

Do you have any comments or suggestions about how town meeting is conducted? (In pre-COVID years we've been at Mary Hogan School gym and Town Hall Theater and in recent years returned to MUHS auditorium with improved microphone access.)

- Keep doing an in person meeting with an option to view a live stream.
- I would like to see more public info better distributed about topics covered at the meeting.
- MUHS is great. Needs to end earlier.
- Good location.
- More snacks!
- better use of microphones - use them correctly.
- The sound system was inconsistent and some speakers were hard to hear despite instructions to speak very close to the mike.
- What happened with the idea of using our town gym? Used to love that. I hated elementary school for the Town Meeting! I hated sitting in high school cafeteria as overflow crowd! Don't mess up Town Hall Theater!
- better microphones
- I miss the old gym. Moveable chairs, able to get up and move about. The auditorium felt confining.
- I like it at MUHS and on MCTV
- Location is fine.
- Need a better sound system - hand mics didn't work unless held exactly right. Too much time spent selectboard getting up and off stage for presentations. Town meeting worked well in old gym - everyone on floor level - just using screen up on stage. MUHS auditorium seats comfortable enough.
- I have never attended the town meeting
- Include live streaming
- Have a good sound check rehearsal before starting to maximize mic volume. Teach people how best to hold mic. With lower attendance at 100, consider returning to a gym with mic stations set up for people to line up. I'd rather have a well lit easier system for speaking and seeing people. Position the moderator so that she doesn't have to move away from the media screen or presenters. Offer child care. Thank you for the hard work of preparing and presenting materials. Use MUCH larger font on the postcard warning notice and add some other useful info. It is a shame to miss this mailing opportunity to share more. Town Report is missing some of our committees still. Again we're missing Public Health and Safety, Conservation Commission and Tree Committee. I appreciate the work of compiling the town report. Laura Asermily
- I think that mail-in or in-person voting would see more participation. In person annual meetings to decide such important town matters are not well attended enough and therefore not representative of the majority of residents. Ballots would likely see greater participation providing a more balanced vote.

- all these locations are ok
- No comment
- No comments
- Town Hall Theater is my favorite. It seems to be the right size now and it brings people downtown--to the center of town.
- No, I am a business/property owner, not a resident.
- A blended approach that allows those unable to attend in person to participate via ZOOM would be better.
- No.
- Would love to see Town Meeting be an informational meeting with Australian Ballot voting for warned measured. I think you would see a higher voting turnout and more representative voting if you used Australian Ballot voting.
- MUHS is the best location
- No
- Town Hall Theater Please
- THT was nice, but the high school auditorium is good, and Mary Hogan has a nice feel to it, though a little harder to hear. Here's a weird idea: Could it rotate among various churches so people could see what we have and make use of underused space?
- THT may be a better fit given turnout
- I could not attend the meeting in person this year and it was very difficult to hear and make everything out in the broadcast. Better video and sound quality was needed
- Muhs
- Works well
- MUHS auditorium is great!
- Town Hall Theater was the best!
- Video conference
- MUHS worked well. I would like the option to purchase dinner and snacks prior to the meeting- surely that would be a good fundraiser for a local group
- No suggestions.
- No
- MUHS
- I'd like more pre-reads to prepare comments.
- No
- The auditorium at MUHS is the best location, with ample parking and seating.
- I watched it live online. There were problems with the audio. It was jarring to hear the volume of the microphones at one level on the stage and a very different level for the people in the seats.
- No comment. Prefer microphone access for better hearing level.
- None
- I am satisfied with the current format.
- Zoom in option would be helpful.
- None. Wasn't able to attend this year.
- I liked the selectboard not being on stage. I liked the Collins award being awarded by a selectboard member but the remarks went on far too long, especially as she wasn't a town resident! Sound continues to be problematic. From where I sat, the moderator blocked view

of the speaker at the podium. Could the table have two microphones for Kathleen and Brian?
Can there be 4 mikes for the public?

