

**Government Study Committee
Minutes
July 21, 2011**

Present: Keith Elder, Paul Tura, Mary O' Donnell, Ken Stevens, Dick Dennehy, Bob Ward, Jean Landis Naumann, Wendell Chamberlain. Absent: Fran Hoeg.

Present: John LaBrache, Trea. TOK.

Meeting commenced at 7:03. Named Mary secretary for meeting.

Motion to table Minutes of 7/7/11 until next meeting due to absence of Fran accepted.

Chair Elder reported on BOS meeting 7/19/11, in which an 8/9/11 Special Town Meeting was called to address 2 articles; the first dealing with the Adams Library's CPC funding, and the second dealing with the Collector-Treasurer situation. The 2nd article will be a Home Rule Petition to create a combined Coll-Treas. that is appointed by the BOS. The BOS also would like the TGSC to weigh- in on this issue based upon their research and take a vote to recommend endorsement or rejection of the Article. Chair indicated that due to resignations it was timely to consider a re-org., and the issues before our Board should be: Does TGSC wish to endorse BOS article as is or make own recommendations at TM? Vote to combine Coll.-Treas. position. Vote to make that position appointed or elected. Chair invited Treas. LaBrache to lend his expertise to the discussion.

With discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Dennehy, and 2nd. By Mr. Ward that the TGSC make a recommendation at the 8/9/11 Special Town Meeting. Vote unanimous.

With unanimous assent the committee began discussion on the merits of combined Coll.-Treas. position, prefaced by an examination of the Article as written as well as an abstraction of an Article written by the Town of Plympton, which included language for a more efficient transition. T.A. Jill Goldsmith provided TGSC with abstracts of both versions with opinions that the Plympton version was within the scope and intent of the Kingston Article. Points of interest and discussion by members with input from Town Treas. included analysis of cost savings, trends in other towns, oversight by town accountant to insure accountability, personnel coalescence and cross training to stay within budget, election timetable constraints, and stronger relationships with T.A. and financial team.

Motion made by Chair to recommend combined Collector-Treasurer position. Seconded by Ms. Landis Naumann. Unanimously accepted.

With unanimous assent the Committee moved to begin discussion on the subject of elected or appointment of combined position of Coll.-Treas. The following points of interest were made; Chair believes this complicated position needs the best talent available with more accountability not electability. Position needs to be part of financial team mgmtnt approach. With elected position, person might choose not to attend meetings. Mr. Tura worries that taking vote away from public inhibits removal.

Mr. LaBrache has concerns over Kingston Home Rule Petition's lack of a transition mechanism once signed by Gov. Patrick. Plympton language insures smooth transition. Office holder who is left (Treas.) is appointed to fill out remaining term, and then BOS appoints. Mr. Stevens asked Treas. why he wants appointment over election. Mr. LaB. believes in professional certification that elections don't afford. Mr. Stevens voiced his professional opinion that he sees no difference in the level of competence between elected or appointed. Mr. Ward believes our town is a big corporation that has a small pool of candidates out of which it is expected to elect a professional to run a corporate finance structure. Mr. Chamberlain pointed out that current voter turnout is running between 15 and 18% at town elections. Mr. Dennehy worries that appointed would turn into a revolving door or stepping stone to more lucrative employment in another town. No commitment. Mr. Stevens believes there is no guarantee of oversight over appointed position. Won't look out for taxpayer. Mr. Dennehy said position only accountable to 5 people, no one else. Mr. Ward worried that people having nice personalities as elected officials does not translate to a level of competency that has avoided past bad practices. He believes a sound financial management team approach insures checks and balances.

Motion by Mr. Ward to recommend appointed Collector-Treasure position. 2nd by Ms. Landis Naumann. Voted 5-3 to accept. For: K. Elder, B. Ward, M. O'Donnell, J. Landis Naumann, W. Chamberlain. Against: D. Dennehy, K. Stevens, P. Tura.

Post comments following vote; Mr. Stevens seeks elevated personnel responsibilities with this action. Wants staff to step up to question Coll.-Treas. if necessary. Staffing will be a problem. Mr. Ward believes staff will be called on to do more. Mr. LaB. says there are payroll concerns, discussing work time allocations to the various clerical positions within the two departments to allay minority concerns on how the newly created office will work within budget. There is a need for one more full time position, but 19hr. position might suffice. Having a lock box will save employee time. Cross training Coll.Treas. employees will lead to more efficiency. Mr. Tura wanted to know who collects delinquent taxes. Mr. LaB. says John Hoban Assist. Treas.

Chair moved to the discussion of language in the Article. Does the committee support Article as written or should we recommend a change to the Plympton language that spells out the transition roadmap? Mr. Ward made a motion to not support current Kingston Article as written because of a lack of a transition proviso. Discussion by committee ensued concerning re arranging the language to address the specific sequence of the positions and titles of the offices in question and addressing the need for interim Coll.-Treas. when Gov. signs petition. Mr. Ward's motion to accept Plympton Article language with transposition of titles and amend "BOS may to shall" in section 1. 2nd by Mr. Chamberlain, was carried unanimously.

Chair moved on to the discussion about the Town Administrator position now being vacated. BOS wants to advertise using old job description. They are not seeking TGSC input. TGSC should send memo to Search Committee on our TA report data present in our preliminary report. Mr. Ward said the report might need tweaking; other details have come up and time is right for what we have gleaned to be sent on. Mr. Dennehy

commented that we need more meetings, and made a motion to meet next Thurs. to consolidate data and recommend our position on the TA. 2nd by Mr. Ward. Carried unanimously.

New Business: Ms O'Donnell sought to make a motion for an Article at Town Meeting that seeks to cut back the position of Town Planer to a part time position and hire a town engineer. Mr. Dennehy concurred and voiced the need for a town engineer in order to streamline the planning and permitting process. Mr. Ward believed the subject needs more study. Ms. O'Donnell's motion was tabled.

Mr. Tura made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Mr.Chamberlain. Carried @ 8:55.