



Finance Committee

Judge Welsh Meeting Room – 4:00 p.m.

January 28, 2014

Members Present: Mike Canizales, Duane Steele, Clarence Walker, Doug Cliggott, Raphael Richter, and alternate Sean Patrick Harrington

Others Present: Mary Jo Avellar

Mike opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Public Comments: None at this time

Member Comments: Alternate Sean Patrick Harrington discussed being angry and frustrated over meetings being cancelled. Mike Canizales yielded his comments to Mary Jo Avellar who stated that meetings were cancelled because there was no quorum. Mike then discussed the need to have advance notice when scheduling meetings. He discussed that one reason the meeting was cancelled was because Doug (who was absent due to a family issue) was to present on sub-committee report. Mike apologized for comment in e-mail in reference to Doug Cliggott, and he stated that he felt Sean's comments were petty. Mike then asked for comments from other Board members. Clarence Walker acknowledged understanding the frustration discussed by Sean, but stated he felt committee needed to get into other business. No other committee comments.

Meeting continued and Clarence Walker stated his concerns about Board of Selectmen opinions on OPED, and was surprised that the OPED issue was raised again. Mike stated he would continue to work on resolving the issues.

Mike introduced Julia Perry (Chair, Charter Review Commission), and Tom Cohen (Charter Review Member). Julia stated that the Town Charter is authorized by State Law, and the Law requires review on a regular basis. She stated that the last time a review was done was in 1990. The Charter Enforcement Commission recommended to the Board of Selectmen that a full review take place. States they are reviewing line by line of the Charter. She stated that the Committee has no authority to change Charter but can recommend changes to the Board of Selectmen and to be presented at Town Meeting in April 2015 so they have a year to process. They proposed a timeline – January to April 2014 will reach out to Committees, in spring will do forums to reach the public, small groups will be held in the summer, forums

again in fall for the public, and then the rewriting. Hopefully suggestions for revisions will be completed by February 2015. Tom reviewed Massachusetts general laws, and he shared various documents with the committee members. Mike inquired about the Financial Committee Handbook which references Massachusetts laws. Tom stated the Charter gives a framework for the committees. Julia stated that Chapter 9 discussed finance functions and Chapter 6 has a description of roles. She discussed the Charter as being disjointed and wants clear statements, authority, and how committees fit into the structure. They are looking at how Financial Committee members are identified – should they be appointed or elected, and whether authority should be more advisory. Tom shared that there has been much discussion so far since the Charter was last reviewed so long ago. He feels they need to add what the committees do, their intent, and the need to look at responsibilities and bylaws. In the Charter, the Financial Committee section doesn't cover process, for instance, Capital Improvement prior to the budget process, and long-term planning should be developed. Everything needs to go into the Charter in the right sequence.

Mike stated that the process clarification sounded great, and that there has previously been discussions about what the role of the Finance Committee should be. He also stated that there will be a debate if the Commission advises changes in appointment of committee members. Duane stated the moderator line is clear and shouldn't be blurred. Clarence inquired as to why not use the verbiage of the Massachusetts general law. Julia stated it will be incorporated where necessary. Julia also stated they are looking at electronic referencing. Tom commented that the Charter is not sufficient at this time for the lay person to understand all the wording, and wants the document easily readable. Sean stated the timeline is ambitious, and that they need to look at the Democratic process with regard to how people are appointed. Mike discussed importance of considering the history of the committee, and also politics when making decisions. Raphael commented he agreed with the budget planning. Doug asked how recommended additions or deletions be submitted to the commission. Julia responded the need to review the handout, and to make any suggestions before the rewrite. Mike stated the committee will review and respond. Duane commented on streamlining the committees into a shorter list, and Tom stated there are now 44 committees.

Mike adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Maghi Geary

