think that opinions are an important part of Town Meetings. Hopefully with an explanation of why they hold that opinion to help voters understand the pros and cons to help make an informed decision. Impact fees discussed in Article 5 have very specific restrictions and uses. Please feel free to offer your thoughts to the SelectBoard via attendance at their meeting, or via electronic or paper correspondence</i></p>	10/25/2022 8:28 AM
34	<p>Proxy voting.</p> <p><i>Please See #9</i></p>	10/25/2022 6:43 AM

35	more outreach to residents about the meeting and info about attendance rates <i>Please see #1</i>	10/24/2022 9:13 PM
36	The Select Board members should be better prepared to explain the issues that they introduce, rather than just reading the text aloud. <i>Please see #11</i>	10/24/2022 8:52 PM
37	Moderator crossed line with unsolicited advice about an article. should have made comment from floor and/or let assistant take over for rest of meeting. <i>Please see #2</i>	10/24/2022 8:48 PM

Q4 What did you like best about the Special Town Meeting?

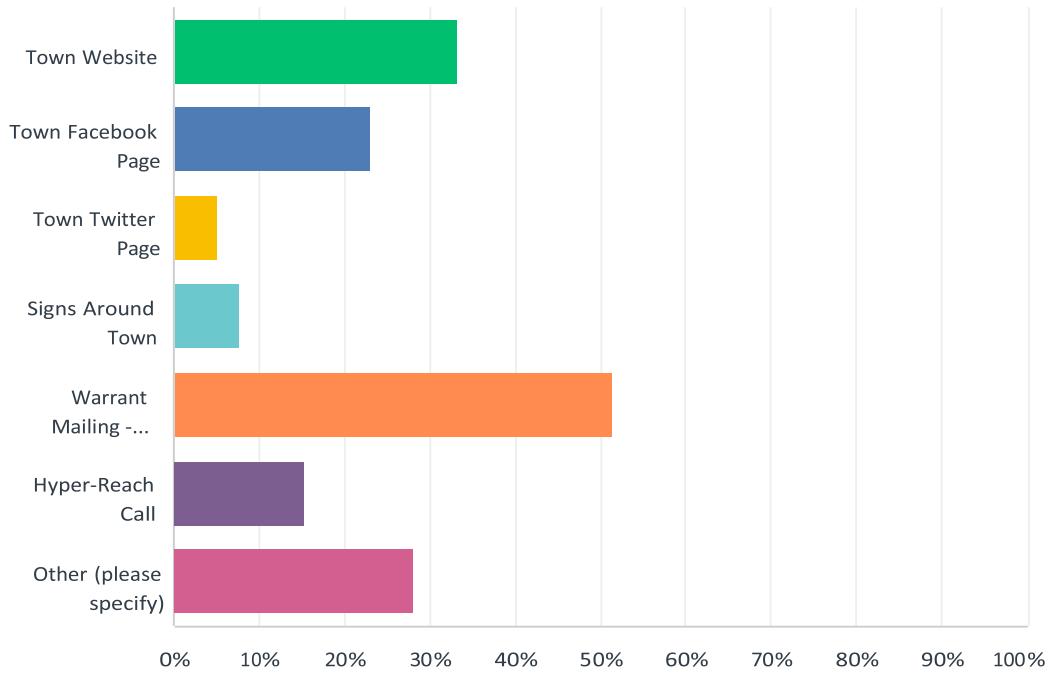
Answered: 28 Skipped: 14

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Nothing	10/31/2022 10:49 AM
2	Childcare was provided and it was relatively short.	10/31/2022 10:34 AM
3	Moderator kept things moving. Comments were thoughtful.	10/30/2022 7:22 AM
4	It was refreshingly short. I find it hard to be alert at 12 pm at previous town meetings. How did the outdoor town meetings compare in attendance to indoor ones? The pandemic changed habits & lives. <i>Date Attendance Location</i> <i>10/24/2022 94 Indoor</i> <i>6/11/2022 169 Outdoor</i> <i>10/16/2021 227 Outdoor</i> <i>5/15/2021 81 Outdoor</i> <i>10/3/2020 160 Outdoor</i> <i>6/13/2020 185 Outdoor</i> <i>10/28/2019 380 Indoor</i> <i>5/20/2019 343 Indoor</i> <i>11/8/2018 122 Indoor</i> <i>5/21/2018 284 Indoor</i>	10/26/2022 9:54 PM
5	The various discussions were thoughtful and respectful.	10/26/2022 8:14 PM
6	Well paced and mainly very civil, liked DPW director's explanations on W/S	10/26/2022 4:43 PM
7	Checking in was easy. The moderator does an exceptionally good job in my opinion.	10/26/2022 10:15 AM
8	I liked when the moderator said regarding article 5 that we don't vote for which pothole to fill. <u>someone should have said something like that in the beginning</u>	10/25/2022 6:52 PM
9	I always enjoy seeing people I don't normally run into. I also like hearing the differing opinions.	10/25/2022 6:41 PM
10	It gives thoughtful residents the opportunity to ask good questions and hold departments accountable.	10/25/2022 5:05 PM
11	It was shorter than usual.	10/25/2022 4:45 PM
12	The questions and presentation of information from the Town	10/25/2022 4:25 PM
13	having DPW there to answer questions	10/25/2022 3:39 PM
14	Chance for anyone who wanted to speak to do so	10/25/2022 2:24 PM

