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WRENTHAM, MA  
2023 OCT 12 PM 2:00

Board of Selectmen's Meeting  
Open Session Meeting Minutes  
400 Taunton Street – Senior Center

Members present: Joseph Botaish, James Anderson, and Christopher Gallo  
Members absent: Bill Harrington and Michelle Rouse  
Also present: Kevin Sweet, Town Administrator; Amanda Vasapollo, Executive Assistant; Rachel Benson, Director of Planning & Economic Development  
Charter Review Committee Members; Board of Assessors (Tom DiPlacido, Ed O'Neil & Irene Levesque); Board of Health Member, Dr. Randall Ferrell; Fiske Library Trustees (Mary Beth Bernard, Honora Rainville, and Judy Brown)  
Called to order: Meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Mr. Botaish.  
Documentation:  
Charter Review Public Forum Presentation #1

Discussion:

Mr. McGovern spoke, made brief introductions and provided the intent of the meeting. Mr. McGovern presented to the audience the Charter Review Forum #1 Presentation – Update to Elected Boards and Officials.

A discussion took place amongst the Committee regarding lack on participation in local elections. Joseph Botaish, Select Board Chair, spoke in favor of changing the Town Clerk from elected to appointed, cited the complexity of the position.

Ms. Thompspon, Town Clerk, spoke against changing the Town Clerk from elected to appointed, citing taking the right to vote away from residents and the educational requirements for the position.

Mr. McGovern clarified that the Town Administrator would be the appointing authority for the position.

Ms. Thompson spoke, noted that the Town Clerk position should have a residential requirement if changed to appointed.

Chris Gallo, Select Board Vice-Chair, spoke, asked about the Town Clerk position in surrounding communities whether they were elected or appointed.

Ms. Thompspon responded, a majority of neighboring communities elect the position.

Mr. Sweet responded, across the state it' about half communities have elected and half are appointed.

Mr. Sweet is in favor of the Town Clerk position becoming appointed, cited examples of lack of oversight/authority over elected Town Clerks. Mr. Sweet reviewed what the process would be for appointing the position.

A discussion took place regarding the election process, the timing of it and the impact of cold weather. Tom DiPlacido, Board of Assessors, provided feedback on the proposals from his position as a resident, not on behalf of the Board of Assessors, stating moving positions to appointed feels like walking away from democracy. Mr. DiPlacido wants to review the proposal with the rest of the Board of Assessors before providing any official comments.

A discussion took place regarding the what the Select Board process would be for appointing positions under their authority noting what the current process is for appointments.

Ed O'Neil, Board of Assessors, spoke, for proper checks and balances would like the Principal Assessor to not be able to serve on the Board of Assessors.

Mr. McGovern and Mr. Sweet responded in favor of having Principal Assessor (Department Head) only serve in an ex officio capacity on the Board of Assessors.

A discussion took place regarding the pros and cons on having residents versus non residents as Town of Wrentham employees/appointed officials.

A discussion took place regarding the pros and cons of elected versus appointed positions, the hinderances of the election process, the barriers for newer residents wanting to get involved, and the lack of vetting of elected officials.

Mr. Gallo spoke, proposed increasing the quorum of the Board of Health from three members to five members, cited the difficulties in navigating open meeting law.

Dr. Randall Ferrell spoke, in favor of increasing the quorum of the Board of Health also citing the difficulties in navigating open meeting law with only a three-member board.

Judy Brown, Fiske Library Trustee, spoke opposed to changing the Trustees from elected to appointed, citing the position doesn't require as much technical knowledge as the other elected bodies and that the library is utilized by a wider variety of residents compared to other elected bodies. Ms. Brown also spoke against having the Library Director serve duly as a member of the Trustees and as Library Director.

Honora Rainville, Fiske Library Trustee, spoke on her experience with the election process.

A discussion took place regarding recent appointments to the Fiske Library Trustees and how that process went.

Mary Beth Bernard, Fiske Library Trustee, provided comment on her recent experience being appointed to the Trustees.

A discussion took place regarding history of prior Town Elections, tactics on gaining more voter participation and informing residents.

Everett Skinner, Planning Board Member, spoke opposed to the proposal on reducing the number of Planning Board members from seven to five.

Rachel Benson, Director of Planning and Economic Development, spoke in favor of reducing number of members on Planning Board and suggested making two appointed alternates.

A discussion took place regarding the voting requirements for the Planning Board.

Mr. McGovern thanked everyone for coming to the Forum and for providing feedback on the proposals.

Adjournment:

Motion made by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Gallo, the Board voted to adjourn the open session meeting at 8:06PM. Motion carries, 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Amanda Vasapollo, Executive Assistant