Are You Ready for the Annual Town Meeting?

Preparation list:

1. **Review TM-6000, *Annual Town Meeting***. It can be found in MAT's Information Library on the MAT website, www.mntownships.org. Each township must have an Annual Meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of March.

2. **Hold a Board of Audit Meeting.** The Town Board must meet as the Board of Audit at a meeting between the close of the fiscal year (Dec. 31) and one week before the annual meeting. The Board of Audit examines and audits the town's accounts. From the Board of Audit meeting, a financial report is prepared, which the Clerk is required to post at least 30 minutes before the annual meeting convenes. Even though the report must also be read at the meeting, MAT recommends copies of the report be made available for those attending the meeting. Minn. Stat. § 366.22. See a checklist for preparing for the Board of Audit meeting at the end of the article.

   At the Board of Audit meeting, the Board can recommend the local tax levy that voters will need to approve at the Annual Meeting. CTAS provides a good budgeting program, and supervisors can review last year's expenses and look at anticipated expenses for the following year: road and bridge maintenance, fire protection, town hall maintenance, town cemetery or park expenses or any other projects the township will need to fund in the future.

3. **Notice.** The clerk must provide ten (10) days **published** notice of the time and place of the Annual Town Meeting in a qualified newspaper of general circulation within the town. Minn. Stat. §365.51, subd. 2. The notice must include the 1st and 2nd alternate dates for the annual meeting. The alternate dates are used only if inclement weather prevents the meeting from being held.
   - The 1st alternate date is always the third Tuesday in March. Minn. Stat. § 365.51, subd. 1.
   - The 2nd alternate date is set by the supervisors and must be within 30 days of the third Tuesday in March. Minn. Stat. § 365.51, subd. 1.

   Best Practice: Publish & Post
   The best practice is to publish and post notice of the Annual Town Meeting. Remember the notice must be published in a Legal Publication. The list of publications is available on the Secretary of State's website: https://www.sos.state.mn.us/business-liens/start-a-business/legal-newspapers/

   The law allows an alternative to published notice – the supervisors may order the notice to be posted instead of published unless the voters at any prior annual meeting voted to do something different. Minn. Stat. § 365.51, subd. 2.

4. **Township Election Notice.** About two-thirds of the townships hold their election on the 2nd Tuesday in March. Townships in the 7-County Metro area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, & Washington) must publish two notices of election – 14 days and 7 days before the election. Non-metro counties do not have to publish notice of the election. However, many townships combine notice of their Annual Meeting along with the notice of the election and a notice of the Board of Canvass meeting.

5. **Treasurer's Report.** Within five days before the Annual Town Meeting the town treasurer must make and file with the town clerk a written statement indicating:
   - the money received from the county treasurer and from all other sources;
   - all money paid out as town treasurer;
   - the items of money received and from whom;
   - on what account and when each item of money was received;
   - when each payment was made and the amount; and the unexpended balance on hand.

   Minn. Stat. § 367.16(7). The best practice is for the treasurer to run these items before the

Board of Audit meets and to work with the Clerk so both the Clerk and Treasurer books balance.

6. **Other Resolutions or Motions.** If the electors need to act on any items the Town Board wants to move forward – establishing or vacating a road, manure line authorization, building a new town hall, or purchasing new fire equipment – make sure the paperwork is prepared so electors can review and vote on any proposals.