

**Government Study Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, September 1, 2010**

In attendance: Betsy Gordon, Donald E. Shute,  
Daniel Collins, Eric Russo, Paula White

1. Approval of minutes of August 18 meeting  
The committee reviewed and voted unanimously to accept the minutes as prepared from the August 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting.
2. Administrative matters  
Betsy Gordon reminded all of the members of the committee that they need to pass the state ethics exam before moving forward as a member of the committee. The committee also created a list of names, addresses, phone numbers, and emails for all the committee members for communication purposes. A copy of the current Town of Norwell By-Laws was handed out to each person on the committee to review the job descriptions and list of responsibilities for each position in our town government.
3. Determine focus for report to 2011 town meeting  
The Government Study committee by definition in the town charter has the charge to “study the structure and functioning of the Town government, and may make such investigations with respect thereto as it deems appropriate.” The committee discussed the idea that the charge is too big to complete in one year and that they should determine a smaller more pointed focus for the upcoming year.

After much discussion about the different aspects and departments of government that could be addressed and all the different possible configurations that could be considered, **the committee unanimously voted on a two-pronged focus for the coming year; the possibility of moving from a 3 person board of selectmen to a 5 person board of selectman and moving from a town administrator to a town manager.**

It was acknowledged that across Massachusetts town manager and town administrator titles have varying degrees of responsibilities and power. Therefore the committee will focus less on title and more on the specific job description list of well defined responsibilities before making any recommendation.

Once the focus was determined the committee decided that it should meet with and interview a few town administrators and managers from the surrounding communities to understand the pros and cons of each position and configuration of duty.

4. Plan of action with timeline  
The attached Tentative Timeline was presented to the committee members by committee chair, Betsy Gordon. After reviewing the timeline and action plan the committee unanimously voted to accept the timeline as a flexible plan for moving forward. The changes that were recommended were to add the conservation commission to the meetings in October of the towns committees. It was also suggested that the committee consider interviewing town hall staff to understand their point of view on the administrative side of town government.

While reviewing the timeline members of the committee volunteered for specific tasks. Dan Collins will work to review the process needed to make change (if needed) to the town government including charter change, legislative petition etc.

Eric Russo will take charge of preparing a power point presentation that can be used at town meeting in the spring.

5. Designated tasks prior to next meeting

- All committee members will continue their research with surrounding town regarding other Government Studies and Town government Structure. Eric Russo will now focus on Cohasset instead of Hingham.
- Betsy Gordon will set up a meeting with the Massachusetts Municipal Association.
- Betsy Gordon will work to contact the town committee chairs in hopes to get meetings scheduled for October.
- All committee members will submit interview questions that will be used in the meetings with town committees, staff, and other town government officials in an attempt to gather consistent information from each interview.
- Don Shute will try to schedule meetings with William Buckley, a member of the Pembroke Government Study committee. Betsy Gordon will contact Linda DiNardo, chair of the Government Study committee in Hanover, and Steve Rollins, Hanover town manager and former town administrator.
- Betsy Gordon will speak with Jim Boudreau about the possibility of meeting with town hall staff for gathering information about government efficiency.

6. Future meeting dates

A tentative meeting for September 8, 2010 was set dependent upon our ability to schedule interviews on such short notice.

The meeting dates going forward are largely dependent upon the availability of committees and individuals that the committee would like to interview.