**Governance Study Committee**

**Meeting Minutes September 5, 2023 7:30 PM**

Members Present : Ganesh Rangarajan-Chair, Dave Wluka, Phil King, Michael Illuzzio, Keevin Geller, Joann Michalek, Daniela Field (remote), Peg Arguimbau(remote) Absent : Matt Keenan

Chair opened the meeting at 7:33 reading the meeting notice regarding State allowances for remote meetings due to Covid. This meeting was a hybrid meeting.

**Discussion of background research on removal and recall provisions** – Chair thanked those who had contacted other towns. Dave reported on his findings from Norwood, Raynham, both having provisions, and Norton, having none.. Foxboro yet to respond. There is an existing State statute for removing elected officials. We could make our own rules, but do we need to if statue in place? MAPC did not have much info either and they are swamped right now in terms of giving us help. The Chair stated he had located a number of towns in MA that do have recall and he would review their info.

Phil questioned whether the State level provisions had ever been used – might be worthwhile for us to just codify those. Dave agreed some towns have them and we could use those or we could look deeper into this. Chair shared his screen with information we already have about those towns who have a structured approach for recall and the number/percentage of people needed to start the process. The most recent GSC did define the rules for recall, but not the process. Perhaps the State statute will be sufficient and we stay with that.

Michael questioned how this would work for appointed positions. Chair stated ideally the same set of standards and rules, maybe a bit less specific – there was discussion around that. Chair again noted that the recent GSC did a good job setting up when the procedure should happen, but it did not compare to enough other town and did not provide specific percentages and numbers for details. Dave suggested rules/standards could be the same, but processes need to be different i.e., elected positions should be removed by voters; appointed positions removed by appointing authority. Chair brought up minimum threshold and discussion ensued regarding what those should be – still have to meet the bar maybe a number of bars. Reviewed process possibilities by using numbers of precincts/residents to get enough numbers to trigger the process/vote.

Peg questioned what the Select Board wanted from us on this. Chair said he though not so much the percentages, but more the process; using this committee for example….what would be grounds for removal? Town Administrator indicated to the Chair that he believed the data was lacking – we should get that data and include it. We questioned if the expectations should be the same for all committees? Keevin believed they should be. Joann asked if the Select Board has any say in who the candidates are? It was explained that the Select Board makes the decision on Board appointees and it can be said that the residents “appoint” the Select Board by voting. Dave clarified that the chair would step in and address the issue and if it persists, then go to Town Administrator with it. Keevin believed it should work that way for both elected and appointed. Chair thought perhaps the elected official bar should be higher – multiple check boxes to accomplish removal by recall. Discussion regarding use of percentage of voters, or a number of residents to begin process and the time frame within which to accomplish that. Daniela added if the process is clear about removal, then not as tedious and a shorter, more simplified process.

Dave suggested categorizing the commitment -items to look at for example - for elected officials;

* Miss “X” number of meetings with no previous notice to the chair, or valid reason
* Do not perform or participate in the basic organizational things committed to when sworn in
* Violated the Open Meeting Law
* Accepting bribes

For appointed;

* Habitual absence with no previous notice to the chair, or valid reason
* Improper treatment of applicants
* Violated the Open Meeting Law
* Accepting bribes

The Chair agreed to work on putting together bullet points of concern for recall of elected officials. Dave agreed to do the same for appointed officials. Members will get their thoughts regarding each category to the appropriate person to be up for discussion at our next meeting.

**Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes –**

Meeting of August 8, 2023 – King moved, Geller seconded to accept the minutes - voted: 6-0-2 (Rangarajan – Aye, King - Aye, Geller – Aye, Field – Aye, Michalik – Aye, Arguimbau – Aye) (Illuzio – Abstain, Wluka – Abstain)

Meeting of August 22, 2023 – King moved, Wluka seconded to accept the minutes – voted: 6-0-2 (Rangarajan -Aye, King – Aye, Michalk – Aye, Wluka – Aye, Illuzzio – Aye, Arguimbau – Aye,) (Geller – Abstain, Field – Abstain)

**Next Meeting** September 19, 2023 at 7:30 PM

**Adjourn** 8:50 PM