

Town Council Study Committee

May 29, 2024

Attending: Jeff Carlson, Caroline Baltzer, Beau Barber, Curtis Barnes, Kelly Steffen, Jeremy Bloomer.

On Zoom: Joe Grause, Tom Dixon, Jill Vieth, Rachel Mandel, Donna Martino

NOTES:

The discussion was primarily a followup to Mark Ells' presentation from May 22.

Jeff – We should now do our assigned job – prepare an Article about Town Council for Town Meeting.

Caroline – The Select Board asked us to look at all forms of government available in Massachusetts. We did that.

Joe – It's time to put out our plan. We did what the Select Board asked.

Caroline – There are still questions. What is the role of the Voters?

Beau – What is the role of advisory boards? (e.g., Planning, Zoning, FinCom)

Jeff – The Charter will answer those questions. We will have different information; a different Charter.

Tom – The Select Board asked us to develop a Town Council proposal.

Jeremy – A Town Council would be more effective; would look at structural issues; move from philosophical issues to "granular" concerns. "Articulate" those concerns and solutions.

Tom – We need to be aware that the 2025 Annual Town Meeting will have a very busy agenda – many important concerns.

Joe – What are the "What If" options?

Kelly – Should we consider "electronic voting"?

Beau – A Mayor is not a good idea – we should look at a strong Town Manager vs. a Mayor.

Jeff – A Town Council is more efficient; how to establish responsibilities? TC allows government to respond in a timely manner.

Caroline – Our task is to prepare a Charter; should we add an ATM to the Charter as an option?

Jill – a TC offers more flexibility; more professional involvement in regulations. We have outgrown ATM. ATM is not a good way to make policy; pass regulations. It is "an exercise in futility".

Rachel – we need to look at what we have now; what are the challenges; what changes do we want? How do we achieve changes?

Donna – At its recent meeting the ACNVT endorsed the idea of a Town Council; it would be of an advantage to summer residents and non-voting taxpayers.

Curtis Barnes

6/24/24

