

Milton Town Government Study Committee
Minutes
August 16, 2016 Meeting

Present were Richard Neely, Leroy Walker, Ted Hayes, Peter Mullin, John Cronin, Kathy Fagan and Mary McNamara. Absent were Philip Matthews and Marvin Gordon.

Chairman Neely called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Review and discussion of the Minutes from the prior meeting was deferred until the next meeting of the TGSC.

Chairman Neely provided an update on the discussion which occurred at the Board of Selectmen's meeting held on July 26, 2016. The TGSC had proposed that the question approving the five-member Board of Selectmen appear on a special election ballot in November 2016. The Town Clerk's opposition to a special Town election, additional costs to be incurred, concurrent with the Presidential election, prevailed and resulted in the Board of Selectmen deciding not to conduct a special election in November.

Also at the Board of Selectmen's meeting, Chairman Neely updated the Board on the current topics under review by the TGSC: Town financial reorganization; Chief Procurement Officer; Personnel Board function. Recommendations will be made by the TGSC concerning the Chief Procurement Officer and the Personnel Board in time for inclusion in the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting.

Chairman Neely reported that the Board of Selectmen continues to propose consolidation of operations as an important issue for review by the TGSC. Discussion ensued about the difficulty of convincing multiple Town departments of the value of consolidation. This difficulty had been clarified in the past during several TGSC meetings with various department heads and Boards. It was suggested that TGSC recommend that the BOS convene a meeting of all departments which may be part of a consolidation in an attempt to bring consensus and a higher level of cooperation.

Item 3 on the Agenda resulted in a discussion concerning the benefit of informing potential members of the Personnel Board that the nature of the Board might change in the near future. The Personnel Board continues to have authority over new hires in the Town and the vacant seats on the Board should be filled by the new Moderator in order to continue the Personnel Board's work.

The working committee which is reviewing Personnel Board functions reported on their research into the function and roles of personnel boards in approximately 15 towns with comparable characteristics to Milton. Several communities retain personnel boards which function in an advisory capacity: Amherst, Brookline, Needham, Reading, Sharon, Westwood, Westford. Other towns have eliminated the personnel board: Scituate, Westborough. Many towns retain personnel boards which are similar in character to the current Milton Personnel Board (enabled by M.G.L. ch. 41 and the town's By-Laws), including Belmont, Hingham, Holliston.

The ongoing issue concerning the personnel board function narrows to whether the personnel board should retain hiring and firing authority and also the authority to maintain the employee classification system. The TGSC requested that the working committee look into a proposal for committee review which addressed the following items:

1. The current responsibilities of the Milton Personnel Board;
2. The responsibilities of an “advisory” personnel board; and the pros and cons of each approach
3. A description of what entity or person fills any gaps which may occur in the event the personnel board no longer performs certain functions (ie, Town HR director; ATA . .).

Agenda Item #4: Financial management discussion. The working committee on town financial management reported on several comparable towns and their financial administration structure: Canton (by-law combines the Treasurer/Collector; Financial Director and Treasurer/Collector report to the Town Administrator; the Financial Director supervises all the purchases, IT, health insurance, internal audit); Concord (appointed Treasurer/Collector; Financial Director reports to Town Manager; Town Accountant appointed by BOS); Sharon (Treasurer is appointed and functions as Financial Director); Needham (Financial Director; broad selection of departments report to the Financial Director incl. traffic, accounting, assessors, collector/treasurer, IT; audit review done by Financial Director).

TGSC scheduling for the next few months. It was estimated that three months remain to prepare for the Annual Town Meeting. The focus of the TGSC will be on the following areas: (1) Chief Procurement Officer recommendation; (2) Personnel Board recommendation; (3) financial management recommendation. Other issue: clarify method for replacement of vacant Town Meeting positions and other Town elected positions.

The next meetings are scheduled for September 12, 2016 and October 4, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. A motion to adjourn was made and seconded; the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary E. McNamara

August 22, 2016