



GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of the September 11, 2002 Meeting
Selectmen's Office 7:30 PM

Present: Members George Bailey, David Fixler, Andrew Nebenzahl, Patricia Zlotin and Anne Carney

Absent: Dennis Friedman, David Hearne, Leonard Segal

Also Present: Alice Cheyer

Chairman Anne Carney called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM.

The main agenda item for the meeting was to come up with an initial group of recommendations to be made in the form of a report to the Board of Selectmen.

The committee believes that the items mentioned below would improve the way Sharon governs. They are not controversial in nature but address issues brought before the committee during its public hearings.

The committee has also done some research on other forms of governance such as representative town meeting and council form of government but has more work to do before offering a recommendation on that issue.

The following recommendations were agreed upon:

Redraft the Town's by laws to have the annual election follow the annual town meeting. This would allow the current Board of Selectmen to follow through on the budget and other articles that they have been involved in. It would also allow discussion on override questions prior to having to vote on them.

Hold two regularly scheduled town meetings. The first would be the annual town meeting and would primarily deal with the budget and other money articles. The second would be held in the fall and deal with zoning and planning board issues. This would address two of the issues we have had come before our meetings: It has the potential to shorten the annual town meeting by deferring some of the more lengthy discussion to the fall and it could also be structured to get more information out on complex zoning and planning board issues.

Amend the Town by laws by changing the time of the start of the annual town

meeting to 7 PM. Keep the concluding time at 11 PM or at the conclusion of the article under discussion at 11 PM.

Have a list of common procedures used at town meetings distributed with every warrant.

Make more use of Sharon's web site to get information out to the public. This also involves maintaining the site.

Try to promote a candidate's night that also incorporates discussion of ballot questions.

The moderator should make decisions concerning such issues as use of a lottery system for warrant articles, limiting the amount of time for discussion of articles, number of consecutive evenings for town meetings etc..

The committee recommends that the selectmen hold at least one joint meeting a year with all boards and committees to encourage communication. Boards and committees should not operate in a vacuum.

Budget discussion between the town administrator, selectmen, superintendent of Schools, school committee and finance committee should take place as soon as revenue projections are made and should continue as new revenue projections become available. A memorandum of agreement between the school and town concerning revenue allocation should be considered.

All boards and committees should be constituted and commissioned by a vote of town meeting . Any committees, such as the Priorities Committee, not currently commissioned should be commissioned at the next town meeting

All committees and boards should have a description of purpose, constituting authority and date constituted in the annual report. The committee and board members, appointing authority and terms of office should also be in the annual report.

Anne will send an e-mail concerning possible dates for the next meeting.

Anne asked for a motion to adjourn. George motioned to adjourn and Dave Fixler seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM

amc