

TOWN GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE

Thursday, January 22, 2015 – Minutes

Meeting called to order by the Chairperson at 6:00 p.m. and the Chairperson advised the meeting was being recorded through public access.

Present: Chairperson: Phil Washko, Vice Chair: Bernie Roderick,, Dick Douglass, Rich Griffiths, and Pattie Pacella and Brian Wood is a new alternate member.

Absent: Mark Badwey and Siobhan Henebury

Phil Washko welcomed newest alternate member, Brian Wood.

Minutes: No minutes were in received in time to approve.

AGENDA:

Opening Public Comment:

None.

Review Research:

1. Finalize Town Meeting Survey: Review town meeting survey, advised that they would have two weeks to respond.

Final tweaks included removing the secret ballot question and making one question into two.

Bernie Roderick made a motion to accept new survey with changes and was seconded by Dick Douglass. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Fin Com

Discussion on an idea brought forth by Rich Griffiths on how to fill vacancies. Most agreed to do as is with elected boards, you fill to unexpired term.

Document ready to be sent to Tom Crotty.

2. Term Limits

Mark Badwey wasn't present and he was typing up the draft for review.

Phil Washko explained to Brian Wood the premises behind Term Limits. It was an overwhelming suggestion from our survey and voters as well as nationally that the voter was in favor of Term Limits. He explained we were putting together a non binding referendum.

Brian Wood expressed his opinion that he didn't agree with Town Limits on a personal level.

Dick Douglass said that the benefits were speculation.

Bernie Roderick said that we had an obligation to present to Town Meeting pros/cons of them.

Pattie Pacella expressed that there's enough interest from the Public for them to vote on Term Limits and it is not necessarily the opinion of our Committee.

Phil Washko said that the Town Moderator may be available to attend the next meeting.

3. Town Meeting

Review of current Town Meeting. 429 Members, with 100 being a quorum.

Committee needs to figure out what is actionable, compelling to want to make changes to Town Meeting.

Our meeting was interrupted by Robert (Hoppy) Hobson who didn't realize we were on camera, and walked in. He asked, 'why does this Committee want to get rid of the BPW.' There was just a small back and forth of conversation. Then Phil Washko said that if Hoppy wanted to remain in the room we do have public comment feedback at the end of our meeting. Mr. Hobson apologized for outburst not realizing we were on camera.

Back to Town Meeting, discussions on before lunch vs. after lunch quorum counts.

One of our actionable recommendations would be to recommend a sign in process after lunch.

Discussion on attendance of Town Meeting and should people be held accountable if they do not attend at least 3 meetings (including Special Town Meeting in their term).

Pattie Pacella wasn't sure many of the people who don't come even know they are on Town Meeting.

One suggestion was that if your term is up you have to pull papers and get them signed as in any elected position, vs. currently a paper is sent out by Town Clerk that one signs to say they want their name on the ballot.

Bernie Roderick was sure the M.G.L. 156 that talked about Town Meeting was the one that suggested the paper be sent out for incumbants.

Phil Washko to look into the law and determine if in fact it's something we can not change.

A discussion on our Final Report and how that is going to start to come together was had. A few things on that final report would include, measuring accurately for attendance for Town Meeting, ex-officio membership.

Rich Griffiths did say that the Town Clerk has better access to more current data.

Discussion around Conflicts of Interest – Town Employees, family members who vote.. how do you know if there is a conflict of interest.

OTHER BUSINESS:

In other business, Pattie Pacella brought up a concern with no hiring of a TA as of yet and asked if there were any emails between Bob Espindola and Phil Washko regarding the TA. (because at one point there were emails regarding the process). Mr. Washko advised there were not.

Discussion for meeting with moderator:

Perhaps suggesting a Town Meeting handbook.

Preliminary meeting stuff to be written in a by-law, so wouldn't have to be done in first 15 minutes of the meeting.

PLACEHOLDER ITEMS due 1/22:

Phil Washko reviewed the placeholder items.

1. IT
2. Fin Com
3. Term Limits
4. Regulate Town Meeting

Dick Douglass made a motion to accept the placeholder items for these four topics and to email them to the BOS office and was seconded by Pattie Pacella. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion on Bernie Roderick wanting the final report sent to all citizens.

In other business, Dick Douglass reached out to a few newspapers who would consider writing an article or special edition on the final work of the committee. Mr. Douglass to reach out to Bob Unger of the Standard Times.

Our next meeting will be February 5, 2015.

ACTION: Strategize ways at the next meeting on drafting a final report.

Phil Washko to look into open meeting laws and how we can draft final report via email to each other.

No one was present from the public for comment.

Rich Griffiths made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Dick Douglass. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectively submitted,

Patricia A. Pacella
Recording Secretary