

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR WORKGROUP
SPECIAL MEETING, August 7, 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBER, NEWTOWN MUNICIPAL CENTER
3 PRIMROSE STREET, NEWTOWN, CT

These minutes are subject to approval by the Work Group

MINUTES

PRESENT: Bill Brimmer, Pat Llodra, Maureen Crick Owen, and Ned Simpson

ALSO PRESENT: one member of the press

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by the chair Mrs. Crick Owen.

VOTER COMMENTS – None

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Mr. Brimmer moved to approve the minutes of July 24, 2023, meeting. Mr Simpson seconded.

All in favor and motion passes.

OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion and possible decisions:

1. Recommendation

Mrs. Crick-Owen opened the meeting asking Mrs. Llodra for her recommendation indicating that at the July 24th meeting She, Mr. Brimmer and Mr. Simpson had provided their initial thoughts. Mrs. Llodra started with context based on what the Work Group heard, discussions with the current First Selectman, and discussions with leaders in other towns. All identify the same frustration of getting so involved in the operational aspects of leading the town that it is very hard to get distance and look at the big picture. Mrs Llodra expressed her strong belief that Newtown is a stable and thoughtful community where anything other than a populus vote for the town leader would be too much to ask and not healthy. So, while liking the idea of professional management, going to a Town Manager structure is off the table for her. Mrs Llodra would like to go forward to the BOS with a recommendation to add a Town Administrator to our personnel portfolio.

Mrs. Crick Owen pointed out that the Work Group seems divided two to two Town Administrator versus Town Manager. She reiterated her belief in small steps and the number of people we heard from who felt that going directly to a Town Manager structure was a step too far. Mr. Brimmer stated that he is not against a Town Administrator, but going that direction would be postponing the inevitable – Town Manager. The town could face a quandary if it hired a Town Administrator then took the Town Manager step, what would happen to the Town Administrator. Mr. Simpson shared a similar a similar view that a Town Administrator could be a good step along a path to Town Manager. Mr.

Simpson considers a change to either Administrator or Manager as a project in an area where Newtown does not have experience. He noted how other towns had used executive search firms to help with their projects. This approach, which he recommends for Town Manager, may be too expensive to Town Administrator. The Work Group discussed short term, longer term, the town comfort with change, and the desire to directly vote for leaders.

Mr. Brimmer moved:

Recommend that the BOS move to establish a Town Administrator position. In the longer term assess whether or not a move towards professional management would benefit the needs of the town

Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. Mr. Brimmer, Mrs. Crick Owen and Mr Simpson voted in favor. Mrs. Llodra, who recently moved out of town, did not vote.

For sustainability and consistency over time, discussion supported a contract for Town Administrator off cycle from First Selectman election. After some discussion the Work Group decided to highlight the desirability of municipal background in Town Administrator candidates and encourage full reading of the full report and attachments.

2. Discussion of draft work group report (46)

Completion of the Work Group was discussed. Separate sections on Assessment and Recommendations have not been needed. Detail Mr. Simpson had drafted based on a request at the last meeting does not need to be included. Work Group members will provide Mrs. Crick Owen with any text updates. The audio recordings of Work Group meetings are on a Google drive. Moving them to a town resource from the Technology department or Town Clerk was discussed.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Next Steps

Calendar for the Work Group was reviewed.

- Tuesday August 15, 2023, 3:30 pm, Regular Meeting
- Tuesday September 5, 2023 3:30 pm Regular Meeting
- Monday September 18, 2023 7:30 pm Presentation to BOS

VOTER COMMENTS - None

Mr. Simpson moved to adjournment. Mr. Brimmer seconded. All in favor, motion passes. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Recording available at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kzE6iYsB1v8wQ5ff911eReKQDhWTiN3d/view?usp=sharing>

Respectfully submitted,
Ned Simpson