

**Government and Charter Study Task Force
Meeting Summary 11/18/2009
Selectmen's Meeting Room**

Attendance:

Peter Cahill
Thomas Daly
Margery Eramo
Paul Fitzgerald
Ken Foscaldo
Frank Jacobs
Karen Manor Metzold
Michael Jaillet
Anne Marie McIntyre

Absent

Charles Flahive
Alice Moore

Meeting Summary

Approval of meeting minutes from 10/22/2009.

Approval of meeting minutes from 11/04/2009

Peter introduced Marilyn Contreas for general discussion on Town Government Structure and Town Charters.

Marilyn stated that some of the trends in charter revisions have remained the same over time, e.g.:

- Certain elected positions have been made appointed positions
- Charters reflect that Town Managers have assumed a greater degree of authority, more complex intergovernmental authority.
- Consolidation of offices i.e.: Finance, Public Works

Marilyn felt it would be valuable to provide a questionnaire as well as talk to Boards and Commissions to address issues such as:

- Basic Structure of Board/Committee
- Responsibility/Accountability/Coordination
- Clear Foundation of Board/Committee

Marilyn discussed Representative Town Meeting (RTM), and 1989 was last time a town decided to adopt this form of government (Chelmsford).

Cons: People don't run

Lack of quorum

Too many town employees running for office (Creates a captive body)

Most towns with RTM have abandoned and moved to City form of Government.

Peter asked for clarification on the preparation of the warrant for a Home Rule Petition. Marilyn responded it was the town that prepares, and referred to the towns of Westford and Abington who have Special Acts Charters.

Marilyn suggested many town charter revisions are created due to dissatisfaction with the government process (i.e.: town meeting, town manager vs. mayor), rather than a measured response to changing town governmental and structural needs.

Marilyn explained the difference between a Charter Commission and Special Act to make charter revisions as well as the degrees of public participation in both.

Paul and Marilyn reviewed Ch 11 of the town charter and it was determined that the Massachusetts State Constitution Home Rule Amendment 89, section 8, supersedes the Town Charter.

After Marilyn excused herself from the meeting, various town charters were dispersed to each member to review and compare for the next meeting.

Karen volunteered to prepare a questionnaire for the Boards and Commissions the Task Force would like to meet.

Ken suggested that for the next meeting the Town Charters should be discussed and the questionnaire be prepared for review.

Tom suggested a Press Release was needed, Karen indicated she had submitted one to the Community Newsletter and will submit to Hometown Weekly, as well as submission to Boston Globe South.

Motion to adjourn meeting accepted by Peter Cahill at 9: 37.