

Board of Assessors

Discussion of Special Act to Create Town Manager

I attended the BoA meeting on August 13 at 7:15pm. All Assessors were in attendance (chair Susan Rufo, Jayson Brodie, Zack Ventress, Steve Glovsky and John Todd) as well as Bruce Morgan, Director of Assessing.

The agenda item:

7:30 pm Proposed Town Manager Special Act: Discussion with and provide feedback to Selectman Cherry Karlson

The BoA received the following information to facilitate the discussion:

1. Presentation/discussion slides for the Town Manager Special Act
2. Draft Town Manager Special Act
3. Report from the Collins Center: Financial Management Structure Review (background for creating the Special Act – not the focus of the discussion but provided as background for those interested in the analysis)
4. The Buzz, June 13, 2018 "Restructuring Government": discussion with Town Administrator Nan Balmer and Selectman Lea Anderson. <https://vimeo.com/275271539> Start at minute 16:18 for the interview.

Summary of discussion:

The BoA was disappointed and frustrated with the Collins Center process for both the November 2016 Review of Financial Policies and Procedures and the October 2017 Financial Management Structure Review. Neither the former Director of Assessing nor the chair of the Board of Assessors was contacted or interviewed as part of either project despite reaching out to Collins Center staff.

The BoA does not believe that its business is correctly considered in the final reports.

The BoA discussed the following concerns:

- Potential conflicts of interest, particularly if under Section 6B, the town manager establishes a consolidated finance department.
- Use of the word "shall" throughout the document. For example, in Section 1(c) "such officers shall be available at reasonable times to the Select Board...." and elsewhere.
- Changes in the ability to hire, terminate and review the Director of Assessing.

The BoA was supportive of professionalizing the management of the Town.

BoA member Steve Glovsky provided CCK with a hard copy of his personal comments on the Special Act.

Cherry Karlson, notes from August 13 meeting with BoA