

TOWN GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE

Thursday, April 10, 2014 – Minutes

Meeting called to order by the Chairperson at 6:00 p.m. and there was no recording because we were meeting at the BPW Department.

Present: Chairperson: Phil Washko, Vice Chair: Bernie Roderick, Mark Badwey, Rich Griffiths, Siobhan Henebury, Linda Meredith, Pattie Pacella and G. Steve Riley.

Absent: Dick Douglass

AGENDA:

Review/approve minutes: March 27, 2014 & April 3, 2014

Bernie Roderick made a motion to approve both the March 27, 2014 minutes and the April 3, 2014 minutes as presented and was seconded by Pattie Pacella. The motion passed unanimously.

Opening Public Comment:

No one present.

Discuss WIIA public hearing:

Everyone expressed disappointment in the number of people who attended. Discussion on how to “read” TA article, BPW & IT at Town Meeting and precinct meetings.

Discussed Town Meeting floor possible Questions & Answers: (& person who needs to write up the answer in black)

1. Centralizing too much authority to one person? **(Bernie)**
2. How do we get rid of the person if he doesn't work out? (length of contract)
3. Why fix it if it's not broken? **(Pattie)**
4. Pre-requisite to live in the Town? **(Phil)**

Steve Riley said that he believes the Town Fire and Police Chief need to live within the Town, and Phil was to find out why. He believes it might because of a safety concern.

Steve Riley filtered a few questions that may come up during Town Meeting. He asked about authority to TA (if the TA is taking more things off the BOS plate and off BPW (whereas some of the BPW stuff will report to BOS, and not the TA)

Phil Washko explained the authority to Town Administrator. And the water, sewer rates, employee grievances, negotiating labor contracts would be better handled for accountability to BOS rather than an appointed employee.

Brief discussion on the procedures for grievances.

Steve Riley asked why the article read that Vinnie Furtado would need to post his own bond.

Phil Washko said that was in the original wording in the BPW by-law from 1968.

Plan for 4/17 Public Hearing:

Same handouts.

Slide Presentation. (Siobhan Henebury and Linda Meredith)

Amendments on the floor?

If we haven't discussed, we can't support potential amendments.

Town Administrative to Town wide ballot? At this point we agreed it wasn't necessary.

Discussion on allowing Phil Washko as Chairperson to speak at Town Meeting, with any other members commenting when/if they want.

Steve Riley asked about the authority level for Vinnie Furtado if this passed. He wanted to clarify it would be day-to-day operations to Town Administrator and any grievances would go to Board of Selectman.

Pattie Pacella made a motion to approve amended version of Town Administrator recommendation to pass out to Town Meeting members and residents and was seconded by Bernie Roderick. The motion passed unanimously.

Phil Washko advised we would meet at 6:30 p.m. in the banquet room, followed by a 7:00 p.m. public hearing.

Pattie Pacella reflected on the emotional side of this perhaps not passing. Nine months of volunteering, mostly on a weekly basis.

Discuss/plan Town Meeting mailing project:

April 19th would be two weeks before Town Meeting.
Need to finalize paperwork at next meeting.

Mark Badwey agreed to talk to Ilene/Town Clerk about bulk mailing and labels.

Bernie Roderick will check price with UPS Store.

Phil Washko to get back to everyone about perhaps us all helping to get it done.

Discuss Capital Planning Committee article:

Phil Washko asked everyone to read Article 26 and the Developing Capital Improvement package, and plan to discuss at next meeting.

Mr. Washko explained the Committee has no authority on this Article and he's not in favor of it. He has tried to reach out to Bob Espindola to no avail.

Bernie Roderick suggested talking to Mr. Espindola and agreeing to a pass over, where it definitely needs more research.

Discussion ensued.

Future Radar List:
Proposition of Finance Committee
Master Plan

7:18 p.m. The Committee met with the Finance Committee, written below is a synopsis of what occurred:

In general, John Roderiques, Finance Chairperson thought that the article for TA was not for a "strong" TA, but for the same as what we have now, with the title.

Phil Washko explained the Committee's intent was to have the Town Administrator run the Town within the day to day activities, with the Board of Selectman as a Board of Directors. Mr. Washko said the TA will be under the will of the BOS.

A lot of discussion around the BOS over ruling the TA.

John Roderiques reviewed the contractual hearing. Mr. Roderiques didn't believe the Warrant took the BOS out of the day to day business enough, in his opinion.

Mr. Roderiques didn't agree that this warrant shouldn't go to the Town wide vote. He said because it's a change in government, it should absolutely go to a Town vote.

Phil Washko explained our reasoning behind not doing the Town vote and that we had discussed it at length.

More discussion ensued.

Pat Elliott asked what the Committee, what the intent was regarding the oversight by the Board of Selectman to the TA.

Phil Washko said to hire a professional, qualified TA and let him/her run the Town on a day to day basis.

Pattie Pacella clarified the Committee's intent that the TA would be held accountable and be responsible for day to day issues, and the Board of Selectman would serve as the Board of Directors.

John Roderiques continued to express that the Committee just 'cut and pasted' from other Towns to create this warrant. He said that we should be seeking a 'strong TA'.

Mark Badwey said it was more of a checks and balances, and a qualified TA would run the Town and let each department head run their department as seen fit.

Mr. Roderiques disagreed, saying he did not read that in the warrant.

RE: the IT Article

John Roderiques asked, "Why?"

Phil Washko said it would be for the collective needs of each department. Mr. Washko explained the need for IT in the Town, and everyone that the Committee spoke to confirmed that need.

Discussion ensued.

RE: BPW Article

John Roderiques wanted to know why we left it an elected Board. He expressed the opinion that we did that and the two separate articles to get the Town Administrator to pass. He did express, however that he was in favor of the TA government structure and he would've just abolished the BPW entirely. Mr. Roderiques said, 'if we have a strong TA we won't need a BPW'.

Phil Washko explained the intent of the BPW still being a 'think tank' and resource to the Department of Public Works and also the voice of the people, as they so requested.

More discussion ensued.

John Roderiques asked then, about the Special Meeting Article and if we presented these articles, why would the Committee still need to be in existence?

Phil Washko explained that there is a list of stuff that still needs to be reviewed for the Town. He used the example: Finance Committee membership, Town Meeting-quorums, budget processes.

Mr. Roderiques said he sees our vision being far more than what is really required.

Mr. Roderiques said he will not be supporting to retain the Committee indefinitely.

Phil Washko explained that we also wanted to look into a formal Charter for the Town.

There was a brief back n forth with Mr. Roderiques and Mr. Washko on the amount of money that was first requested. The \$5,000.

Phil Washko explained that most of those funds went to pay Town Attorney Tom Crotty to review and legalize the terms of the Warrants/Articles.

The meeting was then adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Bernie Roderick made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Pattie Pacella. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectively submitted,

Patricia A Pacella
Recording Secretary