

Minutes of Public Meeting  
Committee to Study the Number of Selectmen  
December 20, 2017  
Room 1, Town Hall, Belmont

RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA

2018 JAN 12 AM 9:26

Members attending: Maryanne Scali, Laurie Graham, Debra Deutsch, Dan Halston, Michael Crowley, Ralph Jones, Lynn Read, Paul Rickter, Judie Feins, Amy Trotsky, Doug John

Members absent: Peter Whitmer, Andrew Plunkett

## Agenda

1. Approval of minutes
2. Review of responses from committee chairs and department heads
3. Review text of arguments for status quo and for larger number of Selectmen
4. Discussion on possible recommendations
5. Other business
6. Next steps
7. Adjourn

## Meeting Notes

Called to order at 7:01

1. Approval of minutes –

Minutes approved as amended 10-0-1 (one abstention)

2. Review of responses from committee chairs and department heads -

As of this meeting, there have been 17 responses from Department Heads and Committee Chairs. There seemed to be a number of Department Heads reinforcing that they would like to be “left alone” to do their jobs without micro-managing by the BOS and Committee Chairs who would like to have a more “official” liaison or communication connection to the BOS.

4. Review text of arguments -

Committee members reviewed the revised text of arguments and made suggested edits as outlined below:

General comment/edit – where there are specific references to a “five member board”, change to something like a greater number; an increased size; etc. Paul will review document and make adjustment.

- A- Add something about spreading the work-load among more people might make family responsibilities less likely to discourage women from running. (Laurie)
- B- Incorporate argument with L (Andy)

- C- Edit to focus on BOS participation outside of Belmont - external meetings - as well as providing the opportunity for more than one Selectperson to attend such meetings without creating a quorum (Amy)
- D- Delete specific % reference in last sentence (Doug)
- E- Change third sentence to “Although it is desirable to have full attendance it may be easier to attend meetings, act as a liaison to Town Committees and Boards...”(Dan)
- F- 2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph – Change to “With more members, alliances can be more flexible and someone who digs in their heels (correct spelling)”. Last sentence – “Much like arguments for capitalism, increased “competition” may lead..... (Paul)
- G- Committee felt G and H can be combined. Debbie will work on this
- H- See above
- I- Change first sentence to “An increased side of the Board offers the chance to attract Board members with a range of skills and experience” (Judie)
- J- -no edits
- K- Delete sentence 5 (For example, if all....) and 6 (Increasing the Board’s membership...) (Mike)
- L- Change argument to Greater ability to share work and increase communication with committees (Paul)
- M- No edits
- N- Before any edits or changes, Paul will speak with Phyllis to see how communication between TA and BOS currently operates
- O- Correct spelling of consensus (Doug)
- P- Include a note that the majority of current and former BOS members were in support of keeping the status quo (Mike)
- Q- Change argument to Every member is vested – delete and attends meetings (Paul)
- R- No edits
- S- 1<sup>st</sup> sentence – after comma, change to : and is a rational for keeping.... (Debbie)
- T- Delete argument
- U- No edits
- V- No edits
- W- No edits
- X- Delete as included in argument Q.

## 5. Discussion of possible recommendations

Committee members reviewed Suggested Draft Recommendations – 12/19/17.

Discussed structure of the report with points made:

- Should we be making “observations” rather than “recommendations” ?
- Should we make a single, integrated recommendations or several separate ones?
- Should we have a majority recommendation AND a minority one ?
- Focus on BOS governance, what form of government are we suggesting
- Make sure to include data along with pros and cons, as well as interviews with other towns and responses from BOS members (current and former), Department Heads and Committee Chairs.

- Include something about possible election cycle formats (i.e. 2-2-1 vs a having some 2-year seats and some 3-year) as well as how to ramp up to an increased number.
- Include information about Home Rule and the process for making a change in the by-laws in regards to size of BOS.
- Need to look at risks of going against the status quo: easier to identify specific problems with status quo rather than specific risks with changing.

During this discussion the committee took a straw poll with 8 leaning towards increasing the size of the BOS and 3 leaning towards keeping the size as it is.

6. Other Business –

7. Next Steps –

- Revised arguments docs to Paul no later than 1/5/18
- Paragraph in support of status quo – Maryann and Amy
- Paragraph in support of increasing size – Dan
- Write description of data gathering process – Judie
- Write description of OML – Lynn and Dan
- Write description of alternative election cycle schemes – Laurie and Judie; Doug to ask Wellesley (?) how they do it.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:13

Submitted –

Laurie Graham

Documents:

Arguments in Detail as of 12/19/17

Suggested Draft recommendations – 12/19/17

Responses received from committee chairs and department heads

Draft minutes meeting of 12/5/17