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Minutes of Public Meeting
Committee to Study the Number of Selectmen
August 8, 2017
Room 1, Town Hall, Belmont

2017 SEP 26 AM 9:10

Members attending: Maryann Scali, Laurie Graham, Ralph Jones, Debra Deutsch, Dan Halston, Amy Trotsky, Michael Crowley, Andrew Plunkett, Lynn Read, Peter Whitmer

Members absent: Paul Rickter, Judith Feins

1. The meeting was convened by co-chair, MaryAnn Scali
2. Ralph Jones moved to accept the minutes as prepared in draft form. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
3. Please note that Lynn Read will be taking minutes on Sept. 12, and Mike Crowley will be taking minutes on Sept. 25.)
4. The committee started to discuss questions. For the role of the Selectmen, one question would be the text of the charge to the Board provided by each town's by-laws. During this brief discussion of the role of Selectmen, a member noted that it was very difficult to find accurate data on campaign finance expenses. Not all towns have the excellent and accessible reports that Belmont does.
5. To discuss comparable towns, Mike Crowley distributed data on all towns with populations greater than 19,000 and less than 31,000. Data included the 2015 population, number of selectmen, form of town meeting, FY2016 budget, Moody's and/or S&P bond ratings. Given the wide differences in budgets (even for towns with similar populations) it seemed prudent to look at towns where tax bases were mostly residential. Another possible characteristic is residential density. Members suggested looking at towns that were nearby, which often served as comparisons for school systems. These included Arlington, Lexington, Winchester, Milton, and Concord.
6. Research assignments. Lynn Read volunteered to look at Town By-laws and characteristics of municipal light plants.
7. Questions (topic 4 continued).
 - Number of candidates
 - How often do Selectmen meet?
 - How long are the meetings?
 - What are the terms for selectmen, and how positions rotate?
 - What are campaign expenses (if available)?
 - Can we get an organization chart that will show the relationship of the Selectmen to other elected and appointed officials and boards?

- Do town by-laws required that members of the Boards of Selectmen are officially members of other town committees. If yes, how many committees, and what types?

7a. Research approach

- Do we need a script for these questions so that same questions are asked of all respondents?
- How far back should we go in discussing Boards in other towns? The committee agreed on a 5-year retrospective analysis.
- For report development, should we use Google Docs that would enable each member to add to a document? Are there any problems with the Open Meeting Law if we use that technology?

The Committee decided to allocate responsibilities for an initial group of towns. Each named member would do some initial research on a town (or towns). The assignments were:

Acton	Debra Deutsch
Arlington	Maryann Scali
Lexington	Maryann Scali
Westford	Dan Halston
Concord	Ralph Jones
Milton	Laurie Graham
Winchester	Laurie Graham
Hingham	Dan Halston
Marblehead	Amy Trotsky
Stoughton	Andy Plunkett
Marshfield	Mike Crowley
Wakefield	Mike Crowley

8. Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting is September 12.

9. Other business

Members who have access to the report prepared by the League of Women Voters when it considered this question—please bring copies for all at the next meeting.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Submitted by Ralph Jones, Secretary Pro Tem.