

**Government and Charter Study Task Force
Meeting Summary 12/1/2010
Board of Selectmen Meeting Room**

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

Absent: Tom Daly

Scheduled Guests

Al Wisialko, Town Collector

Mr. Wisialko stated that the Collector's office has a staff of two very competent people. He informed the Task Force that the Tax Collector is responsible for the collection of real estate taxes and motor vehicle excise taxes. The Tax Collector also collects funds for The Aid to the Elderly and Disabled Fund. Mr. Wisialko stated that the real estate collection rate is 99% in Westwood.

Peter Cahill asked about the Office of the Collector's interaction with other financial departments. Mr. Wisialko replied that his office works well and frequently interacts with other departments. He mentioned that his office consults with: Pam Dukeman, Finance Director, regarding the budget; the Chief of Police to recoup funds for police details; and Mike Jaillet regarding taxpayer issues. Mr. Wisialko also participates on an Advisory Task Force that meets monthly with other department heads. Mr. Wisialko stated that Ms. Dukeman oversees the Collector's and Treasurer's offices on a daily basis. Margery Eramo asked if Ms. Dukeman has authority to assign work to his staff. Mr. Wisialko said that he and Ms. Dukeman coordinate work assignments through email. Ken Foscaldo asked who oversees Tax Collector staff on a daily basis. Mr. Wisialko replied that Janice Polin, Assistant Collector, supervises Louisa Pisano, Accounting Specialist. Mr. Wisialko added that it makes sense to have the Town Administrator or Finance Director oversee his staff.

Mr. Cahill described the current trend in municipal government to consolidate financial offices into one Municipal Finance Department overseen by the Finance Director. Mr. Cahill explained that a Task Force goal is to create a Municipal Finance Department to provide for streamlined and balanced financial management and processing while retaining the expertise of elected officials.

Dottie Powers asked if it is Mr. Wisialko's decision to change the tax collection process. He replied yes and would like to upgrade the website for online payment capability for all bills. He has asked Ms. Dukeman for money in the budget to purchase this upgrade. Karen Manor Metzold asked about his background and skill set. He replied that he has a financial planning business in Dedham and that he grew up in Westwood.

Meeting Summary Approval

Minutes from November 3, 2010 and November 17, 2010 were reviewed. Alice Moore noted a correction to the November 17 summary. Mr. Fitzgerald made a motion to approve both summaries with edits, and Ms. Moore seconded. Minutes were accepted.

Chairman's Update

Revised Charter

Mr. Cahill distributed an updated revised Charter showing suggested edits from the November 17 meeting. He stated that the goal is to post an updated Charter and a descriptive summary of changes as soon as possible to the website. Mr. Cahill asked for a smaller group to work with Ms. Goldberg on the summary.

Public Forum Media/Press Release

A brief discussion on the media outlets used to promote the Public Forum ensued. Mike Jaillet mentioned that *Westwood - A Community Newsletter* will be published and mailed before December 15th and suggested that it would be good to have the document posted to the website by then. Mr. Fitzgerald suggested that Mr. Cahill provide a background brief for the newspapers so that the media has the correct facts. Ms. Moore added that Mr. Cahill should do a walk through with the media on the summary of Charter changes. The Public Forum will be advertised in the *Hometown Weekly*, *Westwood Press* and *Westwood.Patch.com*. The sandwich boards will be updated and placed in key areas. Karen Manor Metzold will send letters to each of the February Public Forum attendees and a personal email invitation to the heads of boards and committees.

Public Forum Format

Mr. Cahill said he will show a twenty minute Power Point presentation. After the presentation, the Task Force members will field questions from the audience.

Charter Revision Updates

Ms. Goldberg reviewed the latest edits to the revised Charter, version 1.7.

Ms. Powers suggested that in Chapter 2 Section 4-1 the use of the word “voter” be changed to “individual” to make the section easier to read.

Mr. Cahill informed the members that State law outlines the authority of the Sewer Commission and that the Charter refers back to the Special Act that created the Sewer Commission. Ms. Goldberg stated that the revised Charter does not expand nor change the current authority of the Sewer Commission or Department of Public Works.

Ms. Powers questioned language in Chapter 6 Section 2-1(a) referring to the removal of appointed officers only by the appointing authority. Ms. Goldberg clarified that the Town Administrator has the authority to appoint and remove when no other method is provided by Charter, general laws, special acts or the bylaws. Ms. Goldberg also clarified that Chapter 6 Section 2-1(b) gives the Town Administrator supervisory authority and codifies what currently happens on a daily basis.

Mr. Jaillet and Ms. Powers recused themselves from the meeting.

