

**Government Study Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 15, 2010
Norwell Town Hall**

In attendance: Betsy Gordon; Don Shute; Daniel Collins, Paula White, Eric Russo

1. Administrative issues

The committee reviewed the minutes from the meetings dated October 18th, October 27th, and November 1st

Eric Russo reported that the Selectmen's office is able to upload and post our minutes online if we can provide them in .pdf format. The committee will review the minutes one more time for grammatical and punctuation errors before forwarding them to the selectmen's office.

2. Review of Government Study Committee

Betsy Gordon gave a quick summary of this committee's progress and activity to date.

3. Public Comments

Penny Wilson

Connie Hughes

Town Manager vs. Town Administrator

Ms. Hughes believes that the Town Administrator should be doing most of the Administrative functions of the town and have more operational authority he does now.

3 member BOS vs. 5 member BOS

Connie Hughes believes that the BOS now is too busy with petitions, road openings, and liquor licenses to spend any time on long-range planning. The BOS uses executive session only for litigation and negotiation of contracts.

Connie believes that a 3 person board can work very effectively as long as they are a policy making board and not an administrative board.

Term Limits

Ms. Wilson and Ms. Hughes agreed that term limits are a good idea. It is something that deserves closer look as it would bring new perspective to town leadership.

Stipends

Connie believes that selectmen should have a stipend because of they encounter many expenses on the town's behalf. However, she did agree that if the town had a selectmen's expense account and the officials were reimbursed for their out of pocket expenses that a stipend would not be necessary.

Penny Wilson believes having or not having stipends is an issue that should be studied further.

Structure of Committees

There is much frustration in town committees with accountability and getting other town officials to attend their meetings. Each committee should have quarterly meetings with the BOS.

When Connie was a member of the BOS each member was assigned certain committees and advocated for those committees in the BOS meeting. It was a great way to keep communication open within the structure.

Communication

Ms. Wilson finds it very hard to get information in town hall. There is no source of customer service and no one who is in charge. In the end you are on your own if you want to get information or approval from the town of Norwell.

The whole world has changed and it is time that Norwell town hall moves on.

Coordination of resources

Connie Hughes feels that there are many places where Norwell can consolidate. For example, the surveyor of fences should be part of the building inspector's job. It doesn't need to be a separate position.

Efficiencies

Penny Wilson believes that the town does not provide good service anymore to its residents or customers. She shared her opinion that there needs to be better follow-up, communication, accountability and transparency.

4. Adjournment

The committee unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 22, 2010.