



TOWN OF NORTON CHARTER COMMISSION

Norton Public Library,
Community Room

Monday, November 18, 2019
7:00 P.M.

Town Clerk Date/Time Stamp

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NORTON TOWN CLERK

2019 DEC 18 P 1:06

~MINUTES~

1. Call to Order: Roll Call, Ask / Announce Recording, Pledge of Allegiance

The November 18, 2019 meeting of the Charter Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM, By Ms. Laura Parker, Chair.

Members Present: Ms. Janey Goodwin, Ms. Denise Luciano, Ms. Sandy Ollerhead, Mr. Kevin Schleicher, Mr. Keith Silver, and Mr. David Wrenn.

Members Absent: Mr. Dave Heaney and Ms. Kerry Snyder

2. Public Comment – Open forum

Bill Gouveia

- Stated that the role of the Finance Committee has gotten out of hand; the only role of the Finance Committee is to make recommendations to the Town Meeting
- If we moved to a different form of government, would have a need for a new body that would do some of the role of Finance Committee
- If we keep Town Meeting, strongly urged us to keep an independent Finance Committee that doesn't have to rely on the people whose budgets it was reviewing in order to remain on the committee

3. Information Gathering & Research - Interviews

a. Town of Norton Constables

Michael Mayer

- Role of constable is to serve summons, subpoenas, and other court documents as well as to post notices for the town to announce public meetings
- Much of the role of constable is dictated by the state
- Would like to see town residents get preference in the selection of constables
- Should be expected of those who volunteer as constables that they perform the duties of the office

b. Board of Assessors

Carolann McCarron

- Have had to seek people out to join the board when there have been openings
- Was involved in the interview process for the current Assessor
- Board sets the rate for the senior work off program
- Can go to state Appellate Tax Board to appeal a decision made by Board of Assessors
- Doesn't think one person should be deciding the Finance Committee members

James Riley

- Keeping the role as elected serves as a good check and balance
- Biggest role they play is to decide who gets a discount on their taxes based on specific guidelines
- Very important to have checks and balances and have a combination of elected and appointed positions

- Need to motivate people to step forward and get involved
- Rather than having one person choose Finance Committee should be appointed by various boards

c. Finance Committee

Aaron Smith

- Doesn't think the Finance Committee should be the ones debating and setting priorities; those setting priorities should be elected
- Board of Selectmen should be setting priorities in January before budget season even starts
- Finance Committee should be a sanity check from a financial point of view on all budget and non-budget articles
- Feels it's always a good idea to have a group of people who are there to put a different set of eyes and a financial sanity check on what is being proposed by the town's politicians
- Would create a barrier to entry if Finance Committee were an elected position

Aimee Sawyer

- Having the Finance Committee appointed by one person gives better diversity
- Feels we as a town have outgrown Town Meeting
- We need a strategic financial oversight committee to come up with standard policies
- Would like to get documents that they are discussing ahead of time electronically rather than the night of the meeting
- Need more information technology; this is stifling out ability to move forward
- Need to create Department of Public Works and Department of Human Services in order to bring people together and not make decisions in silos

Walter Eykel

- Small representation in town is now making significant decisions with our current form of government
- There is a lack of information available both because people don't seek out information and because it's not available in a timely manner
- Town suffers from stagnant revenue streams

Bill Rotondi

- Duty of the Finance Committee is to opine on the budget presented by the Town Manager
- Feels 11 is a sufficient number of committee members because the diversity helps to come to a decision
- Going to get a more divisive group if numerous people are appointing members to the committee
- Town needs a financial plan that covers more than one year
- Can't expect a committee to make a decision if they just get the documents that night; need time to read, come up with questions, and reflect
- Currently very reactionary and don't have a plan; without a plan we can't go forward

Bonnie Yezukevich

- Time the committee has to discuss all parts of the budget is too short
- Questions whether it should be the purview of the Finance Committee to make a recommendation on non-budget issues
- Lot of committees and boards running up against deadline issues prior to Town Meeting
- To maintain objectivity the Finance Committee shouldn't be elected
- Town meeting is not realistic for our current town needs

4. Acceptance of prior meeting minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Luciano to accept the minutes of November 4, 2019. Second by Mr. Wrenn. Vote: Unanimous.

A motion was made by Ms. Luciano to accept the minutes of November 7, 2019. Second by Ms. Goodwin. Vote: Unanimous.

5. Discussion of administrative items, as needed

a. Upcoming interview schedule update, if needed

The updated interview schedule was shared and discussed.

6. Information Gathering & Research – Discussion

a. Review of November 18th meeting

The committee discussed some of the points raised at the last meeting by Town Counsel.

b. Outline of next steps: process and timeline

It was agreed that the first decision that needs to be made will be the form of government. Some questions were raised on when that discussion will start and the consensus was to wait until January when the interviews were over.

c. Additional information needed by Charter Commission, if needed.

Ms. Ollerhead shared some of the information she has gotten about the structure of different DPWs in surrounding towns.

7. Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance

8. Next Meeting: December 2, 2019

9. Action Items: Clerk to review

- Ms. Parker will do one final push with the survey (survey will be shut off on December 8th)
- Ms. Goodwin will have the list of issues compiled for December 16th meeting
- Mr. Schleicher will check with the Council on Aging for any additional surveys

10. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Ms. Luciano at 10:22 PM. Second by Ms. Goodwin. Vote: Unanimous.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Dana ~ Ollerhead

Minutes approved by the Board or Committee on: 12/2/19

Chairman Signature: Laura L Parker