Town Government Study Committee
Minutes 1/27/2016

Date: January 27, 2016

Members Present: Gene Blanchard, Gay Shanahan, Susan Curtis, Kathleen Glynn,
                          Ted Flynn, Anne Ward, John Tuffy, Marty Desmery

Members Absent: Alex Chin

Guests: Melinda Ordway, Theo Kalivas, Dept. of Revenue Bureau of
                          Technical Services

Visitors: John Madden, Mary Beth MacQuarrie, Shawn Dahlen, Dr. Ben
                          Tantillo

Ms. Ordway began her discussion with forms of government. She indicated that
recently there have not been many changes from open town meeting to
representative government. Towns have had difficulty filling the representative
positions. She stated that recently towns have been considering the Town Council
form of government. Approximately 10 towns have made this change. She
compared it to moving from having selectmen to having a larger board.

She next made comments on checks and balances in the financial arena. She
applauded many of the current practices of Duxbury. She described their
Community Compact work, including coming up with financial policies and best
practices. She spoke at length about the role of an Audit Committee. She then
described their capital planning and forecasting work.

In terms of consolidating services, Ms. Ordway said they have worked in four areas:
facilities, purchasing, IT and some personnel departments. She touched a little on
each. She stated that they have only seen four communities who have fully merged
school and town finance areas: Barnstable, Harvard, Brockton and Reading (who un-
merged with a change of school committee members). She said there are several
instances of partial consolidation between school and town. She later described
recent regionalization in the areas of animal control and veterans affairs.

Ms. Ordway commented on the recent approval of the Town Manager Act, which
was explained by Shawn as a clarification process to the first Act passed previously.
She commented on Duxbury's early ATM date and how difficult it might be on the
budgeting schedule. There was discussion about split Town Meetings (financial
meeting in June, all else in April). She inquired about the Personnel Board,
indicating that many have been eliminated with the professionalization of town
management.

She described the difference between the Community Compact and the Technical Assistance Bureau work. The latter makes suggestions and provides support using more standardized materials and resources. The Community Compact is an initiative of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor and provides a more tailored product. Compacts can be made in three areas: financial, environmental and IT. She also indicated that staffing reductions have resulted in the Community Compacts being more efficient, as there are state funds available to outsource the work to consultants such as the Collin Center.

After Ms. Ordway and Mr. Kalivas left at 8:45, the group discussed the potential value of these services. The selectmen are the decision-makers, as the DOR requires they issue the request for services. We discussed possibly engaging them for: review of govt structure, capital planning (5 years and longer than 5 years), areas of consolidation (school/town), checks and balances or best practices (e.g. Audit Committee suggestion). We are currently doing a study through the Collin Center regarding the town's IT so we did not pursue this area.

Ann and Susan stated that the survey is live. There was the suggestion that we try to get the Clipper to give the survey a marketing push. They expect results prior to Town Meeting.

With Town Meeting approaching, it was decided that Gay will draft a summary of the Committee's activities for discussion at the next meeting. It was generally felt that a written submission was sufficient. The Committee's need to respond to the petition to change the ATM date was discussed; it was decided that we would form our response and response format at the next meeting.

The Committee's next meeting is on February 24th. We will meet at the Senior Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Gay Shanahan