

**Government and Charter Study Task Force
Meeting Summary 02/16/2011
Board of Selectmen Meeting Room**

Attendance: Peter Cahill, Chairman, Karen Manor Metzold, Vice Chairman, Tom Daly, Charlie Flahive, Paul Fitzgerald, Ken Foscaldo, Margery Eramo, Frank Jacobs, Alice Moore, Dottie Powers, Town Clerk, Anne Marie McIntyre, Staff Administrator

Absent: Michael Jaillet, Town Administrator

Scheduled Guests: Members of the Board of Selectmen: Nancy Hyde, Chairperson, Patrick Ahearn, Phillip Shapiro.

Approval of Minutes

The summaries from the December 1 and January 19 meetings were approved with the correction of the spelling of Tom Daly on p. 4 of the January 19 summary.

Mr. Cahill thanked the members of the Board of Selectmen for attending the meeting to discuss their positions on the proposed Charter language which gives the newly termed Town Administrator the appointing authority of the Finance Director. Alice Moore added that the Task Force is looking to move Westwood's form of government forward by making the Town Administrator position stronger which will attract better candidates for the position in the future. Ms. Moore added that the Task Force was advised by both the Department of Revenue and the Department of Housing and Community Development that a stronger Town Administrator is the current trend in municipal government.

Patrick Ahearn said he disagreed with suggestions of the Department of Revenue and the Department of Housing and Community Development. He stated that he believes Westwood is such a well performing town that it would get a plethora of good candidates when the need arises. Mr. Ahearn said that the Finance Director position should be parallel to other Department Heads such as the Police Chief, Fire Chief and Director of Public Works and report to the Board of Selectmen. He added that, if the Finance Director is appointed by the Town Administrator, it could create an internal reporting struggle between the three offices.

Phil Shapiro said he was comfortable with the proposed changes and he disagrees with Mr. Ahearn. Mr. Shapiro stated that the importance of the Finance Director is internal and advisory in nature and not based on maintaining community relationships like the positions of Police or Fire Chief that set the cultural tone of the town.

Nancy Hyde said she has been more inclined to move in the direction of giving the Town Administrator the authority to appoint the Finance Director and is currently going directly to Mr. Jaillet for budget related issues or questions, rather than the Finance Director.

There was a discussion on appointing and reporting authority in large firms and how that operating structure and organizational chart compares to town municipal management. The Board of Selectmen also requested that the timeframe for having an interim Town Administrator be open ended and not be confined by time constraints.

There was a short break in the meeting as the Selectmen left the meeting.

Mr. Flahive asked for a review of the issues the Personnel Board brought forth at the last meeting. Peter Cahill and Alice Moore gave a brief explanation of the Personnel Board concerns.

After a discussion of the proposed Charter change, it was determined that the Task Force would consult with Lauren Goldberg to propose language in 6.2.1 (a) to clarify that the Board of Selectmen would be consulted rather than advised by the Town Administrator in the appointing of the Finance Director.

After a discussion of the proposed Charter change, it was determined that the Task Force would change the proposed language which includes a time frame on the interim Town Administrator position of not more than one year to having an open ended time frame.

Mr. Cahill said that he will have further discussions with Ms. Goldberg and the Personnel Board on the issues and concerns of the Personnel Board. He will circulate to the members the information he recently received from the Personnel Board.

Mr. Cahill reminded the members that the Finance Commission meeting will be on February 28, 2011. Mr. Cahill said the final document should be ready for the second Finance Committee on March 21, 2011.

Ms. Powers suggested the Task Force consult with Town Counsel before the final document is publicly released.

The next scheduled meeting will be March 16, 2011.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.