

CHARTER TRANSITION COMMITTEE
ISSUE(S) NUMBER 003

From: Mark Fisher [mailto:mfisherna@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, July 17, 2019 9:04 AM

To: Deb Kohl; Chris Sweet; Mitch Mac Donald; Don Bates; Anthony Rianldi

Subject: Observations

I am writing this note before the Town Council determines if it should extend the term of the Charter Transition Committee beyond July 31st. Even if it does not, I urge you to stay aware of the transition and progress of our new form of government and hope that you would still voice your opinions to the President of the Town Council if you think the process is going too far astray of the intent and direction of the Charter.

After attending the first Town Council meeting and the first half of the second, I watched the NorthTV tape of the remainder of the second meeting. Understanding that it will take time for participants in our government to grasp the new way, we still need to keep the focus in the right direction.

While nothing of great magnitude was obvious, I observed several small things that collectively, if not adjusted, could create difficulties in maintaining a smooth transition. There were undertones indicating that a few members are having difficulty accepting or understanding that they are not the Board of Selectmen. This could be problematic because their authority and responsibilities are different and consequently their expectation and understanding of authority is different.

There were several questions raised that could be categorized as micro-managing. There was also a suggestion of inviting all Boards, Committees and Commissions to appear before them. This is a carryover from the Board of Selectmen and is not a function of the Legislative branch. Obviously, if the Council has specific questions about specific issues that they need answers to help their deliberations, then the Charter outlines their rights and responsibilities in calling various Town officials in front of them. Meetings to see how Boards and Committees are doing are the function of the Manager, not the Council.

The Council has included an agenda item titled: Town Manager's Report. While on the surface that is understandable and an efficient way to deal with issues the Manager wishes to update the Council on, I watched the Manager report on professional association meetings he attended. While it is his prerogative to do so, it could develop a misunderstanding that the Manager has to report to them on his daily activities. Again, the relationship between the Manager and Council is significantly different than the one between the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator.

I share these observations with you for you to decide if, how or when you would address them, if you agree.

Thanks