

Town of Marshfield Charter Review Committee

DATE OF MEETING: **Thursday, September 8, 2016**
TIME: **6:30 PM**
PLACE: **Seth Ventress Building Auditorium
76 South River Street, Marshfield**

ATTENDANCE: B. Bowers, D. Burke, S. Borstel, B. Farnsworth, D. Gibson, B. Farnsworth and B. Spitler
ABSENT: A. Reed, J. Grabowski, R. Marzelli
Ex-Officio: S. Robbins- Board of Selectmen, B. Galvin

Guests:

MINUTES

- 1. CALL TO ORDER- 6:34 P.M.**
- 2. ANNOUNCEMENTS- 6:35 P.M>**
 - Meeting is being recorded by MCTV
- 3. NEW BUSINESS- 6:37 P.M.**

Interview Schedule

1. Chief of Police Phillip Tavares & Chief of Fire Department William Hocking- 6:40 p.m.
 - Chief Tavares (P.T.) gave an outline of his departmental responsibilities. He has 7 different Departments and 7 different budgets which he is responsible for developing. These include Police, Harbormaster, Animal Control, Animal Inspection, Beaches, Emergency Management, and Clamflats.
 - Chief Hocking (B.H.) outlined his departments and budgets which include Fire Dept., Emergency Medical and Safety Prevention.
 - P.T. was asked his opinion of the question raised by the B.P.W. , that they would like to take over Beach Management. He disagreed with this, saying the beach management is a safety issue which is his responsibility. He did clarify that DPW is responsible for trash removal at the beaches.
 - Both Chiefs say that they have had no issues getting what they need based on the structure of town government and feel that due to the safety management responsibilities of each department, they work well with other departments and town leadership. Both chiefs have worked in the town for over 30 years but neither chief works in town hall so they did not feel comfortable addressing the departmental responsibilities involved in town hall.
 - P.T. expressed concerns over the executive branch and overall town management. Expressed issues with lack of accountability by all departments and concerned about leadership in certain departments. Expressed a concern about the lack of concerted efforts

- to work together amongst all departments. Talked about everyone not on the same page. Concerns about lack of an overall leader, no one is responsible for the master plan. This is due to lack of ability of town administrator to hold many departments accountable. P.T. expressed a need for centralized leadership in town.
- B.H. said that it is easy for the Chiefs to see the lack of leadership in other departments. This is due to the fact that both Police and Fire Departments operate in a paramilitary operational style, with a strong leader at the top. Both departmental leaders see the need for centralized leadership throughout town.
 - P.T. described how that due to the job description and town charter , that the town Administrator is a coordinator only. Town Administrator has no power to get anything done within several departments. Town management problem is primarily due to the fact that a number of department managers are accountable to separately elected boards, with no central accountability.
 - B.H. recommends a town manager and P.T. recommends a form of government in which The leader has more authority over all departments. P.T. said that there are too many elected boards in town. B.H. started that he is not in favor of a 5 person B.O.S. and both P.T. and B.H. expressed concerns about finding qualified people to run for B.O.S.
 - In regards to a finance director, both agreed the town needed a person in charge of finance With greater power and stronger background. Finance Director needs more authority than Treasurer /collector has. B.H. discussed finance issues due to considerable turnover in the area of Medicaid billing.
 - Both Chiefs agreed that they like to work together ahead of time with town officials to avoid A departmental battle at town meeting, pitting police against fire. Police have experienced the issue of budgets being changed after the joint B.O.S./ Advisory Board meeting and not being informed.
 - B.H. discussed how he has worked with town administrator and town administrator on Capital Budget. B.H. now shares and reviews Five year and 10 year Capital Budgets with Capital Budget on a regular basis. This did not take place in the past. P.T. discussed that due to high turnover of his vehicles. They are a part of the department's operating budget.
 - B.H. thinks a permanent building committee would be a great help in managing and Planning for building needs.
 - B.H. discussed the process of town meeting. Both talked about how it can be frustrating When you spend time answering questions over and over, many of the questions that were covered in committee meetings. Both think that we should consider a means of limiting repetitive questioning. P.T. expressed concerns about the lottery and why do only 1% of registered voters attend. P.T. mentioned in his wrapup that the town charter does not require the town administrator to be a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which he thought was interesting.

