

## **TOWN GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE**

*Thursday, June 26, 2014 – Minutes*

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

**Present:** Chairperson: Phil Washko, Vice Chair: Bernie Roderick, Mark Badwey, Dick Douglass, Rich Griffiths, Siobhan Henebury, and Pattie Pacella.

### **AGENDA:**

**Review/approve minutes:** June 12, 2014

Bernie Roderick made a motion to approve the June 12th minutes and was seconded by Pattie Pacella. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Opening Public Comment:**

None.

### **Review/Discuss Charter Review Project:**

Phil Washko reviewed that we have started reviewing previous Town Charters, and currently working with Plymouth's as our template. He explained our next step would be to review the Table of Contents against other charters.

Rich Griffiths reviewed his information.

There was a discussion on the Town's current by-laws.

Discussion on reviewing another 5 (because Rich Griffiths) has already reviewed 5 Town Charter "table of contents". Therefore, discussion was on which Towns we should review. Everyone came to the consensus that we would review Amesbury, Bourne, Sandwich, Dartmouth and Wrentham. The intent is to review the commonalties of their 'Table of Contents' only at this time.

Rich Griffiths & Siobhan Henebury will work on how to produce excel spreadsheet.

At 6:31 p.m., the open discussion with past Select board members began. Present were former Select board members: Brian Wood (1997-2000), Mike Sylvia (2000-2012), Ruth Galary (1991-1994), Ron Manzone (2005) & Brian Bowcock (began in 1999)

Bernie Roderick asked how the members felt about the Town developing a Town Charter, or should we remain as by laws.

Mike Sylvia said that a charter would start the framework for the town and that's what's needed. He said it would be more consistent over time.

Ruth Galary shared that she felt professional Human Resources department was needed.

Phil Washko said that with a Town Administrator that would assist with HR.

Mr. Washko asked about how the Committee could continue to share with the public. He said that we offer an online option, an open invitation to our meetings and public forums but we are still frustrated when people in Town say they don't know what's going on.

Brian Wood believed that the Townspeople of Fairhaven are very conservative and don't like change. He asked why the change is taken place, is it because of the DOR report.

Phil Washko explained the driving change is that obviously Executive Secretary, Jeff Osuch and his longevity with the Town, and the fact that he will be retiring soon is one of the pieces to the puzzle.

Discussion ensued.

Discussion around 3 Selectman to 5 and what the advantages/disadvantages may be.

Mike Sylvia said he believed that 5 may be more problematic than 3. He said that the Town Administrator is going to take on a lot more of the daily duties than the Selectman.

Dr. Bowcock said that a Selectman's position is not "part-time" as some have said. He said there are many times when things arise and the Selectman have to be there. He believes 3 Selectman can do the job.

Dr. Bowcock stated the Chairperson is the one that sets the agenda and is posted within 48 hours.

Mark Badwey asked if they thought we were heading in the right direction with the Charter or we should consider a Charter commission?

Ruth Galary believed we were at a starting point.

Mike Sylvia said that he believed if we went to a Charter commission now that we would be taken a few steps backward, whereas we already have started a year ago, we have done a lot of research and should take that forward.

Ron Manzone agreed.

Discussion on elected vs. appointed.

Brian Wood said that the townspeople like to vote, and the more chances to do so the better.

Dick Douglass brought up the unopposed view and if that meant a 'true election.'

A brief discussion re: Finance Committee and the size or how the members are appointed.

Dr. Bowcock said that he felt budgets should start in early fall and go to the Selectman and then to Finance Committee.

Mike Sylvia said he believed a smaller group would be better to do their duties.

Discussion on strong chief and use of civil service in the police department.

Ron Manzone said he believes in civil service and believes it's a good system.

Phil Washko asked how they felt about having a requirement for Town Meeting.

Dr. Bowcock liked the idea of drawing the articles on the day of Town Meeting, that may encourage people to stay all day.

Rich Griffiths discussed the at large members of Town Meeting.

John Roderigues arrived at 7:58 p.m.

Phil Washko asked the Select board members what made their job difficult.

Dr. Bowcock said what the State would put down to the local Towns.

Ron Manzone said politics and that issues are very involved. You really have to do your homework in the research.

Ruth Galary thought it came down to educating the public more.

Phil Washko asked Mr. Roderigues specifically (because he wasn't present when we discussed Town Charters) his opinion on the charter worthiness.

Mr. Roderigues said that the Town should absolutely have a Charter but that it should be done right. He said there are Special Acts in Town that maybe never got recorded correctly and that would need to be researched. He wasn't sure if \$5,000 and 11 months to go it would be done the right way.

Pattie Pacella asked if they could give advice to the TA, what would it be.

Dr. Bowcock said it was critical to have a good financial team.

Mark Badwey explained that using a professional headhunter to find the TA was in his opinion the most successful way to find the right candidate.

Mr. Badwey asked if there was one thing they could change on their own to change government to make it better what would it be.

Brian Wood said that he would give operating instructions on how Boards should behave. He said a lot of opinions are biased.

Ruth Galary said she would change attitude.

Ron Manzone would try to find people who care more about their town as a 'public servant'.

To Mr. Roderigues directly, someone asked 3-5 Selectman. John Roderigues said he was not a fan of 5.

The meeting ended at 8:34 p.m.

Pattie Pacella made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Dick Douglass. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectively submitted,

Patricia A Pacella  
Recording Secretary