

**TOWN OF HOLLISTON
Governance Committee
Meeting Minutes**

Date: Monday, November 21, 2022

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Room 105, Town Hall

Attending: Len Engel, Hayley Fetrow and Sam Tyler in person and Sue Nersessian remotely.

Select Board

At 7:34 p.m. the Committee met with the Select Board. Select Board Chair Benjamin Sparrell said that he asked for this meeting in order to understand what work remains for the Governance Committee to do and how the Governance Committee plans to do it.

Mr. Tyler said that the Committee has done a substantial amount of work but has also experienced a lot of frustration in trying to get proposals approved at town meetings. The Committee plans to submit a revised proposed By-Law Review Committee by-law. The work on the issue of the size of the Select Board continues and the Committee will be prepared with a recommendation for the May 2023 town meeting. The Select Board size issue encompasses a review of the distribution of duties and responsibilities between the Select Board and the Town Administrator to achieve efficiencies. The Committee is also looking at reviving its proposal from 2021 for a capital planning committee. Other considerations are strengthening the role of the Town Administrator and the possibility of a charter. Ms. Fetrow said the Committee needs to develop partnerships and find cosponsors for its proposals. Ms. Nersessian said collaboration is key and was achieved in part in preparation for the recent fall town meeting.

Select Board Clerk Tina Hein said the Committee's work is valuable and the Committee did a good job of publicizing its proposals leading up to the fall town meeting. However, it appeared that the people who went to the fall town meeting didn't seem to have read the information the Committee had published and was more influenced by negative statements made at the meeting. Mr. Tyler suggested restoring the process of sending a copy of the warrant and recommendations for each town meeting to every household prior to each town meeting.

Select Board Vice-Chair John Cronin said that despite the hard work of the highly qualified members of the Committee over the last two years the process isn't working. The Committee's proposals have met with negativity and a sense that town meeting is resistant to change in the government structure.

Mr. Sparrell said the work the Committee has done is valuable but it hasn't produced results because of politics. It would be helpful to take a step back and get a comprehensive report from the Committee, probably by the end of January. Mr. Tyler said a report could be prepared focusing on issues remaining to be addressed. Mr. Ahern noted all the information that the Committee has provided through the Town website and said that a report from the Committee

on its findings and its big picture recommendations would be extremely valuable.

Mr. Cronin said that the Governance Committee work has met with too much contention, bias, and personal attacks. He said that out of respect for the time of the Committee members he doesn't feel the process is working through no fault of their own. It would be better to dissolve the Committee and have them submit a final report.

Ms. Hein moved, Mr. Sparrell seconded and the Select Board voted two in favor with Mr. Cronin opposed to request a report of the Governance Committee, detailing the Committee's findings from comparative data analysis, interviews of internal and external stakeholders, and other professional sources, to be provided to the Select Board for discussion and posting to the website in January 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



Paul D. LeBeau

Date Approved by the Committee: JANUARY 5, 2023