

## Town Government Study Committee Minutes

**Date:** October 14, 2015

**Date Minutes Approved:** October 25, 2015

**TOWN GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE (TGSC)**

Meeting held at the Duxbury Free Library - Setter Room at 7:00PM

**Present:** Gay Shanahan, Chair; Gene Blanchard; Susan Curtis; Kathleen Glynn; John Tuffy; Anne Ward; and Alex Chin, Clerk for this Meeting.

**Absent:** Marty Desmery, Ted Flynn

**Guest Speaker for the Meeting:** Dr. Ben Tantillo, School Superintendent

i. **CALL TO ORDER** – The TGSC meeting was called to order at 7:10PM at the Duxbury Free Library / Setter Room

ii. **OPEN FORUM**

iii. **NEW BUSINESS**

Guest Speaker:

Dr. Tantillo is the Duxbury School District Superintendent and attended the TGSC meeting as a guest speaker for an informal discussion. The purpose of these informal discussions is for the TGSC to gather information from various town officials to (i) help give context to the current governmental structure and (ii) to solicit ideas for areas of opportunity where a possible change in the governmental structure could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the town's operations.

Dr. Tantillo noted that the communication between the school department and the town was going well and that he has regular meetings with the Town Manager and FinCom.

He noted that improvements to the budgeting process could be made.

- The schools are basically just allocated a budget and there is not much discussion around needs and trying to fill in gaps.
- The districts per pupil cost is relatively low
- Special needs programming is the largest unknown (out of district placement is very costly)
- The state doesn't set its budget until May, so the current timing of town meeting does not allow for the most accurate budget possible for the schools.

Consolidation of services

- The consolidation of the facilities management has been working well. Dr. Tantillo would like to see this expand to landscaping at the schools
- In process of working with the Town Manager to hire an IT consultant to examine the current IT structure with both (i) town and (ii) school infrastructure and look for opportunities to consolidate.
- Accounting Finance

- The schools still maintains some separate accounting and finance functions, but with the addition of the new software there is/will be more consolidation in the future. Currently the town processes (cuts) the checks for the schools accounts payables.
- The HR module in the software will not be added for 2-3 more years. So the town and the schools will remain on two different independent systems.
  - Once the HR module is implemented, there should be efficiencies gained
    - CORI Checks
    - Certification tracking
    - Budgeting
    - Performance Review
    - Etc.

#### Town Meeting

- Likes the current budget presentation process.
- Would like to see better management of speakers (i.e. strict on amount of time per speaker and cut off similar comments)

#### Over all comments

- Notes that any “left over” operating budget typically gets spent on building up keep projects.
- People are coming to town for the schools. District added 100 pupils this summer
- Sees need for wellness program in near future which could be combined with town offerings

### **OPEN FORUM**

George Wadsworth (Citizen) commented on an influx of senior citizens to town recently. He inquired on the need for a survey (possibly conducted by the planning board) to understand the trends of where people are moving in from and why.

### **SURVEY SUBCOMMITTEE**

The TGSC discussed ways to solicit information from the citizens of Duxbury to help guide our process.

The TGSC reviewed the current survey questions, noted that the expected response rate to be between 6-8%. The survey will be administered by SurveyMonkey (electronically) and hard copy (paper). The hard copy surveys will have to be hand keyed into SurveyMonkey by the TGSC so that all results can easily be aggregated for review.

### **BY-LAWS SUBCOMMITTEE**

The subcommittee has reviewed the by-laws and noted that most of the comments to date are administrative in nature (i.e. clean up of language).

**RECONSIDERATION**

The TSGC reviewed a handout that summarized research into other towns' policies and procedures surrounding reconsideration.

The minutes from the meeting of 9/23/2015 were approved (Motion Gene, Second Alex – Passed 7-0-0)

The TSGC further discussed the option of having the Massachusetts Department of Revenue do an independent evaluation of the town's current government structure. The committee also discussed the option of having a pro-bono consultant conduct an evaluation as well. The committee was going to do more research, but anticipated having one (or both) of these evaluation conducted next summer (2016).

The meeting adjourned at 9:15PM (Motion Gene, Second Alex – Passed 7-0-0)

Respectfully submitted by Alex Chin.