

**Government and Charter Study Task Force
Meeting Summary 12/02/2009
Selectmen's Meeting Room
7:30 p.m.**

Attendance:

Peter Cahill
Margery Eramo
Paul Fitzgerald
Charles Flahive
Ken Foscaldo
Frank Jacobs
Karen Manor Metzold
Alice Moore
Michael Jaillet
Anne Marie McIntyre

Absent

Tom Daly

Approval of Meeting Minutes 11/18/2009

Discussion on Survey Questions

Review of survey questions prepared by Karen to be sent to invited committees and boards. Prior to the meeting, the draft survey was reviewed and some suggestions were made by Peter Cahill and Mike Jaillet.

Peter suggested to the committee to think about the use of the survey and what the Task Force hopes to achieve with this tool specifically:

- Types of Feedback
- What do we want to achieve
- Best way to get the information
- To whom will it be sent?
- Response effort/burden on respondents
- Data: How to handle large amounts of information received.

Ken felt the survey should be used to illicit insight from respondents for the Task Force to have a better understanding of their committee/ board/office, to be more productive at the face to face meeting and basically what they think is good and bad in the structure of their committee/office.

Members discussed to whom the survey should be sent: Ken, Charlie and Frank suggested that not every committee be sent a survey, but rather those committees that have the most impact on Westwood town government. Ken suggested that the Chair should receive the survey and leave it to the chair's discretion to administer to their committee members. Peter suggested that the other committees with less of an impact on town government be sent a courtesy, information email/letter.

After a thorough and comprehensive review of the questions, some were combined for fluency and deleted for redundancy. Wording was edited to better reflect the makeup of the committee and/or board and their functions. Suggestions were made to include examples with certain questions to aid in the respondents' discussion on effectiveness of committee and overall town government structure.

Ken suggested the Town Charter be sent along with survey. Surveys should be returned within a month of receipt.

Paul suggested putting place holders in the Town Warrant which closes January 15, 2010.

Mike Jaillet suggested a meeting with the Board of Selectmen to let them know the direction the Task Force is headed, (e.g. Home Rule rather than a Charter Commission).

Discussion of Town Charters

Interesting aspects of town Charters:

- Detailed language about recall
- Specific language on duties of Selectmen, Town Manager/Administrator
- Reserve Powers Clause
- Modernization of Finances and Budget
- Ability to deliver services in a fiscally responsible manner and emphasis on accountability

Future Meeting Dates

Task Force Meeting Dates: January 6 & 20, February 3 & 17

Public Forum in January

- Set Date and Place - January 13, 2010 was suggested
- Reach out to certain groups in Westwood (LWV, Democratic and Republican Town Committees, etc.)
- PR (Hometown Weekly, Westwood Blog, postings)

Motion to adjourn by Paul Fitzgerald (2:04:04)

****FULL AUDIO VERSION OF MEETING IS AVAILABLE ON TASK FORCE SERVER****