A brief discussion ensued on how the Town Administrator will oversee daily operations while still allowing for the authority of appointed/elected boards and officials. Ms. Goldberg pointed out that Chapter 6 Sections 2-1(b) and 2-1(c) require the boards and elected officials to meet with the Town Administrator as needed to effect coordination and cooperation. Ms. Moore commented that the goal was for consistent employment practices. Ms. Goldberg suggested adding language in Section 2-1(b) to read: “supervise and direct all appointed department heads and principal deputies or agents of part-time or volunteer elected and appointed boards or officers for the purpose of ensuring uniform consistent application of the town’s personnel and employment practices and officials.” A decision on the final language could not be reached. Ms. Goldberg will review this section and compose language for the members to approve.

Mr. Jaillet and Ms. Powers rejoined the meeting.

Charter Revision Updates Continued

Ms. Goldberg continued reviewing the version 1.7 Charter edits.

Chapter 2 Section 2-1 removed reference to the presidential primary.

Chapter 2 Section 4-1 will include the changes Ms. Powers mentioned earlier.

Chapter 2 Section 6-1 changed the deadline date the Selectmen would have to decide on holding Fall Town Meeting to September 15. Also included language suggested by Mr. Jaillet that if the Board of Selectmen decide not to hold Fall Town Meeting, the Board of Selectmen can still call for a Special Town Meeting.

Chapter 2 Section 7-1 updated language so that the Finance and Warrant Commission will have to provide the required information in writing before each Town Meeting in the manner provided by bylaw. However, failure to timely post, publish or mail such advice, estimates or recommendations in the manner provided by bylaw will not affect the validity of the Town Meeting. Mr. Cahill said a bylaw will be written to accommodate this change.

Chapter 3 Section 4-1 added the language that the Board of Selectmen has the authority to appoint the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Director of Public Works and Town Counsel.

Chapter 3 Section 5-1 inserted the word “have”.

Chapter 4 Section 4 removed the section on associate members only for the Planning Board because it was inserted in Section 6-1.

Chapter 4 Section 6-1 added the language “that not more than 2 associate members appointed by the majority vote of a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the elected Board that is appointing the associate members”. Ms. Goldberg stated this language is consistent with how a vacancy is filled by State law.

Chapter 4 Section 8-2 changed recall language to read “not more than 1/3 of the signatures”.

Chapter 5 Section 6-1 changed the language to limit the members to 17. Ms. Goldberg suggested adding the language “the quorum of the appointed members for purposes of transacting business shall be a majority of those then in office.”

Chapter 5 Section 7-1 substituted “planning” with “appointed”.

Chapter 6 Section 1-1 corrected capitalization.

Chapter 6 Section 2-1 (a) (ii) corrected capitalization and removed language on notice of removal of department heads on town bulletin board.

Chapter 6 Section 2-1(i) clarified that the Chief Procurement Officer would be responsible for all procurement except for the School Department and Library.

Chapter 6 Section 5-1 added language limiting the time period to appoint an Acting Town Administrator.

Chapter 7 Section 3-1 removed language regarding compensation.

Chapter 7 Section 5-3 corrected capitalization and added the words “or knowledge”.

Chapter 8 Section 1-2 added language that clarifies the salary of the Finance Director.

Chapter 8 Section 1-3 added additional language regarding Finance Director’s educational qualifications; need to correct the word “of”.

Chapter 8 Section 1-4 added language that clarifies that the Finance Director shall provide assistance to the Town Administrator as requested by the Town Administrator.

Chapter 8 Section 2-2 was added and accepts the statutory language which creates the Fire Department.

Chapter 8 Section 2-3 was added and accepts the statutory language which creates the Police Department.

Chapter 9 Section 2 provides a brief description of the Audit Committee.

Updated numeration of Chapter 9.

Chapter 12 Section 3 updated reference to years ending in “0” for a Charter review and years ending in “2” for a Bylaw review.

Ms. Goldberg stated that the effective date and transitional sections still need to be added.

It was noted that in Chapter 5 Section 7-1, the language “other than the Zoning Board of Appeals” needs to be added. Mr. Jaillet commented that the ZBA is the one board where associate members are needed because of abutters, expertise, etc.

Ms. Powers questioned the requirement in Chapter 6 Section 2-1 of the fifteen day posting of appointments by the Town Administrator. Mr. Jaillet stated this practice would be cumbersome, and currently he serves notice to the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Goldberg pointed out that this section gives public notice.

Ms. Powers mentioned the current practice of annually appointing department heads. Ms. Goldberg stated that some annual appointments are required by state law. The members decided that this section requires counsel from Tom McCusker regarding which appointments are not annually required by law.

Mr. Cahill, Ms. Moore and Mr. Fitzgerald will review the language on the duties of the Town Administrator. The Task Force members voted to accept the revised Charter with edits discussed this evening, subject to the approval of a subcommittee consisting of Mr. Cahill, Ms. Moore and Mr. Fitzgerald. After the subcommittee’s approval, the Charter will be made public. A motion to accept was made by Ms. Eramo and seconded by Mr. Flahive. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.