2. Board of Health Representatives – Mark McDonald (M.M.), Tyler Nims (T.N.), Matt Tanis, (M.T.)- 7:35 p.m.

- M.M. opened by discussing concerns over the lack of a group effort , a team effort at Town Hall. Recommend that all board chairs of elected and appointed boards should meet every Six months to increase communication. Discussed that decisions are made by departments That are responsible for working with other departments, without consulting with that dept.
- M.M. discussed that surveys have been done about morale in town hall, yet nothing was Ever done with the information.
- M.M. expressed that he thinks the ZBA board is too big.

- M.T. expressed that the town administrator , by job description and town charter , has too Many duties yet has limited responsibilities and limited ability to hold people accountable. M.M. did not agree with this and thinks the town administrator needs to do a better job of Developing a harmonious atmosphere in town hall.
- Board of Health does not think any currently elected boards or positions should be changed To appointed. Did not express an opinion on appointed boards being changed to elected.
- B.O.H. in favor of a finance director, as long as it is not an additional position but is an Increase of responsibilities of an existing position. Board thinks it would be good for the town to have an assistant town administrator, to work with the current town administrator.. Board expressed concerns with the town administrator trying to oversee the Dept. of Public Health, that it needs to remain independent.
- BOH director sets budget, reviews it with board, along with input from town administrator. Discussed a hiring issue regarding a part-time staff, whom they hired but was then rejected by town adminisistrator only to have that person hired by Town Clerk.
- BOH feels that town meeting as it is currently structured is ok.

4. Town Counsel – Bob Galvin (B.G.) – 8:15 p.m.

- B.G. described that a strong town manager and town council is the most common Form of government in the United States.
- Discussed that he thinks the budget process should be televised. That the BOS and Advisory board meet regularly, that dept. heads should come to these, to present and Debate budgets.
- In favor of a more centralized authority in town. Executive Branch is not centralized with The BOS under current charter. Authority is spread across multiple boards, with no central authority or accountability-for both employees and boards.
- Boards are now exercising greater independence from each other. Reflected on when the BOS and School Dept. were divided and the challenges this caused the town. Current issue Is division with the Board of Public Works and Dept. of Public Works. An Example of this is the BOS using an accounting methodology question such as indirect cost methodology as being an example by the BPW to want to operate independently from the town administration. Expressed concern about the representation by BPW that enterprise accounts are an expression of independence from the management of the rest of the town, they also are an accounting methodology. Being responsible for Enterprise Accounts does not mean that they the department is independent of that department's role in town government.
- Expressed that most towns now have a Superintendent of Public Works, who reports to a strong town administrator and BOS, do not have a separate BPW.
- Expressed concerns about a change from 3 to 5 member board of selectmen.. Going to a 5 member board does increase centralized management, authority and accountability in town.
- Overall concern is the lack of central authority in town. Norwell went to a 5 member BOS but also increased the authority and power of town administrator, going to a strong town administrator. Need to look at the division of responsibilities amongst town departments and town boards. Need to better define each department's responsibilities in regards to management of property and facilities.
- Need to move to a form of government in which various boards have less of a division of decision making. Lack of work between various boards.

- In favor of a finance director. Difficult for town administrator to do both finance director and role of town administrator. Need a person with greater skills and responsibilities in financial management.
- Stated that open town meeting is the most direct form of government but may not be the most democratic. Discussed the history of town meeting in Marshfield , going back to the 1600's. He has reviewed minutes going back to then in town archives. Currently, far less likely that average citizen will attend- back in the day everyone came. Concerned about the control of town meeting by a number of citizens discourages participation by more people.
- Against the lottery, does not think it accomplishes its goals.
- B.G. is currently town counsel in Norwell, works as town counsel in Rockland. Norwell has gone to a strong town administrator, 5 member BOS with town administrator now hiring a finance director.
- Rockland has a town administrator setup similar to ours. Pembroke and Duxbury both have a town manager, with Pem. Being a 5 member BOS and Duxbury as 3 member BOS. Plymouth has a strong town manager and a rep. town meeting. CRC members discussed the question of representative town meeting and issue that some towns have with quorum and how it becomes a function of town employees.

2. OLD BUSINESS

- Survey data review, observations and comments ... ongoing
- Prior interview review, observations and comments ... ongoing
- Discussion of Public Forums- how to post, publicize, format & logistics

3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

- August 25, 2016- bypassed till next meeting

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

- 15 minutes (individual comments may be limited in time based on potential participation)
Kathy Galvin- asked question about what how many more properties will we buy.

5. NEXT MEETING

September 15, 2016 – Public Forum - Martinson School Auditorium

6. ADJOURNMENT- 10:00 P.M.