

**TOWN OF STURBRIDGE
GOVERNMENT SERVICES STUDY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF August 3, 2012**

Present: Scott Arndt, Priscilla Gimas, Peter Levine, and Aaron Smith. Absent: Mary Redetzke.

This was the first meeting of the Government Services Study Committee (GSSC) held at the town hall, beginning at 2:30 p.m. The committee began with each member introducing themselves and sharing some of their backgrounds.

White Paper: Discussion took place among the members regarding the white paper submitted by the Board of Selectmen Chair, Tom Creamer. The general feeling was that it was a very thorough paper however, the committee felt it wanted to chart its own direction. Some of the thoughts expressed in the paper will be considered but not the overall paper.

Collaboration: Committee members felt that collaboration was very important. Peter Levine reported on Northampton's Best Practices program regarding regionalization. Consideration was given for members to visit other communities and see how they incorporate regionalization.

Scott Arndt spoke about the need for GSSC to be results oriented and not task oriented. Aaron Smith and others agreed and all members felt that the right message for regionalization must be expressed; the purpose would be to better services and make them available more efficiently.

The committee felt it would be important to meet with department heads before we went too far along. The purpose would be to allay any fears department heads may have in regards to the purpose of GSSC. We would also share the mission statement we will develop and make time available for any questions department heads may have. This would actually be our first exposure to the community. Priscilla said she believed that the next department head meeting would be August 8th. She would check with Shaun on Monday, August 6th when he returns from vacation and would email the members.

Members felt that Aaron's experience will be very beneficial to the committee and he could guide us in the steps we need to take to begin and execute the study. Questions included: how do you do culture change? How do we get others to "buy-in"? Where do we start?

Mission Statement: Peter brought forth a mission statement from Northampton and members adapted it for Sturbridge. The agreed upon mission statement is "To make delivery of town services more efficient and less costly while improving quality for our citizens."

Starting points: Aaron suggested a list of departments, the services they provide, how many full and part time employees, and the budget involved. Priscilla said she would gather the information and forward it to Scott for the financial piece. This would be ready for the next meeting. Peter will contact Franklin Regional to learn about their regionalization and report back to the committee.

Some additional issues to be addressed include cross jurisdictional collaboration, nominal consolidation, merging of departments, etc.

Next meeting: Friday, August 17th, 2:30 p.m. Meeting adjourned 4:20 p.m.

Priscilla C. Gimas, GSSC Chair _____