

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

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 7:00p.m.

Members present: Jean Landis Naumann, Keith Elder, Frances Botelho-Hoeg, Bob Ward, Paul Tura, Ken Stevens, Mary O'Donnell, Wendell Chamberlain

Members absent: Richard Dennehy

Visitors: Board of Assessors (Nancy Shea, Anne Dunn, Thomas Donnelly)

Minutes of September 16, 2010 were approved as written on a motion by Bob Ward, seconded by Mary O'Donnell. Vote: 6 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions

Chairman's report:

Selectmen discussed the Committee's meeting of 9/16/2010 at their meeting. They will be sending the Committee their comments and suggestions at a later date.

Ken Stevens discussed previous questionnaires used by former TGSC for departments. The Chairman shared with the Committee the questions he has provided to departments in preparation for their upcoming meetings with the TGSC. Ken Stevens discussed using a ranking system for data derived from the questions. Paul Tura suggested a calendar be provided to the departments to let them know when we would like to meet with them. The chairman will put together a calendar of upcoming meetings and provide it to department heads.

The link for the survey on Town Meeting is now available online. A suggestion was made to put the survey in the paper for those who do not have internet access.

Community Forum:

The Community Forum will be October 27,2010 in Room 200 of the Town House at 7:00 p.m.

The Chairman will chair the Forum. The procedure will be:

- Open Forum for gathering of information on Town Meeting. Chairman will give opening statement
- Residents will be allowed to make comments on Town Meeting, basing their comments on the questions found in the survey.

Draft of Committee Report:

Bob Ward and Wendell Chamberlain discussed with the Committee the first draft of section I of the Committee Report.

Board of Assessors:

The Assessors gave an overview on their responsibilities. They shared the following information with the Committee:

- Department of Revenue oversees their work/responsibilities
- They use the Internet to be more accessible to residents
- They interact with the Selectmen, Building Department, Town Clerk, and Tax Collector
- They must do a full re-evaluation every three years. They hire outside help to conduct these evaluations of commercial property
- Registry of Deeds charges for printing of information
- Their budget was reduced
- Foot traffic in their office has decreased due to an increased use of the internet for service
- There has been a decrease in requests for abatements because of information posted online
- Quality of requests for abatements has improved

- A rough draft will be developed by the fulltime assessor. That draft is brought to the Board of Assessors for discussion/approval and final presentation to the Finance Committee.
- The assessors meet once or twice a month
- A senior citizen is used for 62 hours of office work as part of the Senior Work Off program
- They use the MUNIS system for budget reports. The office personnel are effectively using this system
- Timing is critical in reconciling reports/betterments with the Tax Collector and Sewer Department
- In order to be more effective they need to keep communication open

How can Town Government help the Assesors to do their job more effectively and efficiently?

- Demonstrate an understanding of the constraints/guidelines that Assessors are mandated to follow
- Data collection and statistical collection is very time consuming and requires many man hours
- Continue to share similar systems to allow the process between departments to continually improve
- Provide continuing education for staff

New Business:

None at this time

On a motion by Jean Landis Naumann, seconded by Paul Tura, the Committee voted to adjourn. The vote was unanimous and the Committee adjourned at 8:55 p.m.