



GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of the August 20 , 2001 Meeting
Meeting Room 7:30 PM

Present: Members George Bailey, David Fixler, Dennis Friedman, David Hearne,
Leonard Segal, Michael Schachter, Anne Carney
Absent: Patricia Zlotin

Chairman Anne Carney called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM. Chairman Anne Carney asked that approval of the minutes be deferred until after the committee's discussion with Town Moderator George Donovan. The committee concurred.

Chairman Carney asked George Donovan to give his ideas on the recent town meetings and what he felt could be done to improve them. George commented that he thought that in general Sharon governs itself well compared to other communities. He felt that zoning laws in particular were complex and felt he had to allow a lot of time at town meetings to ensure that correct information came before the attendees. When asked about attendance and the possibility of having a quorum, George stated that he saw no particular value in worrying about attendance. He felt if some people wanted others to represent them then that was their choice. George did say that he felt the November meeting was particularly stressful. In fact he felt that anytime there was a large crowd it created problems, particularly logistical ones. When asked about the time allowed for discussion George stated that his way of conducting town meeting is to make attendees feel they have been treated fairly. If this means extended discussion then that's the way it has to be. He believes that time has to be allowed for organized presentations.

The question of rules of procedure came up and George noted that the town meeting does not follow Robert's Rules. To a certain extent he follows procedures outlined in "Town Meeting Time".

Ideas such as putting all capital outlay items into one article and discussion of warrant articles by lottery were discussed. George said that he was open to ideas to speed up the process as long as the ideas produced a better quality final product. The idea of having a handout explaining the general rules and procedures to be followed at town meeting was discussed. George said that he would be willing to review and comment on the handout given out with the warrant in Easton. Anne will get this to him. The committee thanked George for his interest and comments.

The committee then took up the first item on the agenda. Len Segal motioned to accept the minutes of the June 27, 2001 meeting. The motion was seconded by George Bailey

and voted unanimously. Dennis Friedman motioned to accept the minutes of the July 18, 2001 meeting. David Fixler seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

The next item on the agenda was the survey. After discussion by all of the members, the decision was made to gather information by other means. Michael, who was the proponent of the survey agreed that it was just too difficult to get a representative survey. George Bailey then brought up the fact that the planning board often didn't get information to the finance committee in time for the finance committee to make a recommendation in the warrant that is mailed out to every household. George agreed to try to come up with some language that could be incorporated into the by-laws to make sure the planning board would schedule its hearings to get its recommendations to the finance committee in a timely manner.

The committee then spoke about the information it had gathered on surrounding towns – e.g. the lottery system works well in Natick; Watertown has a town council form of government that works well. Most members still had some research to do and will bring results to the next meeting.

Matters for discussion at the next meeting should include:

- a decision on having the annual town meeting before the town election. Perhaps having the ATM on the first Monday in May and the election on the last Tuesday in May.
- deciding if the committee should recommend scheduling town meeting for no more than two days in the week.
- does the committee have enough information to make a decision on a lottery system for warrant articles?

Chairman Carney will invite the School Committee Chairman and Planning Board Chairman to the next meeting. Michael agreed to contact Mitch Blaustein right away and Anne will call Phil Chapman.

The committee felt it wasn't ready to schedule the public meetings since it hadn't heard from the School Committee or Planning Board.

Under "New Business" George asked that the minutes of the committee's meetings be given to the Town Clerk and that the agenda be posted. Anne said she would do this.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 11, 2001 at 7:30 PM.

With no further business to discuss, Anne called for adjournment. The motion was seconded by George and voted unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.

amc