

DRAFT MINUTES:  
Committee to Study Town Governance  
meeting held on May 17, 2017 (Townshend Town Hall 7 p.m.)

1. Call to Order: 7:15 pm members present: Joanna Snelling, Al Haumann, Will Bissonnette
2. [Minutes/Notes of previous meeting](#): moved to accept by Ms. Snelling seconded by Mr Haumann motion passes
3. Additions and deletions: Ms Gulack has resigned her position on the committee.
4. Members of the Public: none
5. Clarified charge from selectboard:

“The Governance Advisory Committee of the Select Board is hereby charged with identifying the major deficiencies within the current Town of Townshend governance structure, researching possible solutions to those issues such as instituting a position of Town Manager or Town Administrator, and documenting any legal barriers that might impact the Select Board's presentation of options to the voters of Townshend. The Committee shall present its findings to the Select Board at which time the Board may further charge the Committee with developing a job description for a specific position,”

Discussion of the charge revealed two aspects of governance issues. 1. There seems to be differing views of who is responsible for the various functions and how each department interacts with the others. 2. There is a long history in Townshend and there are many historical differences. As a result there are some personality conflicts that have festered over the years that make some interactions difficult.

Current deficiencies: finance director, highway commissioner, Aging of the elected workforce and possible recruitment to town government. Central expertise in grants writing, coordination and follow up. Provision for a centralized hub of information and dissemination.

Ms Snelling moved to accept the new charge and set a timeline to be prepared to present to the board by the second week of July. Seconded by Mr Haumann, motion passed.

6. Around the table for information from interviews:
  - A. Mr Moriarty –not present
  - B. Ms Snelling- Reference to history and personalities found as a recurring theme. Most agree that there are difficulties with oversight, information sharing, information organization, and communication. Looking for clear job descriptions for all members of town government. Follow up between and amongst

departments also came up, as did the matter of trust.

C. Mr Haumann – Raised the need for clear job descriptions as well. Discussion centered around the process of writing and adoption. Also echoed were the concepts of communication, coordination of departments and trust. Building sense of team for the good of the town

D. Mr Bissonnette – Also echoed the above concepts and found that the recurring themes were present in all discussions.

7. VLCT - Mr Bissonnette – Discussion including the necessity of very clear job description. Costs for seminars for the town and the VLCT recruitment package.

8. Definitions – discussion around the fact that we have enough to present definitions to the board.

9. Formulation of duties for next meeting

Mr Bissonnette – follow up VLCT follow up questions

Ms Snelling – first draft of intended recommendation for the board

10. Set date for next meeting 5/25 7pm

11. Adjournment. 9:05

Respectfully submitted by Will Bissonnette.