

—Slug:.....COMM-0861.opin.letter.000_white
—Contributor.....Cristine A. White
—Contributor email.....Crisw57@hotmail.com
—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers
—Format.....LETTERS - Opinions - Letters to the Editor
—Dateline.....Newfane
—Article Number:.....43345



Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Lack of time or patience to sit through a Town Meeting

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2

####END SUBHED####

3 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

4 In the weeks after Town Meeting, I am left with a simple
5 question. How does a town with 1,645 residents and 1,467
6 registered voters end up with barely 100 people participating in
7 decisions that affect everyone?

8 Few questions are asked. Few suggestions are offered.
9 Debate on anything of substance is rare.

10 By the time proposals on national or international issues
11 appear near the end of the agenda, many people have already

12 left. They have gone to work, picked up their children, or simply
13 returned to their daily lives.

14 In Newfane this year, two such items came up after most
15 residents had checked out, both figuratively and literally. About
16 40 people remained in the room. Each measure passed with
17 roughly 30 votes. That is just over 2% of the town's registered
18 voters. Yet the only headline afterward is that the measure passed.

19 Who is responsible? Not the people presenting the items.
20 They understand the math and plan accordingly. Their proposals
21 arrive late, face little scrutiny, and pass with ease. Strategy
22 matters.

23 The real question is why so many residents stay
24 disengaged. Are things going so well that people see no reason to
25 participate? Are they satisfied with their tax bills, their schools,
26 and their representation in Montpelier and Washington? Or have
27 they simply concluded that showing up will not change anything?

28 None of the above. Most residents simply do not have
29 the time or patience to sit through an in-person Town Meeting. If
30 we want outcomes that actually reflect the will of the town, votes
31 should be held by Australian ballot.

32 As it is now, 2% of the town drives the conversation.
33 Everyone else just reads the headline.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

34

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

35

0

####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

36

###BEGIN LINKS###

###END LINKS###

VIDEO:

37

###BEGIN VIDEO###

###END VIDEO###

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

38

###BEGIN LOGLINE###

###END LOGLINE###