

DRAFT MINUTES
Town of Mansfield
Communications Advisory Committee
August 15, 2011
Town Hall Conference Room C

Members Present: Patrick McGlammery, chair; Aline Booth, Richard Pellegrine, Ronald Schurin
Staff: Jaime Russell

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. Dick moved to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2011 meeting; Aline seconded and the committee voted affirmatively.

There was no public comment.

Old Business

A. Committee membership status:

No actions or communications on this matter from the Town Council Committee on Committees.

B. Monitoring the budget communications.

Dick noted that there needs to be greater clarification prior to and/or at the Town Meeting on the rules (under the Town Charter) for amendments to the budget—specifically the requirement that amendments be limited to changes in specific line items.

Aline indicated that the Town provides and disseminates an excellent brochure that provides this information, but that people may not be reading it in sufficient detail in advance of the meeting. She suggested that steps be taken to assure full dissemination of this information. Dick suggested that the brochure include examples of appropriate and inappropriate motions (as to format), which would be helpful to individuals planning to offer motions.

Aline also suggested that it would be useful to have Town staff at the meeting to answer specific technical questions on line items.

The Committee engaged in a lengthy discussion of the role of the Town Meeting, the possible subsequent referendum, and related matters.

Patrick suggested that there is a need to have an individual present at the Town meeting to help guide presenters as to format—prior to the point at which the presenter stands up to make the motion officially.

Ron proposed the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Communications Committee recommend to the Town Council that an appropriate non-political individual be designated as the “guide” to citizens wishing to present a motion at the Town Meeting.

Be it further resolved that the Town officials recommend that motions be in writing and that the individual designated as a “guide” review the motion to assure proper format (as set forth in the Town Charter) and, if necessary, assist citizens in putting the motion in the proper format.

Aline seconded the motion. Following discussion, the Committee approved the motion. Ron agreed to draft a letter with this recommendation to the Town Committee, review it with Aline, and send it to other Communications Committee members for review prior to transmittal to the Town Committee.

C. Review of charge

Patrick led the Committee in a review of its charge.

Dick noted that some major things have been accomplished, but there are still some weaknesses in Town communications. For example, the Town’s voice mail system is not wholly responsive to citizen calls. He recommended that, if possible, calls be rolled over to a “live” person.

Following discussion of this and related matters, Patrick suggested that the Committee is on track in meeting its charge, and that more needs to be done.

Patrick suggested that we might review census data to get a better sense of the Town’s demographics and the communications needs of various segments of the community—specifically, the need for different modes of communications. Dick noted that issues are what motivate people, and different issues motivate different groups.

Other matters

There was no new business and no communications. The next meeting will take place at 7:00 p.m. on September 19

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Schurin