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Dedham Charter Study Committee – March 11, 2020

2020 JUN 23 PM 6:41

TOWN OF DEDHAM
CLERKS OFFICE

- Carmen Dellolaco
- Tom Ryan
- Michelle Appuzio
- Andrew Haley

Meeting called to order by Carmen at 6:03pm EST

Conversation with Town Moderator: Dan Driscoll

- Moderator is the presiding officer of Town Meeting
 - Rules on questions of order
 - Question of the vote
 - Ensures there's an open and fair debate
- Forms committees for various things...some standing and some issue specific
 - Businesses to remove snow
 - Senior Citizens facility committee
- Deputy and Moderator maintain an orientation for new employees
- Regularly asked to chair debates for electable candidates (DEP), ad hoc (firearms debate)
- Influx over the past 10 years where Town Meeting is turning over.
 - Some very active people that take the time to learn what is going on with the warrant.
- Has been on all 4 Town Manager search committees
- Discussed the various duties that come up

- Suggestions / Recommendations: pertaining to the Finance & Warrant Committee
 - There is often talk of making this an elected position
 - Dan's Thinking:
 - Currently 7 appointed and 2 at large
 - Warrant is a difficult document
 - Dense
 - Very technical
 - Puts in countless hours, goes through every line of the budget, has the power to call in any department head and request more information regarding budget.
 - Budget has been prepared by professionals in town hall.
 - Finance/Warrant consolidates everyone's wish lists of the budget.
 - There needs to be someone that can advise Town Meeting on what they believe in their opinion is best
 - The idea of electing the finance committee means that you have people that are biased based on their fear of not getting elected again.
 - Thinks it would be chaotic – they would have one eye on re-election, and one eye on the budget.
 - Should be appointed by the Moderator because...

- Finance Committee has the ability to grill, disagree and argue with the Town Manager...Town Moderator is a bipartisan individual that is “master of process”
 - Will not talk to the finance committee about how they vote but will talk about their behavior and how they interact with department heads.
 - Tom Ryan – during the finance/warrant committee deliberations, the interviewed department heads should be able to respond through some sort of interaction to correct misinformation.
 - Very important for finance committee members to understand that because they are appointed, people give a lot of weight to what they say.
 - Any way to consider making Town Meeting cover 2 days?
 - If you want your item passed, then make it the last item on the list after a bunch of people had left or it was late.
- ***The only thing Dan would want to see changed in the charter is the allowance of finance/warrant committee members to be able to serve on Town Meeting as well.***
 - What is the process for appointing people?
 - 5 on bylaw
 - Finance / Warrant Committee (7 per district, 2 at large)
 - At large are easy
 - District ones are a bit more difficult
 - Once in a while gets a recommendation
 - Snow Removal Committee
 - Hard to find a businessperson to be on it.
 - Most committees are 3-year terms
 - Hard for him not to consider appointing someone for a 2nd term
 - Flipping people out of their seats for the sake of “fresh blood” is not always the best course of action.
 - You are throwing the experience out of the process.
 - 39 from each district, and 13 are up each year
 - Eliminating seats means some people can’t come back
 - Most people that are there want to be there
 - 273 people are on Town Meeting
 - Advocate for changing the quorum to a much lower number.
- Carmen believes that Town Meeting has been dummed down a bit.
 - Why aren’t the Dedham FinCom meetings televised?
 - People really do watch this stuff. It’s reality TV.
 - DD: Warrant book is meant to be a recommendation from FINCOM
 - The split votes are where people have a question about the reasons why FINCOM is making the decision they are making.

Public Commentary has been satisfied...

Motion to adjourn by Michelle, seconded by Andrew...Meeting ends as of 7:41pm EST