

Town of Adams • Massachusetts 01220

GENERAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

TOWN HALL
8 PARK STREET – Room 210
TEL. (413) 743-8300 EXT 170
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General Government Review Committee
Monday, March 14, 2022 at 5:00pm
Adams Town Hall, 8 Park Street, Adams, MA

Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: On the above date the General Government Review Committee held a meeting at the Town Hall Sun Room. The meeting was called to order at 5:06 p.m. Present from the General Government Review Committee were Tim Burdick, Jonathan Butler, Carol Cushenette, Virginia Duval, Jeff Grandchamp, George Haddad, Donald Sommer, and Leah Thompson. *Member Carrie Burnett was absent.* Also present were Bernard Lynch of Community Paradigm Associates, LLC, Town Administrator Jay Green, Board of Selectmen Chair John Duval and Member Joseph Nowak, and Brian Rhodes of iBerkshires.

Swearing-In

Town Clerk Haley Meczywor led the members present through the swearing-in process making them "Special Municipal Employees" under the provisions of MGL Chapter 268A, the Commonwealth's Conflict of Interest statute.

Review of Open Meeting Statute

Bernard Lynch introduced himself and his company Community Paradigm Associates, LLC. He highlighted some of the tenets of Open Meeting Law and discussed how administrative tasks such as posting would work. Each committee member indicated being familiar and comfortable with Open Meeting Law in general. The group agreed to send questions or thoughts to Mr. Lynch directly rather than by group email.

Officer Elections

The Board elected Don Sommer as Chair, Tim Burdick as Vice-Chair, and Leah Thompson as Clerk.

Discussion of Committee Purpose

Town Administrator Green and *Mr. Lynch* discussed the need for a study of the Town of Adams' charter, by-laws, and governing practices. This committee will study the town's form of government and governance; examine models of government in comparable communities; identify strengths and weaknesses in the current government and recommend amendments to the charter, by-laws, or governing practices for improvement; and facilitate public engagement and discussion of the review.

There was a Charter Study Committee in 2009 and a Government Study Committee in 1979. *Town Administrator Green* will facilitate documents from those committees being sent to the group.

Discussion of Anticipated Workplace and Timetable

Mr. Lynch provided the Committee with a Project Outline which broke the work up into 5 phases, the final phase being a culminating report to Town Meeting Members ahead of the June 2023 Adams Town Meeting.

There was discussion about when the appropriate time to engage the public will be. *Member Butler* expressed that comparing Adams Government Processes to like towns will help frame whether considered changes would be profound.

Mr. Lynch led a discussion about the process in Massachusetts to make changes to a town charter vs town by-laws.

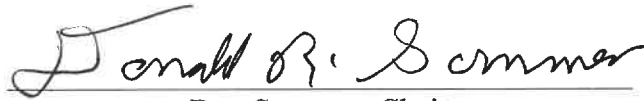
Member Grandchamp expressed concern that the timeline was very tight, the group agreed. *Mr. Lynch* and *Town Administrator Green* both noted that if the final report happens after the June 2023 Town Meeting that would be ok. It could be taken up at the 2024 Town Meeting or a Special Town Meeting could be called.

Discussion of Future Meeting Schedule

Member Thompson began by asking that the group consider earlier meeting times, after a brief discussion the next meeting was set for 3:00 p.m. at Adams Town Hall on April 12, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT: *At 6:07 p.m. Vice Chair Burdick made a motion to adjourn, Member Haddad seconded, the motion passed unanimously.*

Minutes respectfully submitted by Leah Thompson.



Don Sommer, Chair