



Town of Grafton, MA
Bylaw Study Committee
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BYLAW STUDY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 24, 2023
Grafton Memorial Municipal Center, Conference Room F and Via Zoom

Call to Order: A regular meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair David Robbins. Members present were as follows:

- David Robbins, Chair – Present
- Gregory Marr, Vice Chair – Present
- Brian Langevin, Clerk – Present
- J. Roger Currier, Jr. – Joined in person at approximately 7:11 and present for all votes taken
- Andrew Jefferson – Present

1. Public Comment – None

2. Updated Bylaw Revisions and Open Action Items

The committee discussed bylaw revisions and open action items with respect to the following:

- **Severability:** Based on the committee's discussion of feedback received from Town Counsel with respect to severability clauses, Mr. Robbins agreed to follow up with Town Counsel to see if there would be any way to incorporate a single global severability provision that would pertain to all current and future general bylaws. If this cannot be accomplished, the committee intends to proceed by incorporating standardized severability language into each separate bylaw article.
- **Article 2 – Town Meetings:** Mr. Marr reviewed further revisions prepared in response to comments provided following Town Counsel's review.
- **Article 3 – Finance Committee:** Mr. Marr presented proposed revisions based on feedback provided by the Finance Committee.
- **Article 4 – Town Officers, Property and Records:** The committee discussed references to legal matters to be included in the annual town report and other minor non-substantive updates. Feedback from Town Counsel remains outstanding with respect to Section 6 – Written Contracts.
- **Article 5 – Select Board:** Mr. Jefferson reviewed proposed revisions based on feedback provided by the Select Board with the committee discussing and proposing additional minor revisions.
- **Article 7 – Town Clerk:** Mr. Robbins noted that he had identified provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, accepted by the town, that render it unnecessary for the

general bylaws to include the fee schedule currently included within this bylaw. As a result, the committee agreed that the fee schedule should be removed, pending Town Counsel's review and agreement.

- Article 12 – Safety and Order, Section 21 – Regulating Parking Areas for the Vehicles of Disabled Veterans or Handicapped Persons: Without having received further feedback from the Accessibility Advisory Commission or their outside consultant related to the potential revision or repeal of this section based on its duplication or conflict with other regulations, Mr. Robbins shared research he has performed on this topic and revisions he is preparing to update it. Mr. Robbins will be further discussing his findings and open questions with the Town Administrator and Police Chief and the committee will continue its consideration of relevant revisions at a future meeting.
- Article 16 – Dogs Running at Large (currently proposed to be renamed "Animal Control"): Questions raised at the committee's last meeting remain outstanding with Town Counsel.
- Article 19 – Betterment Procedures: The Town Administrator is nearing completion of his proposed revisions which are expected to be shared with the committee prior to its next meeting.
- Article 20 – Personnel Bylaw: The Town Administrator, in conjunction with labor counsel, are nearing completion of proposed revisions which are expected to be shared with the committee prior to its next meeting.
- Article 26 – Licenses and Permits of Delinquent Taxpayers Bylaw: Mr. Robbins shared that he had come across a recent Attorney General approval letter pertaining to a similar bylaw being amended by the town of Warren which indicated that such bylaws should reflect the current statutory text of General Laws Chapter 40, Section 57, as amended. Based on this guidance, Mr. Langevin prepared an update to this article to reflect the pertinent text and the committee discussed including a recommendation in its final report that the Select Board may want to review its Certificate of Good Standing policy in conjunction with this bylaw to ensure the two do not conflict but rather work together to accomplish the Select Board's objectives.
- Article 28A – Fire Department: Mr. Marr reviewed further revisions prepared in response to comments provided following Town Counsel's review.

3. Continue Planning Committee's Final Report

Mr. Robbins introduced a discussion of the draft committee report he circulated in advance of the meeting. The committee proposed certain minor modifications to the form and format of the draft report and will continue its detail review of the report as additional bylaw revisions are incorporated into future drafts.

4. Continue Planning for Town Meeting

The committee continued its discussion of planning for town meeting, reiterating a preference to number warrant articles one (1) through forty-one (41) to align with bylaw articles one (1) through forty-one (41) and consider proposing a single consent motion to pass all proposed bylaw revisions. Additionally, the committee expressed a preference that the proposed

revisions to the Town Charter be approved by way of town meeting authorizing the Select Board to petition the General Court to enact special legislation for that purpose.

5. Review Previous Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Marr to approve the minutes for the August 10, 2023 meeting, as presented. Motion seconded by Mr. Currier. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment: At 9:29 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Currier to adjourn. Motion seconded by Mr. Marr. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Langevin, Clerk
Bylaw Study Committee

Approved August 31, 2023