

**Minutes of the Governance Committee of May 20, 2014**  
**Town Hall – Meeting Room #1 6:30pm**

Present: Chairman Stephen Gray (SG), Jack Angley (JA), Jim Grimes (JG), Town Administrator Michael Milanoski (TA) and Elaine Weston

Absent: Richard Ward (RW) & John Cotter (JC)

SG opened meeting at 6:35pm.

**Approval of meeting minutes of 5/9/14 and 5/13/14**

JA motion to approve both sets of minutes, second by JG. SG requested one amendment . Vote to approve with amendment. 3-0

SG asked TA to create an electronic newsletter to be posted online.

Motion by JA to have the TA generate a newsletter in the next 7 days. Second by JG. Vote 3-0

SG asked the committee to hold the next meeting in two weeks on Tuesday morning.

SG introduced the members of the committee.

SG led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

SG stated the committee has held 10 meetings to date.

RW joined the meeting at 6:50

**Discussion of recommendations of Governance Committee**

Police Chief selection process

Treasurer/Tax Collector from elected to appointed

Abolishing of the DPW Commissioners

BOH go from elected to appointed

Conservation Agent position go to part time, with a separate line item for grant writing

Consolidation of DPW & Town Facilities Department with School building & grounds to roll in by FY'16.

Consolidation of Permitting departments

JC joined the meeting at 6:55pm

**Public Informational Session and comment period:**

Selectmen Hewins:

Asked to read a document she submitted to SG. He asked her to summarize her concerns. She spoke about her major concerns regarding conservation and maintaining the rural character of the town. She spoke on the components of the conservation agent position

that is not possible to do in 19 hours a week. She feels applicants are getting help that is needed and required and the office is a stepping stone to the next step in the process. She stated that part of the reason she left her position is that she feels the position is too important to be about a person and she stated her respect to the committee for the decisions they need to make.

SG stated that there are many different ways to look at an issue and he feels the committee has strived to achieve a thoughtful balance in all of their decisions and that the decision to make the position part time had nothing to do with the person holding the position. The committee feels the TA has the experience to choose an appropriate individual to fill the role of the new agent. If the Board of Selectmen decide to make the position part-time and the person in the position feels it is too much work, it can be revisited. He feels that it needs to be looked at as dividing responsibilities so grant writing can happen across departments and the agent can focus only on conservation. He addressed the budget shortfall in town and the potential debt exclusion and feels the decision to make the position part time was well thought out.

Hewins stated that she did the job for 8 years part-time and that it cannot be done.

Selectmen Dunham: Commended the committee for the dedicated work they have done. He is concerned regarding the procedure suggested for the Police Chief appointment. He feels that an employee should have a performance review once a year and not 2 ½ years into the contract. That will reflect both views of any issues that may exist and goals for the future of the department. He stated what he feels the priorities of the town should be and feels the Board of Selectmen should be making the major decisions in town, including the hiring of the fire and police chief. He feels the Board of Selectmen would be removed from the selection process and not know the qualifications of the candidates.

JC stated that there would be an annual review, but that at the 2 ½ year mark, the person would be looked at to see if the goals and objectives of the town are being met. It would get a professional in the field, get the public involved, give the selectmen a qualified candidate and the selectmen to make the final decision. He feels this makes the appointing process consistent regardless of who hold what position on the Board or as Town Administrator.

He agrees with appointing the position of Treasurer/Tax Collector due to the specialized skill-set required for the position.

He questioned DPW Commissioners being abolished. They were estimated as meeting a total of 5 times in the last year. The committee met with current commissioner Kelley and former DPW Superintendent Halunen on the issue.

He questioned if they spoke to any members of the Board of Health-the committee has not due to the timing of the meetings in relation to the upcoming election.

For the Conservation Agent going to part-time, he is undecided on how he feels about that. JC feels the new model of cross training the department assistants will help give the same level of

service to the public and the intent with the grant writer was to give the Agent more time to concentrate completely on the position.

Building and Grounds combining with DPW he feels is a good plan and he will support that. Consolidation of Inspection departments he feels is a great idea at increasing services to the town.

RW expressed the concerns he had with all of the decisions and none of them were easy, but he feels they all make sense for the town.

#### Ronald Clarke

Police Chief contract renewal: Questioned what would happen if the TA did not recommend re-appointment of the current Chief. RW stated that is the responsibility of the TA to begin a search and the current chief can apply thru that process and in the end the Board of Selectmen would have the ultimate decision making authority.

Appointed Treasurer/Tax Collector-he would like to see the Town Accountant on the search committee/being included in the process as the relationship between the two positions is crucial and may bring up questions that may not otherwise be brought up.

DPW Commissions/BOH: the TA would be the appointing authority, subject to the 15 day-veto power by the Board of Selectmen.

He is in support of consolidation of departments including Buildings and Grounds and DPW.

Arthur Borden: Chairman Board of Health – he stated that the Board used to meet twice a month and as the Health Agent became more familiar with the requirement, they gave him the authority to approve the plans allowing the Board to meet less often. He feels the Board members work hard to keep houses from being condemned and to get homes into compliance. The Agent is in constant communication with the Board of Health. He feels that the Board makes money for the town with the fees they charge and they are in the process of reviewing their fee schedule. They have saved the tax payers money with the preferred hauler in town. They saved the town \$200,000 on the school septic system. SG clarified that the committee does not want to disband the committee and does not have any criticism on the work they have done. SG stated that it simply takes the politics out of getting qualified members on the board for the future.

Borden stated that all members of the Board have been replaced with qualified individuals with expertise in the field. JA, JG, SG & RW all stated that the intention of making the members appointed was to get the most qualified individuals who may not want to go thru a political process of the election.

John Kelley: DPW Commissioner spoke against combing with the school, but does like the idea of combining with Buildings and Grounds. JA stated the committee did a lot of research on the topic.

James Nauen: Chairman of Conservation Commission. He is not in favor of reduction of hours of the Conservation Agent, but would like to see if can work due to the budget constraints in the town. As a member since 1997, the Commission has been educated over the years to gain expertise. He pointed out that the town will need an appointment to the Plymouth/Carver aquifer committee as the former Conservation Agent held that position. He feels the new part time agent may need specialized training in wetlands.

SG re-iterated that the suggestions being made are not forever and can be addressed if the town finds the need for the Agent to be full-time.

TA expanded on the goals of finding a Conservation Agent and feels that the pool of applicants will have the map-making skills will become second nature.

Richard Kyser – Meadowbrook Way: He feels infrastructure for low-income housing has been left out of discussions.

SG stated that the work of the committee is not yet done. The Committee will look at them in the future, but for now they would like to focus discussion on the items to be address at Annual Town Meeting.

SG thanked everyone for their input and collectively the committee has had a lot of experience in town government and they would like to begin to have the recommendations have productive discussions with the Board of Selectmen and at Annual Town Meeting.

### **Schedule Next Meeting**

RW asked as many committee members as possible to appear before the Board of Selectmen next week.

Next meeting to be June 3 at 7:30am

Motion to adjourn by Angley, second by Ward. Vote 5-0.