

TOWN GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE

Thursday, October 16 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 (arrived at 6:07pm), and Pattie Pacella

AGENDA:

Review/approve minutes: October 2, 2014

Pattie Pacella made a motion to approve the October 2nd minutes and was seconded by Bernie Roderick. The motion passed unanimously.

Opening Public Comment:

None.

Discuss potential recommendations for Town Meeting:

1. Fin Comm Review:

Mark Badwey was still researching comments from different Towns. A discussion ensued on further expanding the Finance Committee to review other articles even non monetary, everyone felt they should deal with monetary articles only.

A discussion ensued on the # of people that should be on the Finance Committee, if any change should be made to the current of 13.

Rich Griffiths felt that it should remain at 13.

There were pro's to a smaller #:

- 13 has never been built.
- Smaller #'s – easier to communicate
- Function better – greater voice
- Work for Finance Committee to be lessened because of the new "TA", smaller group would be more efficient and accountable.

Discussion on size, method of appointing, "mandated" precinct presentation.

Phil Washko didn't think that precinct representation had to be met or should be 'mandated'.

Discussion on if the Town Moderator would do the appointing, he/she could figure it out to include one from each precinct.

Discussion on appointing authority and in other Towns that were researched it was the Town Moderator.

It was explained how the Finance Committee person is now assigned, which is through the Precinct Chairperson, who is usually the same person who volunteers and then asks who wants to be on the Fin. Com and then the precinct members vote. It is usually the same person who's on the committee, and really doesn't have any qualifications required it's by a vote. Some argued that sometimes there wasn't even a quorum met in the precinct meetings.

Phil Washko said that it sounded like there was some momentum for a potential recommendation for the Fin Com. One of the reasons to look at it was because it was called out by DOR report, it would make

them more accountable and it sounded by the discussions that it would be 7 members nominated by Town Moderator.

Rich Griffiths wasn't sure it was broken and liked the 13 members. He argued that the Town Moderator might not necessarily have a 'good' pool to choose from.

Discussion ensued.

A straw poll was taken how many of us think that people appointed should be from each precinct? (mandated from each precinct) 3 agreed it should be from each precinct, Rich Griffiths, Bernie Roderick and Dick Douglass to 4: Pattie Pacella, Mark Badwey, Siobhan Henebury and Phil Washko.

Phil Washko said he would rather see the best 7 vs. a mandated 7.

Dick Douglass, playing devil's asked why the change and without a clear benefit.

Discussion ensued on just making a recommendation doesn't have to be a change. We are a recommending Committee.

Pattie Pacella made a motion to offer some time of recommendation for the Finance Committee. No one seconded and more discussion ensued.

Rich Griffiths specifically requested that we address precinct chair recommendations.

Rich Griffiths made a motion to have a little more time to figure out how to fix the precinct chair concept to recommend members. No one seconded.

Siobhan Henebury said she doesn't believe the problem is fixable with just the Chair of Precincts.

Discussion on Town Moderator as the appointing authority.

Bernie Roderick made a motion to start with the Town Moderator as appointing authority for the Finance Committee and was seconded by Rich Griffiths. With Dick Douglass abstaining, the motion passed with 6 in favor.

Bernie Roderick made a motion for 7-9 fin com members, mandated one from each precinct and 3 at large and Rich Griffiths seconded.

Discussion on the question, regarding 'mandated'. There is no other mandated board in Town. Are we micro-managing?

Bernie Roderick said he was for 'mandating' and feels that one person from each precinct would be sufficient.

Pattie Pacella did not agree. She felt the word mandated should not be in there, if the Town Moderator felt he/she would go down that path when interviewing that would be okay.

Phil Washko said he was not comfortable with 7-9 members.

Rich Griffiths amended the motion with 6 mandated, 1 from each precinct with 3 at large members and was seconded by Dick Douglass. The motion was denied with four (Pattie Pacella, Siobhan Henebury, Mark Badwey, and Phil Washko) in opposition, and three in favor (Dick Douglass, Rich Griffiths, and Bernie Roderick).

Mark Badwey made a motion for 9 members, no mandate from each precinct and was seconded by Pattie Pacella.

Discussion, on the question Rich Griffiths shared his opinion on the smaller team concept.

Phil Washko stated that every Town does it differently and he remembers from the discussion with current Fin Com members that 7 was a good number. He also said their work would be reduced when a Town Administrator comes into Fairhaven.

The motion passed 6-1 with Bernie Roderick in opposition.

Phil Washko asked Mark Badwey to further look into what needs to be in the by-law regarding qualifications and Fin Com terms for a by-law.

2. Civil Service

Dick Douglass gave a report on further research he did regarding Civil Service. He said that most towns are fundamentally moving away from it. He has talked with Chief Myers who would like to know what are the consequences from moving away from it. His next step would be to talk to the Police/Fire Chiefs in different towns that have moved away from it.

Mark Badwey asked a few questions, would it create more cronyism? How does the testing work? Best scores? And how do you replace good part of civil service.

Dick Douglass to take the next step in discussing with other Towns and maybe including Chief Myers in the discussion.

Mark Badwey asked him to ask our current fire and police chiefs if there was to be a recommendation to come forward from us at Town Meeting would they speak in favor of it.

3. Strong Chiefs update

Bernie Roderick reported that Town Meeting has authority to update with the home rule petition.

Discussion ensued why we the fire or police 'strong' should be different.

Phil Washko said the question should be whether it is more beneficial to have or have not a Strong Chief under the Town Administrator.

Mark Badwey suggested contacting one or two Towns that have dropped the strong chief status and why.

Phil Washko explained the Strong chiefs

Pattie Pacella didn't believe that a Strong Police chief need to go through the Board of Selectman to hire or fire. Bernie Roderick to research further.

In other business, Bernie Roderick reminded everyone that a Board of Health meeting would be on October 20th at 6:30 pm in the East Room. A discussion was done on the questions.

4. Green Communities

Siobhan Henebury had not had an opportunity to discuss with Mr. Roth. But she did research on line that it seemed like free money to save money. She will continue to do some research.

In other business, Bernie Roderick reported that our Committee had \$3,933 left from last year and \$5,000 from this year to use for our legal bill as well as mailings.

Phil Washko did some research on mailings about the BPW information for April and we could not do mailings, but needed clarification if it was informational basis if we could send out information.

Next meeting is October 30th.

Pattie Pacella made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Mark Badwey. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectively submitted,

Patricia A. Pacella
Recording Secretary