15	<p>My faith in local democracy was actually strengthened yesterday. :) Turn out did not seem terrible to me. While I voted No, and lost, a couple of times I was still content with the level of civility. I understood the concern of the moderator when a member of FinCom was asked to speak as an individual. While it felt a bit harsh in the moment, it had to be clarified. Maybe a short video about norms/rules etc. would be helpful for folks new to town meetings. That way we could feel a little more comfortable with the format. Just listening to all of the instructions read aloud at the beginning probably is not absorbed the same way by everyone. (Related topic: accessibility)</p> <p><i>Will try to create a document of do's and don'ts for new committee members so that committee members are aware of the ground rules. I feel badly that a lack of foresight put a FinCom member in this awkward situation.</i></p>	10/25/2022 12:15 PM
16	I didn't go but I would have liked to know about it earlier or had the option to vote early	10/25/2022 11:57 AM
17	Moderator gave time for questions and comments from residents, as well as giving time to Maynard employees to explain the articles and answer some of the questions. The moderator also helped to keep the meeting on track which ended up lasting just 1.5 hours.	10/25/2022 11:27 AM
18	Opportunities to hear comments and questions from residents.	10/25/2022 11:23 AM
19	This meeting felt efficient and respectful.	10/25/2022 10:04 AM
20	Good comments from audience	10/25/2022 9:50 AM
21	N/A	10/25/2022 9:46 AM
22	The availability to hear my fellow residents, the robo call, hearing each SB present an article. Asst Town Administrator's sincerity when speaking and expressing appreciation for feedback received.	10/25/2022 9:38 AM
23	I couldn't make it due to childcare issues.	10/25/2022 9:35 AM
24	It was both shocking and (from the public health point of view) a relief that it wasn't crowded. It ran well. Loved that we could return our ballot and pencils finally. Because it was a short warrant there was time for people to speak and be responded to; not much one can do about the packed spring TM warrant!	10/25/2022 9:07 AM
25	Giving people the chance to ask relevant questions. Excellent use of technology with HS students	10/24/2022 9:40 PM
26	ability to exercise my right to vote!	10/24/2022 9:13 PM
27	The contemplative discussion from my fellow residents.	10/24/2022 8:52 PM
28	women with baby advocating for retaining what little practical public decision making there is.	10/24/2022 8:48 PM

Q5 How did you learn about this Special Town Meeting?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Town Website	33.33% 13
Town Facebook Page	23.08% 9
Town Twitter Page	5.13% 2
Signs Around Town	7.69% 3
Warrant Mailing - Action Unlimited	51.28% 20
Hyper-Reach Call	15.38% 6
Other (please specify)	28.21% 11
Total Respondents: 39	

Question 5, "Other"

I didn't!! Along with hundreds of other town citizens. Which is a huge problem 10/31/2022 10:49 AM

I got the hyperreach call, but was already looking out on the town website for the date. Never got the action unlimited with the warrant (and was looking out for it) 10/31/2022 10:49 AM

The Town needs to do a much better job of making people aware of Town Meeting and that there is baby sitting. Electronic signs around town would be great 10/26/2022 08:14 PM

Robocall 10/26/2022 04:43 PM

also the reverse 911. We really should make more use of the electronic signboards in general. None were displayed as far as I know. 10/25/2022 05:05 PM

Another resident 10/25/2022 04:45 PM

friend 10/25/2022 12:32 PM

There was a post about it on a town FB page. Went to the town website and couldn't find easily accessible information about the meeting. What was on the agenda? 10/25/2022 11:01 AM

I had no idea 10/25/2022 09:46 AM

Posts by various individuals on FB. 10/25/2022 09:29 AM