

Minutes
March 14, 2019 Meeting
Town Government Study Committee
Milton, MA

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Richard Neely, at 7:08 PM in the Small Kitchen Conference Room in the basement of Town Hall.

Present were Richard Neely, Leroy Walker, Marvin Gordon, Kathleen Fagan and Peter Mullin. Present on a telephone conference call line was John Cronin.

Also present for the meeting was Town Counsel, John Flynn. Chair Neely explained that the ballot for the Town's upcoming 2019 election would contain a referendum question for the voters of the Town as to whether they supported or opposed changing the Town's Treasurer/Collector of Taxes position from an elected to an appointed position. The Committee and the Select Board had sponsored the article at Town Meeting, which passed, to make this change. Chair Neely told Mr. Flynn that the Committee wanted his advice as to what it could and could not do in connection with this upcoming referendum vote.

Mr. Flynn said that it was his opinion that the Town, including this Committee and the Treasurer's Office, could not use any Town resources in support of, or opposition to, the referendum question. This included Town employee time, office supplies and the Town email network. Mr. Flynn said that he thought it would be problematic to publish on the Town website a handout which the Committee had prepared and used at Town Meeting in connection with the adoption of this article. Mr. Flynn said that individual Committee members could write letters to the editor, or appear on cable access TV shows, and advocate for a "Yes" vote, so long as no Town assets were used. Mr. Flynn also said that it was permissible for Committee members to participate in community forums and to advocate for a "Yes" vote. Flynn said that Committee members could also contribute to and participate in a campaign finance 501(c)(3) committee supporting a "Yes" vote, if one is organized. Mr. Flynn said that he thought it was permissible for the Committee to appear on the agenda of a Select Board meeting and to provide a factual briefing to the Board on the upcoming referendum question. In that regard, Flynn said that the only issue to be decided in the referendum question is whether the Treasurer/Collector position is to be elected or appointed. The duties of the Treasurer, and any Chief Financial Officer position which may be created, will not be decided in the referendum.

Chair Neely thanked Mr. Flynn for his time and advice. Mr. Neely informed the Committee that they were scheduled to have a joint meeting with the Select Board on March 27, 2019, to discuss with the Select Board the topics which the Committee would consider this year.

The Committee voted to adjourn at 8:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Mullin
March 30, 2019