

APPROVED

RELEASED

**WORKING GROUP MINUTES  
SELECT BOARD  
DONN B. GRIFFIN ROOM, TOWN HALL  
732 MAIN STREET, HARWICH, MA  
WORKING GROUP SESSION 6:00 PM  
MONDAY, JULY 31, 2023**

RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
HARWICH, MA

2023 AUG 22 A 10:14

**MEMBERS PARTICIPATING:** Mary Anderson, Chair, Julie Kavanagh, Vice Chair, Michael MacAskill and Don Howell and Jeff Handler, Clerk

**ALSO PARTICIPATING:** Joseph F. Powers, Town Administrator, Emily Mitchell, Town Clerk, Jen Clark, Assistant Town Clerk and Ellen Powell assisting the Town Administrator's Office with Committees

**CALL TO ORDER:** Madam Chair called the meeting of the Harwich Select Board to order at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, July 31, 2023.

**TOPICS:**

- I. Discussion on the following items related to Town of Harwich Committees.
  - Annual Committee Meetings
  - Leveraging technology resources
  - Compliance with regulatory requirements
  - Governance
  - Other
- II. Discussion on proposed topics for future working sessions and discussion on future dates

Work Session began at 6:01 p.m. Jeffrey Handler, Clerk, arrived at approximately 6:50 p.m. Discussion began with Joe Powers providing an overview of the committee assessment/review process and materials Emily Mitchell and Jen Clark have been drafting. Emily provided detailed information on the number of compliance issues related to committees and members who need open meeting law training, have not been sworn in still need to take ethics training etc. Emily will also share "working" documents with Select Board members once she has been able to clean them up. The need for town email addresses for committee members was presented and the Committee Handbooks needs revamping since it was last updated in 2017. The discussion about the number of committees, missing charges & need to update a committee charge or reassess the charge of certain committees was discussed by the Select Board. The Board needs to move forward in assessing what Committees should remain in place and what, if anything, the Board should do to reduce the number of committees and determine the role of alternates and/or number of members on particular boards. Ellen Powell and Don discussed the reappointment process and need to improve communication on whether members are still interested in serving. Don noted if the chair or the interview committee is to have such discussions, they must start in March in order to meet the reappointment timeline.

Michael MacAskill feels we should start with the “low lying fruit” to develop a process to address the issues. Jeff Handler asked if there are a certain number of times committees must meet and Ellen Powell noted many committees overlook their charge or do not know what the charge is so meetings are not always occurring when they should or as often as they should. The issue arose of disbanding some committees where we have professional staff in place, such as the Waterways Committee where we have a Harbor Master or the Golf Committee where we have a Golf Director. Don Howell noted the Traffic Safety Committee in the past has not addressed a number of safety issues, such as differing posted speeds on Route 137 (depending on whether one is driving north or south on the same stretch of road), However he did not think the citizen participants on that committee should be removed as he felt that it was our professional staff (at the Police Department and at the DPW) who have previously resisted changes needed . Discussion of term limits was raised by Michael MacAskill. Julie Kavanagh feels we should take the information the Town Clerk provides and assess the list by first discussing with the various department heads that have affiliated committees to determine if the committee remains useful for the department head and the town at large. Mary Anderson feels we should start the assessment by speaking with department heads then talk to committee members before making any decisions. The need to use technology to improve tracking on missing items due (ethics, swearing in etc.) along with reappointments was also discussed. Don Howell asked if there was an ability to create a “tickler” reminder for expiring appointments etc.

Emily also mentioned social media accounts that are operated by the Town and the need for a town wide social media policy. The town does not currently have a policy. Select Board members agreed there is a need to move forward with assessing committees and it will place on the agenda for the next regular Select Board meeting. Mary Anderson noted future topics for the working group should be wastewater and Monomoy Regional School District budget funding mechanism.

**ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn made at 7:45 p.m. by Michael MacAskill and seconded by Jeff Handler**

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Kavanagh  
Vice Chair  
Harwich Select Board

July 31, 2023