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Town Meeting Colleagues:

I filed Article 9 with the intention of having Town Meeting begin earlier and end earlier each evening given that the traditional 11pm end time seems unreasonable and comes with disadvantages listed below. I appreciate the thoughtful and careful consideration afforded to this matter by the Town Meeting Procedures Committee and am grateful to the Select Board for seeking the Procedures Committee guidance and taking time to receive feedback from the Procedures Committee prior to making its recommendation.

I offer for your consideration my Top Ten Reasons Why Town Meeting Should Begin at 7:30pm

#10: Late night policy decisions aren't necessarily ideal

#9: There may be Town Meeting members who struggle to stay awake until 11pm

#8: It is important to respect the time and needs of town employees, board/commission/committee members, ACMI staff and other news media, town consultants, legislators, and others who watch and/or speak at Town Meeting, including students

#7: An earlier end time may allow for increased sleep making for healthier habits and more rested Town Meeting members

#6: The later into the evening the meeting runs, the more likely it is that Town Meeting members depart before adjournment

#5: Sticking with an 11pm end time may deter some residents from being willing to serve on Town Meeting, serving as a potential barrier for increasing the diversity of Town Meeting membership in all of its forms

#4: January 2023 Town Meeting Member ATM survey results (Q23) indicate that 61% preferred a start time earlier than 8pm, aside from the first night

#3: According to preferences from the December 2023 STM TM Member survey with 154 respondents (provided by the Town Moderator to the Select Board on 3.18.2024), the top timing choice was 7:00-10:00pm; the next most popular choice was 7:30-10:30pm, assuming a 3-hour length

#2: Town Meeting members who have early morning work obligations, nontraditional work schedules, and/or caregiving responsibilities may appreciate having an earlier end time and more time to rest

#1: A modified start time would affirm that traditions can adapt over time in response to changing needs and/or preferences of the membership of a legislative body

I recognize that there would need to be shifts made to the scheduling of pre-Town Meeting meetings of the Select Board, Arlington Redevelopment Board, and Finance Committee to accommodate an earlier start time. I find that these scheduling concerns are valid, but not insurmountable. If Town Meeting determines that an earlier start time is in order, I am hopeful that such bodies could accommodate an earlier start time.

I respectfully ask for your support of Article 9. Many thanks!

Christa M. Kelleher

Christa M. Kelleher TMM-Precinct 5