

2018 JAN 24 AM 8:49

Committee to Study the Number of Selectmen ("CSNS")

Draft Minutes of Meeting held November 7, 2017

Present: Michael Crowley, Debra Deutsch, Judie Feins, Laurie Graham, Daniel Halston, Doug John, Ralph Jones, Andrew Plunkett, Lynn Read, Paul Rickter (presiding), Maryann Scali, Amy Trotsky, Peter Whitmer

Meeting called to order at 7:02pm and concluded at 9:00pm.

**Approval of minutes of meeting held October 23, 2017**

The minutes were approved as amended, by unanimous vote.

**Reports of interviews of Selectmen from comparable towns**

Reports were made on interviews conducted with Selectmen from Acton, Arlington, Concord, Hanover, Hingham, Lexington, Marshfield, Stoughton, and Winchester. Reports from the interviews with the Selectmen from Marblehead, Milton, and Westford will be made in future meetings.

A Common theme emerged that most towns feel strongly that their current Board of Selectmen arrangement is best for them. In Stoughton 3 of the 5 Selectmen are facing recall elections.

Towns with 5 Selectmen have strong Town Managers. The recall elections in Stoughton relate to the firing of the Town Manager.

Towns with 3 Selectmen tend to have Town Administrators.

Towns with 5 Selectmen felt that the larger number on their Boards afforded increased opportunity for gender and racial diversity as well as representation from broader portions of their citizenry.

The Selectmen interviewed demonstrated heightened awareness of Open Meeting Laws, although some described practices of their Boards that might be questionable. Some conduct a portion of their business electronically.

Competition levels in elections were dictated by the degree of controversy involved in town issues. Campaign spending varied from town to town. Some towns value Selectmen positions much more than others, which rely heavily on committees to work on policies and issues.

The towns studied vary as to whether Selectmen are paid for their service.

Hours spent fulfilling duties of being Selectmen varied widely from town to town. In some the Selectmen are retired and the office has become an avocation for them.

It was felt that Boards with more Selectmen could have more involvement with individual town committees.

Some Selectmen expressed concerns about a higher number of Selectmen leading to members not “pulling their weight” and loss of transparency, but that was not reported by members of larger Boards.

### **Belmont Selectmen Survey**

There is still no response from the following: Sami Baghdady, Dan LeClerc, Steve Rosales, Ann Warner, Chip O’Hare. Attempts will be made to connect with them. Maryann will speak with Steve Rosales, and Daniel will reach out to Sami Baghdady. Attempts will continue to get responses from current Selectmen Williams and Paolillo.

### **Polling of Town Department Heads and Committee Chairpersons.**

A discussion was held concerning a suggestion to conduct an informal poll of Town Department Heads and Chairpersons of Town Committees about their interactions with our Selectmen and what they would ideally like those relationships to entail. The Town Clerk will be contacted for email addresses of the Committee Chairpersons.

### **Benefit Costs of Selectmen**

Maryann will find out the statistics on Benefit costs for the Selectmen over the past decade.

### **Review of Final Report Outline**

The following items were listed to be included in our final committee report:

Reasons for our Committee’s existence and research.

Surveys from Belmont Selectmen

Interviews of Selectmen from comparable towns

Interviews with Town Department Heads and Committee Chairpersons

### **Next Steps**

Members submit list of best arguments in favor and against retaining the current number of Selectmen.

Send the summary of Selectmen Survey responses developed by Andrew and Daniel to the committee members.

Continue to reach out to non-respondent Selectmen.

### **Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:00pm, and was passed unanimously.

### **Documents used in the meeting**

Agenda for the meeting, draft minutes of the previous meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Doug John