

## **TOWN GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE**

*Thursday, February 27, 2014 – Minutes*

Meeting called to order by the Chairperson at 6:00 p.m. & read the recording disclaimer.

**Present:** Chairperson: Phil Washko, Vice Chair: Bernie Roderick, Dick Douglass, Pattie Pacella and G. Steve Riley

Two new members were present: Voting member, Mark Badwey and Associate member, Rich Griffiths

**Absent:** Linda Meredith and Siobhan Henebury

### **AGENDA:**

**Review/approve minutes:** February 19, 2014 & February 20, 2014

Bernie Roderick made a motion to approve both the 2/19/14 minutes and the 2/20/14 minutes as presented and was seconded by Dick Douglass. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Opening Public Comment:**

No one present.

### **Interview with Collins Center Rep: Mike Ward**

Collins Center works out of UMASS Boston, existed for 5 years – Provides municipal services. Hired by City/Towns to provide organizational structure.

Mr. Ward reviewed HR related, IT assistance, Management and organizational structure

He says they work with a huge pool of consultants (mostly retired Department heads)

Re: HR – Audit check list

Helps with IT Technology, IT Strategy  
Assessing the needs of IT

Executive Recruitment – biggest practices – Town Manager's & Town Administrator's (TA's)  
They work with the Board of Selectman (BOS) and perhaps a Screening Committee. They have decades of experience.

Have only had a 1 unsuccessful candidate, the Board of Selectman didn't choose the finalist

Typically a project by project.

5-6 Months for the process itself for a Town Administrator and would be tailored to our Town

Recruitment expert would be: Dick Kobacchi

Phil Washko asked a question on pitfalls? Things to avoid?

Mike Ward said the best candidate from a mediocre pool, you want to choose best out of 3-5 "best candidates". So you want to look at a strong pool.

Phil Washko explained the TA job description we just completed and asked if they would be attractive to a candidate.

Mike Ward said, 'do expectations align with tools I've been given?'

And importantly, clarity on personnel and budget.

Bernie Roderick asked about issues around hiring/firing? "Sole authority" or "Subject to BOS"

Mike said that it's what starts off for the TA. A precedent has to be set.

Bernie Roderick asked about BOS changes, BOS could change every 3 years, inherit change, whereas they maybe did not hire TA.

Mike said that he's sure there are examples, it could certainly be different. The option of moving to a 5 Board of Selectman certainly slows down the chance of new BOS.

A discussion with Mr. Ward and the BPW:

Phil Washko explained our 'struggles', asked Mr. Ward what they've seen.

Mike Ward said that he's never run into this before, it's very rare that Towns have BPW Boards, around 5-10% have a BPW and more in SE Mass than any other place. He asked us, what are our arguments to keep that Board.

Pattie Pacella said that the residents feel they have a 'voice.'

Phil Washko agreed that the 'constituents' is a big part of it.

Steve Riley explained that Fairhaven is in a unique position whereas the Executive Secretary ran BPW and continue to works well with BPW and the Superintendent. He feels that a TA would change the Town dramatically and thinks the Committee should wait it out another year of fact finding and then change BPW. He believes the Town would benefit as a whole this way.

Mike Ward said there is some truth to peace meal, however would this prevent the best TA to be hired? Would he/she have all the tools to accomplish their duties? Would an elected BPW limit the candidate pool?

Phil Washko agreed that it is a drastic change, but it's a positive change that would affect Town and BPW.

Rich Griffiths asked Mr. Ward if the logic he's suggesting wouldn't we be looking at all elected Boards?

Phil Washko reiterated that the other Boards in Town don't employ Personnel. Only the Board of Health and BPW.

Steve Riley said he would like to see it go slow and steady.

Mike Ward asked specific questions regarding the BPW budget and who's in charge of it.

Phil Washko said that we were contemplating an advisory Board and appointed vs. elected.

Rich Griffiths said that in regards to 'constituents' he sees the importance of a TA for authority.

Dick Douglass, off topic, asked Mr. Ward if he's ever seen an actual "bitch" department; because really that is what a constituent is typically calling in for.

Mr. Ward said that some Towns/Cities have a central # - 3-1-1 and someone is trained to answer all questions (about 100)

Dick Douglass said that currently we do not have any opportunity in Town to log complaints that BPW receives from constituents.

Steve Riley said that maybe current calls would be available but not from 5 years ago

Phil Washko went over the 4 focuses of the group: TA/BPW/IT/Capital Planning

Mike Ward said most Towns don't have good IT.

Phil Washko said that the existing IT Committee, which is a very 'basic' who gets a new computer is what's happening now in Town, and we would be proposing consolidating services and bringing an IT firm in for some IT strategy.

Mike Ward said that the Collin Center does have the capability to contract with the Town directly.

Dick Douglass asked if it would be collaborative to do with other local Towns.

Mr. Ward said it would be easier to collaborative with the School Committee.

