

Townshend Committee To Study Town Governance
Minutes of 29 March 17
Grammatical edits from notes
Approved 24 April 17

Attending: Joanna Snelling, Gailyn Gulack, Philip Moriarty, Al Haumann, and Will Bissonnette

1. The meeting was called to order by Will Bissonnette at 7:10.
2. Election of Officers:
Phil Moriarty nominated Will Bissonnette. Carried unanimously.
Joanna Snelling nominated Al Haumann as Vice Chair. Carried unanimously.
Phil Moriarty nominated Phil Moriarty as Clerk. Carried unanimously
3. In lieu of agenda, Mr. Bissonnette noted some handouts with emphasis on the Open Meeting Law
4. Discussion of a plan forward: absent a charge from the Selectboard, general discussion as to the steps the committee should take was undertaken. A variety of experiences and opinions were presented. Mr. Haumann read VLCT description of the difference between managers and administrators. Ms. Snelling pointed out that the differences are significant and need to be considered. VLCT can provide some technical assistance, perhaps including a visit, and will be contacted by Ms. Gulack.

Ms. Snelling suggested the following to be the purpose of the committee:
“To explore options for the administration of town government and present the Selectboard with a report clearly outlining the possibilities.”

Committee members agreed. It was clear, after a brief discussion, that the range of things to be studied included the all aspects of town government organization, not only Selectboard’s role.

Various approaches were discussed. Interviews with current/former members of town governments were suggested for next meeting. The purpose was gather general information about how other forms of governance in area towns are working and to provide committee members of some of the details that are involved in actually operating the town. Assignments are:

Mr. Moriarty — Wilmington
Ms. Snelling — Newfane
Mr. Haumann — Guilford
Ms. Gulack — Jamaica
Mr. Bissonnette — Putney

In addition,

Mr. Bissonnette will talk to former Townshend Selectboard members,
Mr. Moriarty will research essential functions of town government,
Mr. Haumann will create a current town organizational chart.

Mr. Moriarty urged members to send him work products electronically. He will post them on a personal web page he devoted to the committee’s work and is available to the public as well as committee members. Meeting notes will also be posted there and sent to the Selectboard and Town Clerk. [Committee Link](#)

After the next meeting, the committee will decide on further steps.

5. A contact sheet was created.
6. Next meeting: the committee will meet at 24 April 17 in the Townshend Town Hall at 7 p.m.
7. The meeting adjourned 8:48 p.m.

Submitted
Philip M. Moriarty
Clerk



Christopher Moriarty after casting his first-ever vote at Town Meeting