

Town Government Study Committee

Meeting Minutes

11 March 2008 – Revised Per 18 March 2008 Meeting

Call to Order

- ❖ Chris Delmonte called the meeting to order
- ❖ Time/Date: **7:35pm on 11 March 2008**
- ❖ Location: **Academy Building Conference Room**

Roll Call

- ❖ Chris Delmonte conducted committee roll call
- ❖ The following committee members were present:
 - X Dr. Jabbar A. al-Obaidi
 - X Mr. Christopher Delmonte
 - X Mr. Ed Ivaldi
 - X Mr. James G.H. Moore
 - X Ms. Anna M. Nalevanko
 - X Mr. Ernie Talpey
 - X Ms. Sheila Whitaker

Approval of Minutes from last meeting

- ❖ Chris asked if everyone had read the minutes
 - Motion made to accept the minutes from last meeting as written, 2nd
 - Discussion on the minutes:
 - None
 - Vote: Unanimously approved

Old Business

- ❖ Select Chairperson for the Committee
 - Opened with discussions on candidates/nominations
 - Motion made for Ed Ivaldi to be chair, 2nd
 - Discussion - Amendment to remove Chris as Temporary Chair upon acceptance of this motion; Committee had consensus on amendment
 - Vote - Motion unanimously approved
- ❖ Select Vice-Chairperson for the Committee
 - Motion to have Sheila to be the Vice Chairperson, 2nd
 - Discussion – none
 - Vote - unanimously accepted
- ❖ Select Secretary for the Committee
 - Motion to have Ernie as Secretary, 2nd
 - Discussion – none
 - Vote - unanimously accepted

New Business

- ❖ Discussion surrounding formality of Committee meetings given it's a working committee and desire to minimize procedures to maximize time spent at meetings
 - Want to use consensus as recognized by the Chair as much as possible
 - Use with non-binding actions

- Utilize Roberts Rules for keeping order if needed
 - Use with binding actions
- Add use of Action Items to keep track of activities that Committee members will perform without making them formal motions
- Committee accepted this discussion by consensus

Discussions

- ❖ Determine Focus/Scope of the Committee's efforts
 - Discussion on what the Committee should look at to accomplish warrant's goals
 - Should we generate a mission statement?
 - Consensus was reached on using Warrant as driving description for Committee's mission
 - Anna had a set of topic areas to review:
 - Rules/Constitutions: General By-Laws, Charter
 - Legislative Structure: Town Meeting, Representative Town Meeting, City Counsel
 - Form of Government: Executive Secretary, Town Administrator, Town Manager, Mayor/Council
 - Board/Commissions: Appointed vs. Elected, Functions
 - Staff: Organization (i.e., finance director needed), Appropriate Staffing, Missing Positions, Potential Consolidation
 - Policies/Procedures
 - Look at positions and form of Government as we have it today
 - Compare against other towns of similar characteristics
 - Discuss the others within the community
 - Discussed the range of the scope that we have
 - Determined we have a very large range for the Committee based on Warrant
 - Warrant read to better understand
 - Look at overall town government and/or recommend the town government
 - Report to the Town
 - Looking at the form of the Government for consolidation and what we have for roles
 - Financial reorganization
 - Long term plans
 - Set timelines for various activities of the Committee
 - Ron was unable to get the records from the previous TGSC
 - Identify a submission of the Committee for the May 2008 Committee Summary Report
 - Will most likely want to obtain another year for Committee work at Town Meeting
 - Hold public town meetings to obtain feedback
 - Where are we now?
 - Anna to look at summarizing the current form of government and identify the positions and organization (create an organization chart)
 - Where can we go to get factual information on the Bridgewater
 - Mass.gov
 - Identify where do we want to go? Start driving towards the goals
 - How do we get there? Make some recommendations to the town to get there
 - What's the proper level of detail that we need to identify for the TGSC to examine?
 -
- ❖ Identify data resources
 - Talk to other towns that are deemed "Best in Class" and learn from their lessons learned
 - Mass Municipal Association
 - Mass Municipal Management Association www.massmanagers.org

- Has resources of other towns that have reviewed their governments
- They are willing to send out someone to discuss with us the merits of the various types of town governments
- Anna showed hardcopies of reports for two other towns
- Have a list of others that we can use as resources in the town
- MGL on the state site has a lot
- Set up speakers for meeting – present to us
 - Get a person to come in to discuss the various other town committees that have been set up and what they have learned from them – we are not yet ready to get the interviews going yet
 - ◆ Call MMA to get further information
 - ◆ Moderators Association – have discs on OTM and RTM available
- People to interview in Town
 - Civic groups, e.g.:
 - Bridgewater Improvement Association
 - Natural Resources
 - Town officials, Board of Selectmen, Executive Secretary
 - Department heads
 - Interviews of citizens – random
- Group discussions/forum with small groups
 - 4-5 people
 - Use similar questions to each group
- Focus Groups that are larger in size
 - 7-15 people
 - Have goals on what they want to accomplish
- Open Public Forums
 - Engage with discussions on questions we’ve got and would be lead by someone with expertise in the areas
 - Provide press releases for the speakers to ensure public can attend and ask questions
- Use of SurveyMonkey is free and online
 - automatically generates reports
 - gets the survey out to large number of people
 - provide letter to committees in the town and civic groups to advise them as to what we’re doing and where we’re going so that we can solicit feedback
- We need to maintain our independence from all town groups to ensure our integrity
-
- ❖ Examine initial timeframe for reporting to the Town (milestones) the Committee’s progress
 - May 5th is next Town Meeting
- ❖ Determine any Subcommittees needed
- ❖ Other motions as approved by Chairperson
- ❖ Next meeting Goal
 - work to generate a plan/schedule for the committee as main focus for next week

Motions

- Motion for Anna to put together the organization of the town and put together for the next meeting, 2nd
 - Discussion – put together a general list, boards, etc.
 - Vote - unanimously passed

Action Items

- ❖ Anna to discuss notes from last TGSC with neighbor who may have records as was participant
- ❖ Anna to provide links to the two Town reports that were shown during the meeting
- ❖ Chris to call MMA for further information
- ❖ Jim to get the Moderators Association OTM disk
- ❖ Jim is going to draft an outreach letter that we as Committee can critique

Adjournment

- ❖ Determine next Meeting date(s), time(s) and location(s)
 - Looked at meeting schedule desired and how often we'll meet
 - Consensus was every two weeks
 - Will stabilize on 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month
 - Next Dates are: 3/18, 4/1, 4/15, 4/29 (extra meeting in April due to how Tuesday's fall)
 - Time 7:30pm – 9:30pm
 - Location to be Police Station Conference Room
 - Chris has already put us in for the rest of the year
 - Training Room door on left from back parking lot
- ❖ **Motion** to Adjourn, 2nd, and approved unanimously at **9:30pm**.

Meeting minutes written by: Ernie Talpey

Minutes approved by TGSC at 18 March 2008 meeting