

Town Meeting Government Study Committee
Minutes
May, 20, 2010
Room 201 Town House, Kingston, Massachusetts
7:00p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Elder at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

Members in attendance: John Haas, Jean Landis Naumann, Keith Elder, Wendell Chamberlain, Frances Botelho-Hoeg, Richard Dennehy

Guests present: Jill Meyers, Kingston Town Administrator, and Charles Cristello, Town Manager Middleboro, Massachusetts

Citizens present: Bob Ward, Priscilla Palombo

Discussion of Town Administrator/Town Manager positions:

Jill Meyers made a presentation regarding the position of Town Administrator in Kingston. She stated that her job description is outlined in the Wage and Personnel Bylaws. Her duties include: addressing resident's concerns, financial management, policies and procedures, budget, trouble shooting, and primarily to meet the directives of the Board of selectmen. She works with the budget and takes an active role in the process by working with the Treasurer.

Questions for Ms. Meyers and Mr. Cristello:

F. Hoeg- Interfacing with department heads

Meyers- meets quarterly to discuss finances. Would like the meetings to be more contributory. Is seeking to implement monthly reports from departments. Feels she should be a resource to elected officials. Stated that constraints of her office make it difficult to interface all of the time.

R. Dennehy- Enterprise Funds and Town Administrator's role

Meyers- Prefer to keep Enterprise Funds. Committees can only spend what they have.

Cristello- Some communities have strong Charters which lay out strong Town Administrator positions. Town Administrator position was formerly that of a clerk/executive secretary. Hybrid charters are popping up lately combining administrator/manager roles.

J. Haas- How are duties and responsibilities of elected officials laid out

Meyers- Bylaws, Enterprise Funds are handled at Town Meeting. Can address financial issues

W. Chamberlain- Establishment of a Financial Management Team

Meyers- Role with the FinCom is limited

Process would be easier of role of administrator, financial responsibilities, were more clearly defined

J. Naumann asked about recommended models to review

Cristello- Hanover is a good model to review. Also suggested looking at models that are along the continuum and will get back to us with some suggestions

J. Haas- Is there a trend toward less elected/more appointed and consolidation of positions?

Cristello- Has noticed a trend toward combining departments such as public works.

R. Dennehy asked about imposing impact fees

Cristello- Towns do not have the authority or have limited authority in this area

W. Chamberlain asked about Open versus Representative Town Meeting

Cristello- danger with RTM is that it can be "hijacked" by special interest groups. Suggested keeping OTM and work hard to encourage people to attend.

Chairman's Report:

Selectmen accepted the resignation of Jeannette Gleason and posted an opening for the Committee. Topics for the next meeting will be the DOR Report and continuation of the Town Manager versus Town Administrator discussion.

Minutes of April 29, 2010 and May 6, 2010:

A discussion took place regarding the minutes of the April 29, 2010 meeting. On a motion by John Haas, seconded by Richard Dennehy, the minutes were approved as written.

The minutes of May 6, 2010 were also discussed. On a motion by John Haas, seconded by Wendell Chamberlain, the amended minutes were accepted on a 4-1-1 vote with Haas, Naumann, Elder and Chamberlain voting in the affirmative, Dennehy voting in the negative, and Hoeg abstaining.

Mr. Dennehy expressed his concern that his minutes were amended, and that if others wanted to submit minutes they should have volunteered to take the minutes in the absence of the Secretary.

Other:

Chairman asked the Committee to be prepared to discuss the Rutherford Report at the next meeting.

Priscilla Palombo addressed the Committee and expressed her concern that at times it has been unclear as to who to go to when a Department Head has problems with a staff member.

On a motion by Wendell Chamberlain, seconded by Jean Landis Naumann, the Committee voted to adjourn at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Frances E. Botelho-Hoeg, Secretary