

## Town Government Study Committee 2014

Library – Great Hall

December 17, 2014 7:30 pm

Committee: Katherine L Babson Jr., Rose Mary Donahue, Arthur J Goldberg, Ann Marie Gross, Richard Page, Linda Perlmutter, Anna Sereiko, Thomas Ulfelder, Stanley Brooks,

Also: Kathleen Nagle

Guests: Peter Hechenbleikner

Katherine Babson called meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Citizen Speak: Laura Fragasso

1. Make the website more user friendly to engage the public.
2. Create an opportunity/structure for town to establish an overarching goal/mission top guide decision-making by all boards.

Babson introduced Pete Hechenbleikner to the committee. Ms. Babson suggested hiring Mr. Hechenbleikner to consult with the committee on Land Use and Executive Function areas of investigation. Mr. Hechenbleikner resume includes extensive experience as a Town Manager in Reading and recent consulting work in Westwood regarding reorganization of the land use functions.

Babson distributed a chart of Town Manager characteristics and executive authority in different forms of governance.

Babson reported that several peer community interviews have been completed and noted that each community has a model and adaptation of Executive Authority to meet their particular needs. In design of executive authority it is important to respect the existing culture of the community.

Babson made a motion to engage Mr. Hechenbleikner as consultant to the Town Government Study Committee. The rate of compensation is \$75 per hour. The committee has a budget for this year of \$15,000.

Babson suggested dividing into working groups to facilitate progress.

1. Land Use: Donahue, Brooks, Babson
2. Executive Function; Page, Gross, Ulfelder, Babson
3. Strategic Planning; Sereiko
4. Bylaw Revision: Goldberg
5. Human Services: Perlmutter

6. Town Meeting reform: Page
7. Communication plan: Gross

Babson suggested liaison assignments to keep other boards informed on the work of the committee:

1. Moderator: Page
2. BOS: Babson
3. Schools: Sereiko
4. Library: Perlmutter
5. BPW: Perlmutter, Babson
6. Advisory: Gross, Page
7. Land Use area: Donahue, Babson

Page presented findings re: Town Meeting Reform

1. No consensus to change size of Town Meeting
2. No interest in creating committee structure within town meeting
3. Seek opportunity to make it more engaging
  - a. Less repetitive/redundancy in presentations
  - b. Fewer extended comments
  - c. Some in favor of a mechanism to end debate
4. Investigate electronic voting

Ulfelder suggested that reducing the parliamentary protocols should be looked at to both save time and make more interactive for members.

5. Interest in setting regular fall town meeting with a set date and limited agenda to Non-budget items

Babson suggested an article for ATM 2015 to extend the life of the committee by one year, amend the charge to include areas committee finds important to work on and request funds.

Gross addressed the topic of resident input meetings and how to engage residents. The meetings are scheduled for January 22 and 23. She suggested some broad questions to frame the discussion with residents. The committee asked her to report back at the next meeting with proposed discussion questions.

Acceptance of minutes deferred.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Submitted by Kathleen Nagle