

Hopkinton Charter Commission public hearing, June 30, 2004

Present: Gary Daugherty, Beth Herlihy, Doris Carver, Mary Pratt, Chairman Marie Eldridge, Vicechairman Bill McRobert, Clerk Bruce Karlin, Nancy Clark, Tom Irvin

Hearing opened 7:03 p.m.

Chair M, Eldridge instructed attendees how to engage the commission to offer thoughts and suggestions.

Ken Weismantel, 145 Ash St.: Should we appoint rather than elect some of the boards and positions (e.g., Cemetery Commission, DPW, Board of Health, Town Clerk or constables)? Should we increase three person boards to five members to allow communications? I support Open Town Meeting format as best.

Eric Sonnett, 60 Theresa Rd.: Retain Town Meeting. Executive secretary has no authority - administrator and liaison to BOS. \$50 million budget run by four old men and one old lady who meet twice a month after dinner. How do we handle crises if selectmen not available? I recommend a switch to town manager who has power but answers to the board.

Ken Allor, 18 School St.: Frustrated by poor attendance at important meetings. Has the commission investigate representative Town Meeting? Should the town rely less on volunteers and more on paid qualified personnel?

Chris Dietz, Alexander Rd.: Preserve Open Town Meeting because it is most representative.

Discussion of Open vs. Representative Town Meeting. Representative may encourage more attendance. Representative may give undue weight to some issues e.g. salaries

Jim Cozzens, Jamie Lane: Keep Open Town Meeting. Attracting people is a good idea, such as: streamlining and delegating to clarify; community information spread earlier with website and community access and local media; encouraging and requiring departments to inform the public before they get to the meeting. Cable will make live access call-in available.

Kathy Gross, 11 Walcott: Is the Finance Committee the best budget process? Put the Finance Committee report out earlier. Perhaps we're ready for a town manager.

Eva Beede: Lived in cities with strong mayor. Adjustment moving from NJ and Texas to a small town. Describe how the boards work, As town grows, more services will be needed. Make government open to youth, get more youth involved.

Meeting adjourned 7:45 p.m..