



Session. One member of the community decided on all the Warrant Articles, and how they were going to be worded on the paper you receive come voting day. Attendance in the 10-15 range is common. There is currently a list of Towns that are trying to eliminate SB2. It is difficult in that it requires a 2/3 majority to change back. It only takes a majority vote to move to SB2.

The idea is great as it allows people to go to the polls on voting day and vote on all the articles that were decided on at the Deliberative Session, but you can't change them. The second and largest issue is that of the budget. Under the traditional Annual Meeting format, if the proposed budget does not pass, it is amended until it does pass. Under SB2, if the proposed budget does not pass you go to a default budget.

A default budget is the amount of the same appropriations as contained in the operating budget authorized for the previous year, reduced and increased, as the case may be, by debt service, contracts, and other obligations previously incurred or mandated by law, and reduced by one-time expenses contained in the operating budget.

Mr. Belanger spoke of the various interpretations of contract, one-time expenses, etc.

SB2 does allow, if the budget does not pass, for the calling of a special meeting to talk about a budget. That is traditional Town meeting format. He urged the voters to turn down the proposal for SB2.

Maryanne Shanley, 7 Buttonwood Drive, Hollis

Stated there to be several recent examples that show us why, in practice, this would not work out too well. The rough count in attendance at the recent Brookline School District Deliberative Session was 30-40. It is seen over and over attendance at School Board meetings is the result of a particular topic of interest. She does not believe it would improve the system.

Steve Pucci 25 Nartoff Road, Hollis

Remarked he was neither indicating support for one position or another. However, stated something has got to change. He reiterated what was stated regarding meeting notification.

He commented there is a lot of talk about turning down SB2, but what he never hears is what is it about the current process that we use that we should improve upon.

He spoke of the recent budget hearing and questioned the number of people who stood up to ask a question about the \$23-26 million budget. People asked about athletics, the field, and expansion. Nobody asked about the \$23-26 million budget. We talk about people not showing up at a Deliberative Session, but people don't show up today. You go to a March meeting, and many hear about things for the first time. Changes occur, and those being asked to vote don't have the opportunity to understand the consequences of the proposed changes, etc. He provided the example of the contracts for which negotiations completed just prior to the Public Hearing. He questioned how the Budget Committee was supposed to understand the details to be relayed at the Public Hearing, when having just received the information.

It clearly is a problem with senior citizens that are tired and frustrated with what occurs at Town meeting in the evenings. There is a quality that shows up at the start and the numbers lessen later in the evening. That is a problem.

Michelle St. John, 29 Orchard Drive, Hollis

Spoke of being opposed to SB2 mostly due to her concern over attendance at a Deliberative Session. She commented on taking responsibility for being self-informed and participating in local government.

She reiterated she is against SB2 having concern there will be some who will not be informed, and that some could attend the Deliberative Session to railroad a proposal, leaving no options.

Unidentified Female Speaker

Commented the Annual Meeting format can be intimidating. She stated her greatest concern to be for those that cannot participate, e.g., a resident who is deployed. She does not support SB2 but wishes there was a solution for those who wish to and cannot participate.

Deborah Pucci, 25 Nartoff Road, Hollis

Stated she has spoken with hundreds of residents seeking a solution for the COOP Annual Meeting. It has been recognized as a problem by a lot of those who attend, by the School Boards, and the Selectmen. One of the positive things she has heard is appreciation for the discussion. She has questioned if the residents participate in the COOP meetings, and has heard from many how they participated previously, but no longer do. When asked why, a consistent theme comes across, e.g., waste of time, late at night, don't have kids in school anymore, it is uncomfortable, etc.

She spoke of having reviewed meeting minutes for the 2000-2016 meetings. There have been Town meetings where 99 people have showed up. In two of the last three years attendance has been at 150 and 154. There tends to be an increase during times when there are proposed expansions or high budgets. There have been meetings that have gone until 12:30 a.m.

Rather than discounting or supporting SB2, she requested the community objectively look at the process we have and ask how it can be made better.

Testimony in Favor - None

Testimony in Opposition - None

***Chairman Brown declared the Public Hearing closed at 6:53 p.m.***

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_