

SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE

Boards Subcommittee MINUTES

August 4, 2022

The Boards Sub-Committee meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm by Chair Phillip King.

Member attendance

King: Present
Wluka: Present

Monahan: Present
Pietal: Present

Goodman: Present

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of July 27 were approved 5-0-0. (moved Wluka, second Monahan)

Correspondence

Letter received from resident Bertha Foster was noted.

Discussion with Community Members

Community member Mr. Michael Pierce joined the meeting to discuss various topics. On the topic of Open Town Meeting (OTM), Mr. Pierce indicated he supports OTM and that the town is lucky to have it. He didn't feel it would work in much larger towns but he appreciated the fact that residents can vote directly on issues before them. He raised concerns about last minute amendments that could cause legal issues without proper review. He noted that the new addition of "yes" and "no" microphones can be a little challenging. He also has observed that the town has made significant strides in completing OTM in one night. He suggested that the School Committee should also be seated at the front of the auditorium as a significant portion of the budget emanates from their department.

On the topic of the size of the Select Board, Mr. Pierce didn't note a strong preference. However, he did point out the recent issue when a member of the Select Board was ill for an extended period of time resulting in having only 2 active members. He suggested there might be a need for a process to address this type of issue.

On other topics, Mr. Pierce suggested that the Town Report should be blunt and factual, even if the facts don't make the town look good. He also indicated he prefers elected boards as much as possible but understands the need for appointments as well.

Mr. Goodman asked Mr. Pierce on his thoughts on non-citizen voting. Mr. Pierce indicated that residents that own property should be able to vote and participate in decisions that affect their lives.

MAPC updates

None

Town Wide Survey Update

The survey is in process with a total of 1100 responses so far. Mr. Pierce noted the Sharon Men's Club meets on Tuesday mornings and might be a good place to provide surveys. Mr. Wluka indicated he would reach out to the Men's Club to see if there might be an opportunity to chat with them during their next meeting.

Debate and Make Preliminary Recommendations

Mr. Wluka would like to include the question of whether the Town should move to a Town Manager instead of the current Town Administrator structure. He will ask the MAPC for insight into how other towns are structured in this regard.. Ms. Monahan noted that we need to ensure that we communicate issues such as these that we have discussed but aren't formally part of the list of items we were given to address.

The role of the Personnel Board was discussed. The overall opinion of the subcommittee was that it would be best to move to a professional Human Resource structure if possible. Mr. King suggested it might be possible to share duties with the recent addition of an HR professional in the School Department. Mr. Wluka suggested it might be feasible to have an HR professional on retainer as the amount of work might not warrant a full-time staff member. Mr. Goodman noted that the cost could be an issue.

Moved - Consider shifting Personnel Board functions to an HR employee or HR outside contractor – maybe combine with school department HR position - Motion successful 5-0.

Discussion ensued on the role of the Finance Committee. Mr. King noted that it wasn't easy to understand the role of the Finance Committee based on the description on the Town's website. Mr. Wluka noted that the mission statements of the Finance Committee and all other committees should be clearly defined, using wording from Town by-laws when available. On the point that perhaps we should go back to the name of the Warrant Committee, Mr. Goodman noted that name alone can be a bit mysterious to the typical resident.

Moved - Select Board should not change specific duties, fiscal oversight responsibilities of, or name of the Finance Committee. - Motion successful 5-0.

The subcommittee decided that we should look at the structure and role of the Finance Committee Nominating Committee at the scheduled 8/15 meeting.

Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting

None.

Adjourn

Seeing no other business to come before the committee, Mr. King adjourned the meeting at 9:40 pm.