

CHARTER COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY JAN 3RD, 2022

The Boston Globe was writing in the Sunday edition about the swearing in of new leaders on Saturday in Newburyport <25k population, Northhampton >25 population, Gloucester <20 and Somerville -78K; On Sunday Medford and Waltham in the 68-70 K population, and today, Everett and Salem both <50 pop swore in leaders sometimes called mayor, other times Council Chairs. Just amazing how some of the early change towns like Newburyport changed in 1851 and no town ever changed back to Representative Town Meeting.

I am aware on a number of occasions that the committee chair had referred to Plymouth's town manager as "our Mayor" and it is true Plymouth has a strong mayor-type town manager structure, with the TM handling all the towns business and personnel issues and only bringing occasional issues to the BOS which required their approval or for funding issues..

The role of the part-time BOS is to plan future direction with no interfacing with town employees on any issues unless at a BOS meeting.

Now the town is seeking a new town manager via a local consulting firm, Community Paradigm Associates, consisting of a single principal who lives locally around Pine Hills and bid a very low \$16,000 fee to locate candidates.

Anyone familiar with personnel search firms know that a job paying \$200,000 usually should cost \$80,000 or more.

This CPA firm has been in business a little over 7 years and the website provides little information unless one fills out a background questionnaire, which I did before asking 3 simple questions. I have no response in 4 weeks.

The current searches of this firm include the towns of East Longmeadow, Halifax, Sterling, Marion all much smaller and less complex than Plymouth.

The complexity of Plymouth is well outlined in the 4 page brief of requirements of a new Town Manager and the selected person that the town will be comfortable with, must be rather unique. This is especially true in that the job could be obsolete by the Charter Commission results.

It appears that Plymouth continues to rely on small local consultants in the two major analysis required to move forward for the future of Plymouth, the Town Manager and the Fire Department recent station analysis for the location of 7 stations. The fire dept one was rehiring a former consultant from 2006 who had

since been in state enforced bankruptcy, working out of a house, with no business e-mail and no BBB rating for 11 years. Both of these situations required a top flite firm, who probably should have never worked for Plymouth and doesn't even know where we are.

This current situation between the BOS and Town Manager would not have developed under a Council Chair or Mayor council environment because the council has more interaction with the town managers from daily contacts some weeks. The council would not put up with a division [like the school dept] with a budget of \$106 Million , growing \$3 million a year, when their customers [students] have shrunk by 15% over 8 years with only 2 meetings a year. They would put a council member, voting or non- voting, on the board of the school committee to have month to month awareness of events and issues. Questions also arise when reviewing the Comm of Mass website for the student achievement ratings and which show middle range in various subjects of math, english and science as well as tech/eng.

This committee has now met close to 50% of their meetings and no where is a night or two set aside to learn and debate the differences between the present government and the forms that all other governments have selected at Plymouth's population total.

Reviewing the outline for Feb 7th, "commence charter preparation", Feb 14th and 28th "draft of the proposed charter", all without a close examination of the differences and possible improvements of the other forms of government.

I must comment on the Comm. Chairman's comment about the only advantage the other forms of government have is meeting more often, when one of the biggest advantages is voter turnout, because Plymouth can vote in November when state and federal office holders swell the population participation from an embarrassing 10-12% participation or less to upwards of 45% or more.

While we discuss some of the differences, the 3 biggest changes when talking with first time mayors or council chairs are the governor reacts on the phone or e-mail to a mayor or Council Chair because they represent 60,000 voters and the towns will universally say they receive greater state aid, more grant money and substantially more money for schools.

I look forward to more informative comparisons in the next meetings.

Paul Cunningham, TMM, Precinct 8

