

Minutes of the Governance Committee Meeting

Oct 1 2020

Held remotely via Zoom

Members present: Leah Basbanes, Mike Martin, Bob Nelson, Leo Tometich, Ryan McLane, Jim Dow,

Also attending was Kevin Paicos, Alan Chaney, David Tully Jr. Sue Psaledakis

Call to order at 6:35 pm by Chair Leah Basbanes

The meeting began with revisiting the discussion of the proposed Section 5 of the Charter Rev. #4. Mike Martin again voiced concerns about creating a DPW reporting to the TA in lieu of currently elected Highway Commissioners. He also stated that he spoke with the Water Commissioners and they were not in favor.

Cemetery Commission believes that their duties are quite different and that they have different needs so would not want to be part of the DPW.

Discussion turned to the decision to remove the Section 5.6. Leah Basbanes stated that she was not comfortable pushing some thru if not everyone on the committee was comfortable with it. The original intention of the Governance Committee was to determine if a charter was needed in Dunstable and now, we are in the process of drafting one that should be agreeable to all.

Mr. Paicos stated that there are 2 types of Charters, one that is created by a Governance Commission with enabling legislation to draft a charter that would be passed at town meeting and then town ballot. The other type of charter is a Special Act type which is drafted by a governance committee, which would have to be approved by BOS, then Town Meeting and then by State legislature. We are drafting the Special Act type which is easier to amend, though it would go thru the same process again, should the concept for a DPW or other changes come up in the future.

It was stated that while removing the DPW section, going forward with the Charter is important specially to define clearly the role of the Town Administrator and to provide structure and framework for things such as the budget process.

Discussion turned to Section 4.2 b and the appointing authority by the TA. This would be to centralize personnel function to someone who a training and experience in the field of employment insurance, etc. In this present day, there is potential big liability issues with so many different departments doing the hiring and firing. Mike expressed his opposition this as well but he was reminded that is still the draft version and can be addressed. There could be some language added that would include department heads in employment decisions with the TA.

Mr. Paicos ask that the members start to think about the concept of a strong vs weak chief for the Fire Department as this will be a topic of discussion for next meeting.

Next meeting: 6:30 pm on Thursday October 15, 2020.

Meeting adjourned: 9:00 pm

NOTE: The meeting was ZOOM "bombed" again. The committee regrouped to continue discussions.