

FIFTEEN ROPE FERRY ROAD
WATERFORD, CT 06385-2886



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Legislation & Administration Committee

Meeting Minutes—Feb 22, 2024

Members Present: Susan Driscoll, Tom Dembek, Mark Campo, Ursula Moreshead

Members Absent: Christina Jessuck

1. Call to order: Chair called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. Public comment: None.
3. Previous Minutes: Motion by Dembek, second by Moreshead, to approve the Sept. 18, 2023, minutes as presented.
Voice vote: Unanimous Motion passed.
4. Initial consideration of issues previously referred:
 - Review how RTM considers recommendations for committee assignments (RTC 6/6/22)
 - Public Act 22-3, AAC Remote Meetings Under the Freedom of Information Act (RTC 2/6/23)
 - Review of a "Public Comment Ordinance" (RTC 2/6/23)
 - Police Commission expansion to seven members (RTC 10/2/23)

For the benefit of new members who were not in office when these issues were referred, discussion started with brief description of reasons for/goals of referral requests (except for PA 22-3 review, for which no written request was submitted). Consensus to focus first on the public comment and RTM appointment issues, which both involve expanding public participation, and address the other two issues in future meetings.

RTM appointment process: While the charge was to look for ways to "de-politicize" appointments, members expressed interest in making all appointments more open to all citizens. Consensus to start with just RMT appointments for now. The traditional process of taking recommendations only from Democrat and Republican Town Committees was explained. Majority of committee members felt that this provided no opportunities for a large section of the population who might be interested in volunteering for public service to be "sponsored" or even be aware of the numerous boards and commissions. Suggestions included quarterly postings of expiring terms—on the town website's main page or on Commission sites, in The Day, in The Loop, and on bulletin boards in the Town Hall and Community Center. Another option might be creating a new RTM Nominations/Vacancies Committee to interview/vet/recommend candidates for boards and commissions. Campo offered to draft a process map for current appointment method; Moreshead offered to write up benefits/goals of a revised process.

Public comment: Consensus that with limited board/commission response to RTM Jan 2023 recommendation to include public comment periods, providing written guidance to these specialized groups would be helpful—e.g., setting parameters such as time limits for each speaker or restricting comments to agenda items, and explaining that it is not a Q&A session, but speakers could contact boards/commission members after the meeting if questions weren't answered in deliberation. The FOIC's requirement that while there is some flexibility in handling public comment periods, the standards/rules during each public comment period must be applied equally to all speakers. Town Attorney will be consulted on whether RTM options include codifying universal public comment periods through ordinance, resolution, or "strong recommendation."

5. Adjournment: Motion by Moreshead; second by Campo to adjourn at 9:02 p.m. Voice vote: Unanimous.

Submitted by
Susan Driscoll, L&A Chair

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