

I'd like to begin by reviewing how we got to tonight's discussion. Four weeks ago I set forth a series of suggestions for improving the governance of the Town, but there was not adequate time on the agenda for me to provide my rationale for the proposals. Nancy, Janet and I agreed that we needed some time to think about these proposals before taking them up at a future meeting (tonight). It also was suggested that getting input from various Town bodies made sense. In the interim some folks have understandably expressed frustration at the absence of a context or framework for considering the proposals. Hopefully we can ameliorate that frustration tonight. I urge all of us to listen to each other respectfully and to consider the pros and cons of what is being proposed.

I have heard some rumblings in recent days suggesting that there is some animus with my proposals. Let me be clear - my sole objective is to address what, from my observations and experience, are opportunities to improve the effectiveness of our Town governance.

The five points in my proposal are really a package of interrelated suggestions that are intended (1) to promote the independence of elected Town boards (Selectmen and Budget Committee) and (2) to provide efficient and timely input to the Selectmen as we "manage the prudential affairs of the town" as prescribed under RSA 41:8.

Proposals one and two dealing with the membership of Selectmen and Budget Committee members on other boards and committees accomplish the first objective: no Selectman or Budget Committee member, for the purpose of determining a quorum or for voting on matters to be addressed subsequently by the Selectmen or Budget Committee, would also be a member of another committee whose members are appointed by the Selectmen. This does not preclude individual Selectmen or BC members from attending any meeting as a resident of the community, while understanding that they do have a special standing as an elected member of the governing body. For example, Nancy has attended some meetings of the Firewards and the Housing Commission, both bodies where her professional knowledge may be appreciated.

The **third proposal** - the formation by the Selectmen of time limited “ad hoc advisory panels” to address specific topics for action by either the Selectmen or the Town Meeting - is intended to provide for topic specific input on pending decisions, as opposed to the work of permanent bodies that deal with ongoing topics such as energy, conservation, housing or recreation. Examples of current topics that would benefit from such examination include (i) completion of the Whipple Hall renovations; (ii) future uses for the Buker building if the Police department relocates; and (iii) a plan for the handling and recycling of waste materials within existing facilities. These time-limited groups may also provide opportunities for new volunteers to participate in the governance activities of the Town.

The **fifth proposal** establishes a new permanent committee, as provided for in NH statutes (RSA 674:5), to perform an annual Capital Improvement Plan, a responsibility now performed by the Planning Board. Since this proposal requires Town Meeting approval, I suggest we table it for the time being.

The **proposal to dissolve the Solid Waste Committee** as currently constituted is intended to acknowledge that the earlier work of this committee to consider an expanded or new transfer station was tabled following the completion of a Solid Waste Management Facilities Study in November 2017. This committee has not met since November 2020. I personally would suggest that some members of this committee be among those selected to carry out the proposed focused waste material work.

The **proposal to dissolve the Building and Facilities Committee** is more complicated because some of its activities have been examples of good “advisory” efforts, but its overall structure has, in my observation, decreased its effectiveness as a source of input to the Selectmen. The BFC subcommittee advising on the renovation and repair of Whipple/Buker has been useful and should be continued for the time being as one of the proposed ad hoc groups. Likewise, the subcommittee addressing possible

sites for a new police facility has just completed a useful report. Less effective has been the structure of the BFC that funnels subcommittee work back through the entire committee, resulting in delays and reworking of subcommittee work. In both the Whipple and police site situations I believe the work of these subcommittees should by now be directly on the Selectmen's agenda. Based on recent attendance at three BFC meetings it is my observation that too much effort is spent defining its purpose vs. addressing specific matters requested by the Selectmen. For example, it is not clear why the BFC has taken on some transfer station questions when a Solid Waste Committee exists, or why there is confusion about the role of the BFC in the CIP process. Were the BFC to be dissolved at this time, I believe its current members would/could be asked to continue work on some of the specific topics enumerated above (Whipple, Police site, waste materials, CIP).

My thanks to those individuals who have provided some feedback to me over the past month. I now look forward to an opportunity for all of us to consider more thoughts tonight and for the Selectmen to act on these proposals.

Solid Waste Committee

John Manaras, Chair
Robert Brown
Gerry Gold
Robert Harrington
Liz Meller

Building and Facilities Committee

Colin Beasley, Chair	Rip Cross
Bob Bowers	Peter Hogleund
Joe Cardillo	Phil Sherman