- Town Meeting is fabulous. Perhaps on addition could be community members have a place a few weeks BEFORE meeting to present general questions to various depts. The town could forward questions to correct town depts. then at Town Meeting - some of these general/basic questions can be addressed (some people are introverted and shy and don't want to ask questions at the forum). In addition, various depts can get ahead of issues before the meeting.
- As someone who is immune-compromised, the return to in-person only town meeting has made this an inaccessible event for me. I would imagine that given the large number of elderly people in Middlebury, we as a town are now endangering these folks as well or making them choose not to attend. If you look at who is dying from COVID in Vermont and the US it is primarily elderly and immune-compromised. How about choosing a town meeting format that is at least hybrid. I feel like we have the technology but maybe not the energy to try to take care of everyone in our community.
- I like the MUHS location. I think the moderator was a bit too "familiar" this year with audience members/voters. Town Meeting is an official business meeting and the moderator missed some Robert's Rules steps or otherwise completely ignored them (forgot to ask for motion movement before discussion, acknowledged her husband's motion movement by saying, "thank you honey", didn't adhere to speech protocol by allowing a voter to enter into conversation, etc.).
- prefer anyplace that has ample parking and accesibility for handicapped individuals (not so with THT)
- No
- In my opinion town meeting should be a state holiday with the meeting starting at between 9:00am and 10:00am. It should have a lunch break and tables for people to discuss issues. It should continue until it is finished. (Maybe 3:00pm -4:00 pm.
- Yes. Much louder volume for mikes. And a tech asst available to help with technology. And a third check beforehand on charts that will be shown on big screen.
- Make there a zoom option so people with small children or work conflicts can participate easily and vote remotely!! It's very inequitable to have things u can only vote on in person.
- All voting for everything that cost money should be done by Australian ballot.
- I would really like to see more participation. There is almost zero representation from young families, poorer working class families, and minorities. Mostly retirees or hardcore local political-goers
- 1) This should be a hybrid meeting with an opportunity for ALL residents to ACTIVELY participate, including those who may not be able to venture out on a dark winter night. Other towns do this. We do it for Selectboard meetings. 2) The town should engage the professional services of an audio-visual professional to ensure that microphones and audio systems are functioning IN ADVANCE of the meeting. This should include the MCTV professionals and key speakers. Clear instructions on exactly how to use hand-held microphones should be given to the public at the beginning of the meeting. The hand-held mics did not pick up the sound for MCTV well at all. 3) The MUHS auditorium is a theater. Do not hide the location of important speakers at the rear of the stage behind others sitting at a table! Have you seen the MCTV recording of this meeting? The person speaking at the main microphone is barely visible. From most places within the auditorium the speaker could barely be seen. Put a lectern with the primary microphone at the FRONT of the stage. Really – right at the front! Put the podium with the moderator off to the side. We should be able to see the people speaking. Consider using the theater's lighting for this purpose. 4) If the turnout is going to be this small, the Town Hall Theater would be a better venue for this meeting. Better sight lines and audio, and people would be closer to each other. Non-residents could sit in the balcony.
- Keep it up! I'm sorry I couldn't make it this year.

