

Town Government Study Committee
Minutes
October 21, 2010
Room 203
Town House
7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by the Acting Chairman, Jean Landis Naumann

Members present: Paul Tura, Richard Dennehy, Wendell Chamberlain, Mary O'Donnell, Jean Landis Naumann, Ken Stevens, Frances Botelho-Hoeg

Members absent: Keith Elder, Robert Ward

Visitors: Joan Paquette, Town Accountant

Motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting was made by Paul Tura, seconded by Mary O'Donnell. Motion passed: 6 yes, 1 abstention.

Presentation by Town Accountant:

Joan Paquette addressed the Committee and discussed the questions regarding communication, coordination, resources available to her department, and cooperation between departments. Her comments are:

Communication:

Joan scored this area a 3 out of 5. Information does not always flow the way it should. For example, contracts might be awarded and Joan is not informed until the person who won the contract comes to her requesting appropriate documents. This delays the process for document preparation. Town Administrator is the Chief Procurement Officer. There have been no monthly meetings with the Town Administrator. There have been no regularly scheduled meetings with the Town's Fiscal Team. Joan feels these would be helpful as her legal role is to confirm money is available for projects/activities of the Town.

Cooperation:

Joan stated that some departments are great with cooperation while others not so much. She scored this area with a 2 out of 5. Some of her concerns were:

Assessors- The Assessors Office is not always timely with information. Copies of abatements do not always come to her. Turnover sheets are not given to the Treasurer and the Town Accountant at the same time. This causes verification to be delayed. The system is not efficient

Collector- The Collector's Turnover is a public document, but it is not presented to the Treasurer and to the Town Accountant at the same time. Collector "turns over" once a week.

Resources:

Joan stated some concerns regarding resources available to her:

MUNIS System:

- System is remote. Data is not here
- Computers need to be upgraded to Windows
- Modules on MUNIS available to be used by the Town include: Collectors, Accounts payable, Treasurer, Sewer and Water, and utility billing
- Sewer Betterments, General Ledger, and Payroll are not used
- MUNIS offers telephone support via a help desk in Maine.

Payroll:

- Payroll is at Harpers
- Charge Offs are sent to Treasurer, who then forwards them to the Town Accountant

Purchase Orders:

- Not entered into the system

- Town does not use the MUNIS encumbrance accounting system. Accountant keeps track of purchase orders manually if a vendor insists on a PO or if the amount of the purchase is over \$5000.00.

DOR Report/Visit:

Ms. Paquette felt the DOR visit was not helpful. The following are Ms. Paquette's comments on the DOR Report Recommendations:

- **Recommendation #2 establish a Financial Management Team-** Ms Paquette agrees with this recommendation.
- **Recommendation #19 Recommend that the Town Accountant design an Invoice Cover Sheet for each department:** Not necessary
- **Recommendation #20 The Accountant should institute a pilot program requiring certain departments to enter their own information into the Town's financial software remotely-** Most departments are not qualified or do not have access to a computer and cannot do this.
- **Recommendation #21 Prepare Vendor Warrants on a biweekly basis-** To prepare a biweekly warrant is of no benefit
- **Recommendation #22 Departments, Boards, and Commissions submit signed copies of all grants and contracts to the Accountant's Office in compliance with MGL Chapter 41 Section 57** Not all departments are compliant with this
- **Recommendation #23 Change the format of the Payroll warrant** Payroll Warrant is less detailed now than when the DOR first visited. Selectmen do not have access to the names and amounts on the payroll. They only have account numbers and amounts.

On a **motion** by Jean Landis Naumann, **seconded** by Richard Dennehy it was moved to "Request a copy of the Town Administrator's report on her meetings with Department Heads affected by the DOR report and the actions taken on the recommendations from the DOR.

Motion passed unanimously.

Community Forum:

Suggestion was made that the Forum should be posted as a meeting. The Chairman will open the Forum. Posters will be put up around Town further advertising the Forum. Forum will begin at 7:00p.m.

Motion to adjourn by Richard Dennehy, **seconded** by Paul Tura. **The vote was unanimous.** The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Next Meeting: November 4, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in Room 203