



Town of Reading  
16 Lowell Street  
Reading MA 01867

Town Clerk /Records Access Officer  
781-942-9050

fax: 781-942-9070  
website: www.readingma.gov

## READING TOWN MEETING INSTRUCTIONAL MOTION FORM

Please print legibly and print exactly as you would like to present the Instructional Motion. This will become part of the permanent record of this Town Meeting and must be submitted to the Town Clerk and Moderator before Town Meeting.

Instructional Motion Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: April 21, 2021

Instruction to: Bylaws Committee, Town Moderator, Town Clerk, and/or any appropriate BCC or department.  
Board, Committee or Department

I, Angela F. Binda of Precinct 5 do hereby move that;  
the Bylaws Committee, Town Moderator, Town Clerk, and/or any appropriate BCC consider the following two items and report back to Town Meeting at the November, 2021 meeting, with a warrant article, or report on the matter:

1. Town Meeting members who have not attended the required number of sessions to be in good standing for two years in a row shall be automatically removed from Town Meeting, and a replacement shall be voted in by the precinct (at a specially held precinct meeting, to avoid delay in seating a new member).
2. The Town Clerk shall publish attendance records of all Town Meeting members following the sine die closing of the Annual, Subsequent, and other Special Town Meetings (not occurring at the same time as the Annual or Subsequent Town Meeting). And the Town Clerk shall publish, prior to a Town Meeting member election, the attendance record for the three years of the term, of all Town Meeting members who are running for re-election.

### BACKGROUND:

The last warrant article of every Annual (April) Town Meeting is an article pursuant to section 2-6 of the Reading Home Rule, which presents the opportunity for Town Meeting to remove members who have failed to attend one half or more of the Town Meeting evenings of the previous year. Two years ago, there was much debate on removing more members than are usually removed, and whether Town Meeting should allow members to remain if they do not attend.

Last year, this article was not taken up by Town Meeting, due to the new Zoom format and the abbreviated meetings. On last year's warrant, there were three names on the list for the second consecutive year, and I believe they may have been removed from Town Meeting had the article been taken up, discussed, and voted upon, due to their attendance records. One member in precinct 1 attended 0 out of 3 evenings in 2018, and 3 of 7 evenings in 2019. In precinct 2 one member attended 1 out of 3 evenings in 2018 and 1 out of 7 evenings in 2019. In precinct 5, one member attended 0 evenings in 2018, and 2 of 7 evenings in 2019. One member in precinct 8 attended 1 of 7 evenings in 2019, and 0 of 3 evenings in 2020. He is up for re-election in 2022, and could run as an incumbent, with that advantage, even though he attended 1 out of 10 evenings of Town Meeting in the past two years. His name appears on page 30 of the Annual 2021 warrant. Two of these members just ran for re-election as incumbents and were voted back in to Town Meeting. I am sure that the great majority of citizens who voted them had no idea of their attendance records, and may not have re-elected them if they knew of the records.

I do believe there are circumstances that arise - health issues, work travel, family emergency - which make it impossible for even the most dedicated Town Meeting member to attend every Town Meeting. I believe in a one year grace period, if fellow precinct members and Town Meeting members agree to that, and vote to keep the member. However, if a Town

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Town Clerk: \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded: \_\_\_\_\_ Vote: \_\_\_\_\_

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I do believe there are circumstances that arise - health issues, work travel, family emergency - which make it impossible for even the most dedicated Town Meeting member to attend every Town Meeting. I believe in a one year grace period, if fellow precinct members and Town Meeting members agree to that, and vote to keep the member. However, if a Town Meeting member is not able to attend meetings for two years out of a three year term, they should no longer represent their precinct. They are not, in fact, representing their precinct if they do not attend.

Being a Town Meeting member is a privilege, not a right.

Voters who elect representatives to Town Meeting have the right to know, in an easily accessible way, if the person they elect to Town Meeting is attending and representing them. This election cycle saw so many candidates in all precincts competing for limited Town Meeting seats. There are too many candidates willing and able to do the work and they should be seated if others are unable to fulfill their obligation.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.