

Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) 21st Century Government
Subcommittee
Town of Belmont
8 June 2017
Conference Room 1

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APPROVED MINUTES

[Minutes are sent to the Town Clerk, belmont-ma.gov!townclerk when approved]

Voting Members Present

- Paul Roberts <gmail.com!paulroberts> (vice-chair)
- Dave Goldberg <verizon.net!david.goldberg6> (secretary)
- Jim Berets <verizon.net!jberets>

Meeting started at 8PM

Discussion of the minutes from 27 April to bring Jim Berets up to speed and make minor corrections. Minutes from the 27 April 2017 subcommittee meeting approved as amended.

Paul Roberts noted that we've agreed that our priority is to make it possible to allow for remote access for committee meetings. Jim asked whether it makes sense to push this to all committees or to focus on a select few. What sort of criteria would we use? One would be importance of the committee but another would be the technical capability of the committee membership. The idea is not to exclude other committees. Rather it is to best demonstrate the benefit.

Currently ITAC is part of the pilot as noted in earlier meeting minutes. One thing we're dealing with is that the Town Clerk and Town Counsel have questioned the propriety of having committee members attend virtually, even as non-voting members of the public. Guidance from Town Counsel is that remote participation is allowed but recommends that committee members should only listen and not participate if attending virtually. We could go to the Board of Selectmen and ask for permission for committee members to fully participate virtually but they would have to open it to all committees.

A big question is how to support it. ITAC has been using Google Hangout which is simple enough but requires video equipment and some expertise. Perhaps we should, as a start, focus on voice only conference call which is simpler and likely familiar to more people. If we go beyond that, what sort of equipment (aka investment) will be required?

How to gauge interest? Jim noted that we should be solving real problems, not just things we perceive. So perhaps a number of surveys to different groups of people, should be targeted to find specific problems for which we might find technical solutions. The groups would be committee chairs, committee members and then the general public.

The conversation shifted to meeting set up, posting minutes etc which is Topic 2 from the 27 April meeting. We think that is a lower hanging fruit and perhaps we'll find that is a better place to start.

Brainstorming a number of survey questions:

Identifying questions - what committee are you on

What do you think of the process for scheduling meetings - inefficient, neutral, efficient

- for posting the agenda
- for announcing a meeting

..... for posting minutes
..... for getting a room reservation

How do you do it (email, phone, in person)

Is your committee on a fixed or variable schedule or both?

How often does your committee meet?

How far in advance do you schedule meetings?

How often are you required to reschedule?

Do you notify potentially interested non-members of the agenda? If so how?

Do you do anything beyond the minimal requirement to inform the public of your meetings either in advance or afterward?

For the general public: How do you find out about committee meetings? How often do you attend?

How would you rate the idea of remote participation by remote members?

Have you ever had people express interest in listening in to a committee by some remote means.

Any interest in allowing some sort of text based remote access (e.g. via SMS or slack or similar)

Outside of the Town context (e.g. work or personal) have you ever used:

slack, skype, ...?

Jim suggested we get buy in from at least one selectman for this research effort. Paul will coordinate with Phil to do that.

The subcommittee will next meet on 28 June at 6:30 PM