

## TOWN GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE

Thursday, October 30, 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, Siobhan Henebury and Pattie Pacella.

**Absent:** Rich Griffiths

### AGENDA:

**Review/approve minutes:** 10/2/14 – Pattie Pacella made a motion to accept as read and was seconded by Bernie Roderick. The motion passed unanimously.

### Opening Public Comment:

None.

### Review Research:

#### 1. BOH Meeting

Bernie Roderick and Pattie Pacella reviewed their meeting with the Board of Health. One thing ran clear, communication and their budget being scrutinized was a big concern, or actually having no budget or a say in their budget.

Dick Douglass agreed to look into other Towns Health Budgets compared to ours.

-By law or State laws regulate that BOH agent reports to BOS. Pattie Pacella will further review where that is in our by law or in the state law.

#### 2. FinCom

Mark Badwey is still continuing with research.

#### 3. Civil Service – Dick Douglass

Dick Douglass sent information to both Police and Fire Chiefs to ask for their input.

#### 4. Strong Chiefs - Bernie Roderick

Bernie Roderick reported back on research he has found on Strong Chiefs. Norwood had a Strong Chief but due to poor history and one vote, it was passed not to have any strong chiefs. Avon & Dighton both have strong chiefs and working well.

Siobhan Henebury felt that possible liability issues could be actionable with or under the Board of Selectman.

Bernie Roderick felt that we should recommend a Strong Police Chief.

Discussion ensued.

A straw poll was taken on how people feel about the Strong Chief. Phil Washko voted removing strong status (abandoning Strong chief altogether). Pattie Pacella, Bernie Roderick, Dick Douglass and Siobhan Henebury felt that both should be Strong chiefs, and Mark Badwey felt it works best the way it is. (Currently, Fire Chief & Police Chief are strong, however, Police Chief doesn't have strong status to hire/fire, that has to go through Selectman.)

Discussion ensued on the pro's and con's of being a Strong Chief. (SC)

With a Town Administrator as an impartial person, using the TA Structure the SC would have their own department set.

SC's may have "budgetary benefits" by being a Strong Chief.

By stripping the Strong Chief status, he would still be able to hire and fire & set policy.

Everyone agreed that we should bring in our current police and fire chief for further discussion and review. Phil Washko to continue with research on laws and by-laws regarding chiefs.

### 3. Green Community – Siobhan Henebury

Siobhan Henebury to email Bill Roth for further review.

### 4. Elected vs. Appointed – Rich Griffiths

Rich Griffiths was absent so the discussion was tabled.

### 5. Term Limits – Mark Badwey

Last year Dedham considered term limits and it lost by a wide margin. Only two Towns in Mass (Methuen & Southbridge) have term limits. Methuen has 2 year term (3 years (6) & Southbridge has 9 year term.

Mark Badwey suggested sending it to a town wide vote.

Discussion.

On our survey, 53% approved term limits, 13% no and 33% had no opinion. (23% of total voters)

Phil Washko explained 3 options:

1. Draft a non binding referendum on Ballot for public opinion
2. Do research to put out question to Town Meeting to send right to voters for vote
3. Do nothing & leave as is.

Phil Washko & Mark Badwey agreed to check the by-laws for what would need to be included for Term Limits.

Phil Washko gave an update on the Town Administrator through the Senate and House of Legislations.

We will present no new information at Special Town Meeting.

Public Relations:

Neigh News Ad –

No Mailings with census anymore

Bernie Roderick suggested a letter to the editor to either newspaper (it's free)

Dick Douglass suggested a post card of information & will get pricing on such a card.

Public Forum

More discussion at next meeting

RE: IT Assessment

Brief discussion that Phil Washko and Bernie Roderick was to look into recommending an assessment at the request of Bob Espindola.

RE: BOS Agenda, November 3, 2014 @ 7:15pm

Phil Washko advised we were meeting at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Washko explained this was going to be a quick update to ask if they had a plan regarding the TA.

**Public Comment:**

Wayne Hayward was present and gave his opinion about Term Limits. He asked how do we put pro's/cons to a ballot vote? How do you educate the public?

Wayne Hayward had some cons for us to ponder:

- Said it was not a general problem in Fairhaven
- Special Municipal employees are spot negatively vs. Town Employees

He said that there is a learning curve to be on a Board and if we place or suggest term limits then they may have to leave before the learning curve.

Our Next Meeting is November 13<sup>th</sup> & November 20<sup>th</sup>.

Pattie Pacella made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Dick Douglass. The motion passed unanimously at 8:00 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Patricia A. Pacella  
Recording Secretary