

**Government Study Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 6, 2011, 7:00pm
Norwell Town Hall**

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

1. Administrative issues

The committee reviewed and unanimously accepted the minutes for the meetings held on December 1st, December 5th, and December 13th at 1:00pm. The committee also accepted the changes to the minutes from September 1st, September 8th, and September 15th.

The committee is now ready to post all minutes on line through December 13, 2010.

2. Review of Article for Town Meeting

The committee reviewed the draft article that was prepared by Daniel Collins for the upcoming Town Meeting warrant. Dan has met with Town Counsel, Bob Galvin regarding the suggested article. The committee reviewed the changes recommended by Bob Galvin.

3. Explanation of the Process

Daniel Collins explained to the rest of the committee the process it takes to make changes to a town's charter.

1. The committee writes an article to be added to the warrant for the next town meeting.
2. e should get preliminary review by Town Counsel, certain Town officials, and municipal law experts who have offered their services without charge. Then we'll know that it's ready for action.
3. The Article is brought to the Advisory Board who will review and deliberate on the article. The Advisory Board sends the Article to the Selectmen and Town Counsel where it is accepted into the warrant.
4. The Act amending the Town Charter must be approved by a majority vote at Annual Town Meeting.
5. If approved, the Act would be filed with the Legislature, through the offices of Senator Hedlund as sponsor and Rhonda Nyman as co-sponsor, for enactment by the House and Senate and signature by the Governor.
4. The Act would then require "ratification" by a majority of voters at the next annual Town Election. Once ratified by the voters, the Act would effectively amend the Charter."

5. Outstanding Issues

The committee needs clarification on voting requirements for changes to both by-law and charter changes. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires a majority vote and Norwell Town Counsel has stated that is correct, but the current introduction in the Norwell town charter suggests a 2/3's vote is needed. Dan Collins will contact Norwell Moderator Bill Coffey and State officials to get clarification.

6. Communication

The Committee will meet with the Board of Selectman, the town Moderator Bill Coffey, and the Advisory Board before finalizing the article. Once the article is in final format the committee agreed to send copies to all the other town boards and committees. Then, this committee will hold an open meeting where all other committees are welcome to comment

on the proposed article in order to ensure that no further revisions are needed for legal or logistical reasons.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Monday, January 10, 2011