

**HAMPDEN
MASSACHUSETTS**



**GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Meeting: December 19, 2023; 6:30pm

Attendees:

	Cliff Bombard	X	Keith Pixley
X	Michal Boudreau		Luis Severino
X	Eric Brewer		
X	Donna Hatch		
X	John Matthews		

Minutes for December 5 and 12 were accepted as written.

Minutes

The Committee met to recap the GSC's First Forum held on December 12. Key takeaways are:

- o Twelve (12) people attended the Forum.
 - o What needs to happen to better engage the community?
- o Board of Selectmen: Uncertainty that 5 is better than 3.
 - o Term Limits: Would be helpful with a 3-person Board. It might also be beneficial to eliminate party designation and vote for an individual and not an affiliation.
- o Elected vs Appointed town officials and pros and cons of each.
- o Communication: How can residents be better informed? How to increase community engagement? For the 2023 STM, a single topic (Fiber Optic) drove attendance and about half the attendees left after that warrant article was voted on.
- o Strong Town Administrator (TA) and a TA Assistant
- o Website Update: Website should be more informative and easier to navigate. A Social Media Coordinator could add value.
- o Electronic Voting at Town Meetings would increase efficiency and accuracy.
- o Town Meetings on Saturday.
- o Facilities Manager: How would the Town handle moving government functions to TWB should that decision be made? Need an individual responsible for Hampden's assets as the Town tends to allow deterioration.
- o Town Operations: There's a tendency to not get things done.
- o School District: Lighting fiasco; true costs with no explanation.

- Strengths: Town employees are responsive and friendly; ballot voting on paper; roads are well managed and plowed timely.
- Concerns: Communication

Next Meetings: January 16 and 30
February 13 and 27

The Committee adjourned at 8:15pm.