

Fairhaven Government Study Committee Meeting

11 July 2013 Minutes

Attendees: Phil Washko, Andrew Jones, Dan Freitas, Mark Sylvia, Pattie Pacella, Ron Manzone, Linda Meredith, Bernard Roderick, Eric Dawicki came in at 6:24p.m.

Absent: Dick Douglass

Invited Guest: Mark Sylvia

John Roderiques, Finance Committee, Chair attended as a member of the public.

The first meeting of the Fairhaven Government Study Committee was called to order by interim chair Bernard Roderick at 6:00 PM. The meeting was held at the DPW offices.

Election of Officers

Nominations from the floor were solicited for Chair and Vice Chair. Phil Washko was nominated as chair and seconded by Linda Meredith. Vote was unanimous. Bernard Roderick was nominated for Vice Chair seconded by Andy Jones. Vote was unanimous.

Linda Meredith volunteered to perform the duties of Recording Secretary on a short term basis. Linda Meredith was voted in unanimously. Andy Jones volunteered to take over the position in a few months.

Introductions

Introductions of members were made and participants were asked to explain their reasons for participating in this committee. All expressed the commitment to community service and the willingness to present the best options available for needed change and growth.

Open Meeting Law Information

Mark Sylvia participated as a resource to the committee. He presented information on the Open Meeting Law which falls under the auspices of the Attorney General's Office. Members received a link to these materials from Anne Kakely. This committee is subject to these regulations.

Members need to sign the notice of receipt of the Open Meeting Law materials, found on the Attorney General's web link, and return the form to Eileen Lowney by next week.

Committee General Set UP

The Committee reviewed and updated the Contact information for members.

A hard copy of the DOR report was passed out to each member.

Time was spent discussing our working requirements and formulating a plan of action. By general agreement of the group, future meetings will be held every 2 weeks (Thursday evenings) starting at 6PM. A permanent meeting place is being sought possibly the High School Library. Eric Dawicki offered the use of space at Northeast Maritime Institute.

Robert's Rules of Order

A synopsis of Robert's Rules of Order was also presented by Mark Sylvia. We also discussed "Special Municipal Employees."

Andy Jones had to leave the room for a few minutes and then returned.

Public Involvement

A general discussion of the need for public involvement ensued. Public comment times were discussed. A motion was made by Phil Washko and seconded by Linda Meredith to allow public comment related to the issue at hand 10 minutes before and 10 minutes after each meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Committee Spokespersons

A motion was made by Bernie Roderick that the Chairperson serve as the Committee Spokesperson. In his absence, the Vice Chairperson would serve as a spokesperson. Seconded by Andy Jones. Motion passed unanimously.

Informing the Public

Public access cable coverage was suggested by Mark. Phil will look into it.

Reporting options involved a general discussion. We foresee at least 2 public forums: Initially, to request public input, and an ending forum for public information before Town Meeting.

Phil suggested we develop a web site to inform and garner public input through the use of available survey tools. Phil will show a first draft of a proposed site at the next meeting.

A press release will be drafted by Phil and sent to members for comment.

Preparation for Next Meeting

For next meeting members need to review the DOR report and the 1987 report.(Zach Blake will meet with us if needed) Prepare and think of ideas relating to our needs and brain storming ideas.

Information Gathering

Ron Manzone suggested that surveys be sent to Dept. heads for ideas.

Action Items:

1. Read (3) Town Study Committee Reviews. Phil will email them to committee members.

Committee's Objectives:

- Understand the current town government landscape; its strengths and challenges.
- Understand what options there are for changes/improvements
- Understand how other towns have undertaken this process

- Understand what conclusions other towns have drawn
- Understand what challenges other towns have seen in implementing their changes
- Understand the recommendations made by DOR
- Understand the general public's impressions of how our government does and doesn't work well
- Incorporate best practices, peer experience, public sentiment and common sense into a set of recommendations for change
- Ensure that the public is kept informed on progress through timely updates to online project site
- Deliver to Town Meeting a set of recommendations with adequate information and lead time so that action can be taken.

Next meeting July 25, 6PM, DPW site

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Bernie Roderick at 8PM. Seconded by Andy Jones. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Meredith
Recording Secretary