

**TOWN OF HOLLISTON
Governance Committee
Meeting Minutes**

Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2022

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Virtual

Attending: As indicated by roll call: Len Engel, Hayley Fetrow, Sue Nersessian and Sam Tyler were present.

Mr. Tyler called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Opening Statement

Mr. Tyler read the state required opening statement for virtual public meetings.

Minutes

Mr. Tyler moved, Mr. Engel seconded and it was voted by roll call to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2022 meeting:

	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Mr. Engel	X			
Ms. Fetrow			X	
Ms. Nersessian	X			
Mr. Tyler	X			

Ms. Nersessian moved, Mr. Engel seconded and it was voted by roll call to approve the minutes of the September 29, 2022 meeting:

	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Mr. Engel	X			
Ms. Fetrow	X			
Ms. Nersessian	X			
Mr. Tyler	X			

Fall Town Meeting Warrant Review

Mr. Tyler said there were a couple of items raised at the town meeting that are useful changes that could be made to the by-law proposals to get them approved. Ms. Nersessian said the suggestion of staggered and overlapping terms for the By-Law Review Committee members was very helpful. Ms. Fetrow said it was unfortunate that all the proposed by-law changes were put into one article. Mr. Tyler said the criticism that by-laws would have to be changed if state laws change is not accurate because the by-laws are not "cut and paste" replications of state law. Ms. Fetrow wondered if there is a general disclaimer in the by-laws clarifying that state law supersedes Town by-laws. Mr. Engel said that state law makes it clear that state law prevails

over local by-laws; the Committee addressed this concern in response to Mr. Alfred's email. Mr. Tyler said the issue of citizens' petitions raised at town meeting was inaccurate; there was no language or intention to give the proposed By-Law Review Committee any veto power over by-law proposals.

Select Board Size

Mr. Tyler said that Ms. Fetrow had agreed to do an analysis of the "Board Business" items in the Select Board minutes for calendar 2022 to date.

Ms. Fetrow noted that she had circulated a summary of her findings. She said that the Select Board spends a lot of time approving minutes, approving one day alcoholic beverage licenses, approving permits for events, races and parades, making committee appointments and accepting donations. Some of these could be reviewed for possible reassignment to the Town Administrator. Mr. Tyler said he had a conversation with the Town Administrator who also mentioned dog incident hearings as very time consuming. Ms. Nersessian wondered if we could determine what items the Select Board own legally, what items they want to own, what items the Select Board wants to advise on and what items they want to be informed on. Ms. Fetrow said she would like to get advice from Town Counsel as to what items the Select Board must handle and what items they are not required to handle. Mr. Tyler said that the Town Administrator will provide information about the state statutes covering the various licenses and permits.

Ms. Nersessian asked if the Committee should start to do research on the impacts to the Finance Committee of changes to the Town Administrator's responsibilities, such as a change to Town Manager. Mr. Tyler said the Committee will have to decide how much change it wants to consider to the Town Administrator's responsibilities. He said his preference would be to make bold proposals. In 1994, when the Town Administrator position was created, the perception was that the Town would accept the position with limited power and responsibility. The Committee has to try to determine how much change the Town is willing to make. Mr. Engel and Ms. Nersessian noted that the current Town Administrator is extremely capable but there was a time when a Town Administrator was not especially capable. Mr. Engel said the Select Board appoints the Town Administrator so it is incumbent on them to select someone who is capable of handling the duties and responsibilities of the position. Ms. Fetrow said the Committee would not be designing a job description for one individual; it would be for all future Town Administrators. Mr. Tyler said one step in the Committee's process would be to meet with the Select Board. One consideration is whether to include a policy regarding the search and selection process for future Town Administrators.

Mr. Tyler said he would check on the status of surveys sent to former members of the Select Board.

Envisioning Future Holliston Survey 2, Government Change Question

Mr. Tyler said his impression was that the citizen survey responses leaned toward more professionalism in Town government.

Governance Committee

Mr. Tyler noted that Mr. McKechnie has resigned from the Committee. He encouraged the Committee try to identify candidates to fill the vacancy.

Public Comment

There was none.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 10, 2022.

At 7:30 p.m. Ms. Fetrow moved, Ms. Nersessian seconded and it was voted by roll call to adjourn the meeting:

	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Mr. Engel	X			
Ms. Fetrow	X			
Ms. Nersessian	X			
Mr. Tyler	X			

Respectfully submitted,



Paul D. LeBeau

Date Approved by the Committee: November 10, 2022