- I was surprised to read after election that major budget votes were done live at Meeting but not on day-after Australian ballot along with school budget votes. I thought Meeting was a chance to discuss and debate but next day ballot decided everything. How is it decided what is voted on at meeting vs what goes on the Aus ballot?...it seemed arbitrary.
- Loved having in person again. The stage set up was awkward and the audio was problematic, both might be able to be addressed at a better venue
- Wish it were more accessible in terms of time. It's a big commitment to make after a full day at work (we essentially skipped dinner to attend, ended up leaving early from the meeting and had a 10 pm light supper). Most of the attendees seemed to be at least 50, few younger parents, very few BIPOC...so it seems that some voices were underrepresented/missing. Microphone access and ASL interpreter was appreciated, as well as the constant reminder from moderator to speak INTO the mic. Some of the slides in the presentation were not very accessible for those with vision issues - especially the pie charts with red text over a low-contrast color. Please consider using a color contrast checker when designing slides/graphics in the future:
<https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker>
- No comment
- We don't go because we are still COVID-phobic.
- No
- I prefer Town Hall Theater! support that all future town meeting decisions be made by Australian ballot.
- MUHS seems best
- There seems to be a lot of pressure about the time, and it affects the tone of the meeting and residents' opportunities to share their questions and concerns. This, in turn, creates an atmosphere of "informing" people rather than active participation. Could we start earlier?
- I found this year's meeting location very frustrating. The space is too large and too dark, and the sound system clearly needed to be cranked up. Town leaders and staff should be made familiar with the use of both the fixed and the hand-held microphones, which must be close to the speaker's mouth. I felt that the business of the meeting was handled well, and appreciated the more condensed budget presentation. But in terms of "production values", the meeting seemed amateurish and unrehearsed. I think either Mary Hogan or the Town Hall Theater would be a much better venue.
- Well presented, a lot of hard work by all. Recommend that the Pie Charts be in the Capital Improvement Expenses format. Much easier to read. Some of the info presented might have been bullet statements rather than sentences. Could not read the sentences. Recommend that the PA system be tested ahead of time. It was difficult to hear some of the presenters.
- Vote on more items by paper ballot.
- MUHS auditorium is great. I think it's a good idea to remind the public that we operate a high school and let them see part of it.
- Need to get more residents to attend or put the important issues on the ballot. It was appalling to see the low attendance and the very important issues that were voted on.
- Nope
- May have improved access but it doesn't have improved microphones or much training for folks using them. Definite room for improvement here (I have good hearing and few problems but way too many people were struggling to hear)
- The live broadcast sound was not good.
- Nice to have it in person. Could the town report on the portion of registered voters who attended vs # who vote in ballot vs # of voting age people in the town?

- MUHS is a great location, more comfortable than the other places and better for coming and going. Also the microphones. THT is hard to run mics up and down the stairs and less space all around.
- Have it in the former municipal gym that you idiots tore down.
- Watching Town Meeting live on MCTV, the sound frequently changed and was frequently barely audible.
- Prefer Town Hall Theater
- No
- MUHS auditorium is okay. People need instruction about mic use (hold horizontally close to mouth). Answers to citizen questions should be complete and straightforward. That was mostly the case last night (selectboard speakers seemed well prepared) but a number of responses left me wondering what the answer was.
- I'm watching town meeting on MCTV and there has been quite a variation in microphone/sound functioning, even from the microphones on stage. I Appreciate the fact that it's livestreamed. TY!
- Prefer MUHS
- I would like to see the opportunity to participate via teleconference continue.
- MUHS is not wonderful but better than other options.
- Glad it is returning to the high school!
- No
- The use of Australian balloting has eviscerated Town Meeting. It has become a dim shadow of what it was just a few years ago. Residents now have little opportunity to verbalize their concerns or to argue for or against proposals. No longer can they amend anything they are asked to vote on. Consequently there is little reason to attend town meetings. In addition elected officials learn less about what their constituents think, and voters learn less about what their neighbors think. Since few voters attend the informational meetings that are held before Town Meeting, they end up basing their votes on little understanding and knowledge. All the same is true of school district meetings. With the widespread use of online applications, Middlebury ought to be able to create a way for people who are unable to attend meetings in person to be able to speak and vote from remote locations so that we can have vigorous in-person meetings that everyone can participate in.
- It would be great if there was child care!
- I think you're doing a great job.
- Please continue Zoom access to the meetings!
- No
- I think the MUHS auditorium is an appropriate place.
- Continued Zoom availability for those who can't physically attend MUHS auditorium if good
- I'd rather vote on the budget by ballot. It's unconstitutional that I can only vote by being in person at a specific time. Town meeting only works for privileged people. How many registered voters are there? How many come to town meeting? The moment has passed, but this stupid tradition out of its misery.
- I would prefer to be able to be more spread out...maybe the MH gym is best for that? I understand it is difficult to run a hybrid meeting that includes voting, but glad people can at least watch on YouTube.
- No comment
- No
- Mush better
- MUHS is best.
- This is my first year in Middlebury, so I can't say, but any of those options sound fine.

- Outmoded form of citizen governance. Town meeting should be informational only. And citizens should have the opportunity to submit questions in advance of the meeting and the Town should answer those questions.
- no comments
- I like Mary Hogan, less comfy chairs but easier to move around.