



MEMORANDUM

To: Falmouth Volunteer Board and Committee Chairs

From: Falmouth Town Council Ad Hoc Governance Committee
Cathy Breen, Dave Libby, Joe Wroblewski

CC: Nathan Poore, Town Manager

Date: October 10, 2008

RE Term changes and new Guidelines for Interactions between
Town Council and Council Appointed Boards and Committees

WILL ARMITAGE
CHAIR

JOE WROBLESKI
VICE CHAIR

CATHY BREEN

DAVE LIBBY

TONY PAYNE

TERESA PIERCE

BONNY RODDEN

NATHAN POORE
TOWN MANAGER

AMY LAMONTAGNE
ASST. TOWN MGR

Last spring the Falmouth Town Council Ad Hoc Governance Committee met with the chairs of all boards and committees regarding board and committee interaction with the Council, terms, meeting minutes/agendas, and other matters.

The Council's Governance Committee took your feedback and developed Council policies, which were ultimately adopted by the Council. These are attached to the Council Rules which can be reviewed on the town's web site. The overall goal was to increase the transparency of the working of the committees and boards both to the public and the Council. These policies will result in some minor changes in the way our committees and boards operate and, as explained more fully below, we have established the following set of initial guidelines. We view these tasks as a "housekeeping" effort that will hopefully provide for improved efficiency, communication and transparency.

1) Term Adjustment for Committee and Board Members

All terms for volunteer boards and committees will be streamlined to begin and end at the end of the calendar year. The Council Appointments Committee will advertise, accept applications for openings, and make appointments in the fall of each year. If openings arise (due to unexpected resignations) at other times of the year, the Council Appointments Committee will address those individually.

The Council is currently considering an ordinance that will authorize the synchronization of terms. This ordinance is attached. The reason for this "housekeeping" project is due mainly to the fact that past practice has resulted in terms beginning and ending when a member submits his/her resignation. Terms start and end on dozens of different days throughout the

year, resulting in a very cumbersome process to manage. The new process will establish fixed terms starting and ending near the end of the calendar year. If a member resigns before the end of his/her term, the new member will only serve the remaining part of the vacated term rather than start a new 3-year term.

The Town Council is requesting that all committee and board chairs place this on their earliest convenient agenda for discussion with their members. We expect that the result of this conversation will be a memorandum or report from each committee and board chair indicating which members will be serving which staggered term. Although the Town Council will have the final say on matters of reappointment, most committee recommendation will likely be approved.

We need a memorandum or report no later than December 1. For those boards and committees with multiple year terms, new terms will be staggered (members will start with a 1-year term, 2-year term or 3-year term). We ask that you include in your report, a list of members who will fill each of these new terms.

2) Annual Work Plans

Between September and January, the committee will develop an annual work plan, budget requests (if necessary) and annual report. The committee chair will submit all of these to the Town Manager that will be forwarded to the Council for feedback and direction.

3) Annual Review of Charge and Governing Directives (Rules, Ordinances, and Bylaws)

At the beginning of each year, the committees and boards will review their charge and any applicable governing documents. Any suggested changes should be included with the annual work plan.

4) Council Liaisons

Each committee will have a Council liaison. Council liaisons and committee/board chairs are expected to check-in at least quarterly. The Council liaison does not speak for the whole Council but rather acts as conduit of pertinent information between the Council and the committee/board. A list of Council liaisons (also includes staff assignments) is attached.

5) Staff Assistance

Town staff will be assigned to each committee and board. Staff shall provide assistance at a level deemed appropriate for each committee and board. The Town Manager has established staff assignments. A list of staff assignments (also includes Council liaisons) is attached. We will rely on the Town Manager and staff to assist you during this transition. Please contact the Town Manager with any staffing questions or concerns.

6) Agendas and Minutes

With staff assistance as desired, committee and board chairs will develop agendas and minutes for each meeting. The level of detail and format will be developed by each committee and board, with the exception of minimum requirements for quasi-judicial boards.

7) Web Site

With staff assistance as desired, all documents related to the committee's work will be posted to the Town of Falmouth website in a timely manner.

8) Email Policy

As a constant reminder, we have also attached a copy of the Town Council's email policy. Please share this with your committee/board and inform them that this policy applies to all Council appointed boards and committees.

Finally, we have attached a time line table identifying major milestone expectations. We appreciate your cooperation and patience during this transition. Please contact any of us, assigned staff or the Town Manager if you have any questions or concerns.