

Government Study Committee Minutes March 2, 2021

Present: Gary Champion; Craig Saline, chair; Tammy Jones, Diane Young. Also present: Bill Fabri, Diane Halvorsen.

Call to order: 7:03pm. The meeting was conducted on Zoom, with Champion on phone.

Citizens queries: None.

Minutes: The minutes of February 16, 2021 were accepted.

Proposed bylaw on Government Study Committee: The Committee discussed a warrant article presented by the Town Manager at the Select Board's February 22 meeting, which includes the language below:

The Committee shall consist of nine members, including one Select Board member, one Finance Committee member, and one School Committee member, each to be designated by their respective boards or committees, and six at-large members appointed by the Select Board for terms of two years.

Beginning in the year 2024 and every ten years thereafter, the Committee shall review the structure of Town government, including the Town Charter and any applicable special acts and bylaws relating to governmental structure, and make recommendations to the Town Meeting concerning amendments to the Charter, or such special acts and bylaws, or other recommendations it deems advisable. The Committee shall submit such recommendations to the Select Board, after conducting a public hearing thereon, by the end of the calendar year.

The Committee may also be convened for the purpose of making recommendations or reports on such matters pertaining to the Charter or the structure of Town government as may be referred to it by the Town Meeting or by the Select Board.

A quorum of the Town Government Study Committee shall consist of no fewer than five members. A recommendation of the Town Government Study Committee to the Town Meeting or the Select Board shall require the affirmative vote of at least five members.

Committee members raised questions about the value of two-year terms rather than the current three, a quorum requirement that differs from general practice, the proposed process for Town Meeting referring a matter to GSC, whether the state conflict of interest law prevents the Select Board from appointing a Select Board member to GSC. and the GSC being convened in between decennial reviews. The legal difference between a GSC and a Charter Review Commission was noted.

Members of the Committee offered recommendations including: the GSC reporting to Town Meeting every year; 7 members; 3-year terms; 1 voting member each from Select Board, School Committee and Finance Committee; 4 as a quorum; and changing the referral section to "may convene."

Saline will send documents from himself and Champion to the Select Board, as starting points for the discussion at the March 8 Select Board meeting.

Motion: to recommend to the Select Board that the proposed article be deferred and worked on further by the Government Study Committee and the Select Board. The motion passed: Champion, yes; Jones, no; Saline, yes; Young, yes.

Motion: to encourage the Select Board to appoint additional members to the GSC as soon as possible, to bring it to its full complement of nine members. The motion passed: Champion, yes; Jones, yes; Saline, yes; Young, yes.

Town appointments: Select Board member Willy Whitmore had a question about who is the appointing authority for which Town committees. Saline will send a list to the Committee and to Whitmore.

Citizen's petition: Champion gave an update on his citizens petition proposing a bylaw change that would give the Select Board approval authority on mooring, waterways, and Town Wharf regulations.

Next meeting date: to be determined.

Adjournment: 9:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane J. Young, Secretary

Select Board- Ipswich GSC priorities discussion February 22,2021

How has the GSC done its work since 2012?

Q. Since 2012 has the GSC decided on its own what to work on?

A. No. Topics come from Town Meeting, Select Board, Town Manager, Town Counsel, other Boards or Committees. However, the GSC has prioritized its work and decided how best to address/utilize information or best practices that arise during its work.

Q. What have been the various types of GSC recommendations?

A. Reports, letters, proposed by-law, or charter articles for Town Warrants.

Q. Since 2012 has the GSC bypassed the Select Board and gone directly to Town Meeting with a Charter or by law proposal?

A. No. The GSC has not bypassed the Select Board.

Q. Since 2012 Has the GSC gone to Town Meeting with a proposed article without majority support of the Select Board?

A. No. As an advisory committee the GSC seeks support for its recommendations. If not supported, the GSC has listened to Select Board feedback and adjusted accordingly in revising its proposal for reconsideration by the Select Board or withdrawing it.

Q. How has GSC work stayed aligned with the Select Board expectations?

A. Every 12-18 months the GSC communicates with the Select Board to review current topics and priorities. Most recently 7/18/20.

Current town website description

Town Government Study Committee

(9 Members/ 3 Year Terms) – Select Board Appointment. This committee advises the Select Board, Finance Committee, and other Town Officials on matters of policy and practice as they relate to the Town of Ipswich. Specifically, this committee has authored an Administrative Manual (1998) and several policy review studies concerning various aspects of the Town's structure and governance.

Established under Article 17, December 17, 1962 town meeting.

Accomplishments since 2012

- Recall of Elected Officials By law. Town Meeting request. ATM 5/16/13
- Update of Committee Boards Commissions Handbook. Select Board Request.2013-2017.
- Non-Resident Committee member SB policy- Select Board Request. 7/15/15
- Town Manager Residency Charter change. Select Board request. STM.11/7/17.
- Gender Neutral Language- Charter & Bylaws-Select Board Request. ATM 10/16/18
- Inspector, Civil Defense Charter update. TM request. STM 10/16/18
- Changing the Charter . Town Counsel request. Withdrawn. STM 10/16/18
- Select Board Role Charter update.SB & GSC request. STM 10/16/18 & ATM 5/14/19
- Elect or Appoint PIng Board report. ATM request.5/14/19
- Acting Town Mgr Charter change. TM request. STM 10/29/19
- Waterways Advisory Committee by law. SB/TM request. STM 10/17/20
- Waterways 118 by law suggestions. SB request. 2021.

Who determines what the GSC works on?

- 2016 Select Board/Town Mgr. request Waterways Adv. Cmt. & mooring reg adoption
- process review
- In 2016/17 Select Board, Town Manager, Town Counsel identified 31 Charter/bylaw
- Issues that needed to be addressed.
- 2017 interviews were held with: former selectmen, former town managers, town
- counsel, former MMA President/Burlington Town Administrator
- 2017 GSC prioritized findings and began Charter/Bylaw project with Town Mgr.
- residency issue.
- Town Meeting has directed GSC priority in 2013 (recall) and 2019 (PIng. Board- elect or
- appoint?).

How can Charter or bylaws be amended?

- Either Home Rule Charter Commission or Special Act Charter (home rule petition)