

Town of Hartford, Vermont

Ad-hoc Committee for the 2016 Town Survey

Meeting Minutes 8 Aug 2016 – UNAPPROVED DRAFT

Committee members present: Simon Dennis, Lannie Collins, Richard Liscinsky, F. X. Flinn, Rebecca White
absent: John Flynn, Connie Reimer

Guests: Zachary Azem of UNH, survey manager; by phone

Dennis called the meeting to order at 5:40 PM

Committee reviewed Agenda. No changes.

Committee members checked in about their activities.

The committee reviewed the latest version of the survey. This iteration fit in the 4 page layout of the mailer, and the focus was on finalizing exact wording.

In Q1, the water & sewage systems were taken out because they are funded by user fees, not taxes (even for bonded items like the new water tower in Quechee), and those enterprises routinely survey customers. In their place the expenditures on town administration and social services were added. Now all the principal Fund 10 budget items are covered. It was also agreed that instead of trying to represent the entire public works amount focusing on the winter and summer road expenditures would provide a better window into citizen perception of public works.

Q2, which gets at how the town should respond to the structural deficit created by understaffing and underinvestment in infrastructure was reworked in response to Reimer's memo and the discussion that followed.

Q3, asking about possible initiatives, was modified after a poll of the members, Mr. Collins objecting to inclusion of the town farm item as unclear and potentially upsetting.

Q4 and Q5 were simplified by consensus, Mr. Flinn regretting the removal of the sentence in Q5 noting that the question posed was one 'every select board has grappled with for decades' as the idea of the question is to put the respondent in the position of a member of the board.

Q7 had item added about participation in town meeting cycle events. This will enable us to see whether those who attend are representative of town or skew differently from those who do not.

The demographics section was reviewed. Mr. Azem will rework somewhat so that resident / non-resident and seasonal / business respondents can be better differentiated. Age and years in town will be asked as a single number so that any desired groupings can be created. The letter was amended slightly. The chair will let UNH know who the local contact will be.

The next version received will be considered the final draft and will be presented to the SB at their August 16 meeting. The committee will meet Friday Aug 19 5:30 pm at Town Hall.

Meeting closed at 7:37pm on the motion of White, Liscinsky second.