Bernie Roderick asked about cost.

Mike Ward gave ballpark figures. Approximately \$14,000 for full package/recruitment  
\$10,000 Personnel  
\$20-25,000 IT (more complicated)  
\$10-15,000 New projects to help with TGSC

Phil Washko asked about helping with Charter Commission.

Mike Ward said they are not Attorney's for the language part of it, but they can help with a Charter. He said it's a big task and a lot of the Towns don't have Charters.

Mr. Ward briefly explained the Special Act Charter, and that process takes about 1.5 years and the Formal Charter Process takes 2-2.5 years.

Mr. Ward congratulated us on a job well done to date. He said that a lot of TA's are retiring in 5-10 years. The conversation ended with Mr. Ward.

Brief discussion with Rich re: Start process of RFP.

Everyone agreed lots of information was shared from and with Mike Ward. Very informative.

#### **Discuss/Plan TA Article/Motion/Special Legislation:**

Phil Washko advised that all information was turned over to Town Counsel. He said regarding BOH, we don't have enough information regarding the Health Agent to report to TA, and he proposed that we take this off the TA Job Description at this time.

Discuss Atty. Crotty feedback

1. Deadline 3/12 – no problem meeting this deadline and our budgeted \$5,000 is ok and should cover what we have to do.
2. Clarification options choose final recommendation with TA & BPW, basically Atty Crotty said we could put forth re: BPW anything we wanted. There are options.

#### **Discuss DPW/BPW possible repercussions, if any:**

Reviewed Phil Washko's information on BPW options; Superintendent would report to TA  
Proposed to retain BPW as is as Advisory Board

Rich Griffiths asked who would do the advocating at Town Meeting for paving of streets etc?

Phil Washko said the recommendation would still be coming from Finance Committee.

Steve Riley said that wouldn't change, Fin Comm would be the recommending Board/body.

Phil Washko said that it's currently done by Fin Comm and historically whatever they recommend is what gets voted in, the BPW would still have an advocate.

The Board had a discussion around the recommended proposal for the BPW:

- Avoids abolishing BPW
- Establishes central accountability and consistency
- Maintains public constituency
- Retains BPW as resource to DPW
- Preserves public opportunity to serve
- Allows for knowledge/experience/precinct diversity
- Retains voter accountability through BOS
- BPW members don't need to re-run every 3 years (most are opposed anyway)
- Can remove the limitation from BPW members serving on other boards
- Maintains in practicality and function the practices currently in place

Steve Riley would recommend a change every 3 years, so not appointed for life.

Steve Riley argued that the consistency/centralizing with the BOH agent would fall under the same argument. Dick Douglass agreed.

Mark Badwey asked if there is special legislation that holds BOH to their agent.

Pattie Pacella suggested adding the words, "any Department Heads under the jurisdiction of BOS"

Pattie Pacella was curious to how BPW would feel with appointing under these perimeters vs. what it is currently.

Steve Riley said he can only speak for himself, but he thinks we should stretch it out a little more time, rather than take to the May meeting.

There was more discussion on offering 2 big changes to Town Meeting. Phil Washko reviewed his interview with Vinnie Furtado, who would support either situation.

A question came up whether the TA Job description or BPW Article could be amended on the Town Meeting floor. Phil Washko or Pattie Pacella, would email Mark Sylvia for that answer.

Pattie Pacella made a motion to send Article to Town Meeting for Town Administrator Job Description with the change under reporting structure to read, "Any Department Heads under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectman will report to TA, including the Department of Public Works Superintendent (excluding the School Department)." The motion was seconded by Bernie Roderick. The motion passed unanimously.

Pattie Pacella made a motion to forward the Article to Town Meeting for Town Administrator Job Description and was seconded by Bernie Roderick. The motion passed unanimously.

Pattie Pacella made a motion to rescind the second motion, and was seconded by Bernie Roderick. The motion passed unanimously.

Pattie Pacella made a motion to send to Attorney Crotty the change of structure for the BPW to be reviewed, and an Article put forth for Town Meeting and any Special Legislation as needed, and was seconded by Bernie Roderick. The motion passed unanimously.

**Review Capital Planning Committee, template, discussion:**

Phil Washko will email out information for Board's review for next meeting.  
Bernie Roderick passed out information as well.

**Other questions/comments/concerns from Board members:**

Pattie Pacella asked about clarification of March 3, 2014 meeting with BOS.

Phil Washko said he would email everyone to confirm the time. But they thought it was 6-7pm, and it is our interview with the Selectman and perhaps a brief presentation of what we've done to date.

Everyone should be forwarding any questions to Phil Washko for this meeting.

**Upcoming Meetings:**

3/3

3/13

3/27

4/10 (Possible public forum)

4/24

5/8

5/22

Election Date is April 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Closing Public Comment:**

None.

Bernie Roderick made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Dick Douglass. The motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Patricia A Pacella  
Recording Secretary