

Notes for Town Meeting:2020

I have a number of points regarding our town government that might not be otherwise raised at this Meeting that I'd like to raise now. None need answers now, none need discussion now, but all need consideration at some point, probably by our Selectboard, and I would like to get them on the record.

1. Use of **executive session**. Any public board's use of executive session—which excludes the public from deliberations conducted for the public—is guided by state statutes. Executive session use seems to be increasing, and without very good reasons, should not, as it is, when its use is extended, an example of lessening of town democracy.
2. Somewhat related to the above, I wonder whether the Selectboard could investigate a move toward a governmental and management system in which they as a board are less concerned with **employee work**, which could be done by other staff, so they could concentrate on other work which can't be done by other staff. We moved away from this—perhaps with good reason then-- about 25 years ago, and a consideration of change at this time might help our elected leaders in their work, by lessening their burden in this regard.
3. Somewhat related to the above, I would like to see more Town decision making—as much as possible, possibly more than at present—delegated to **Town meeting** rather than the representatives on the Board. Of course what can be done in each venue is outlined by custom and law, but I suspect that more could be done at a Meeting, which, though cumbersome, allows more direct democracy, because of that, more input and more satisfaction with the process.
4. Selectboard please keep in mind the recurrent **flooding** that takes place more frequently now than in the past at the southeast corner of North Street and Fitch Avenue. Both the change in weather patterns (that makes winter rain events more frequent) and the repaving by overlay of Fitch Avenue about six years ago, which raised the street level above the ground level of several downstream houses have contributed to the unsolved problem of street gutter water turning into the backyards of several houses and partially flooding two dwellings twice in the last six years.
5. **Police funding**. I don't have an informed opinion of how much policing is necessary for our town center but I am certain that the payment for this service is not equitable among town people and the problem won't go away until change in funding is made. Our recent polling was a good start but not the end of this Town issue.
6. I think some of the 14 **capital reserve funds** listed on page 27-29 are not really capital expenses—they regard items too small, not capital and some seem redundant—and should be eliminated. These include Howden Hall-can go in Capital Building, Peverill Peake, Fire Capital Equipment (not the

vehicles) , Capital Road and Paving could be combined, Technology, and Police Equipment.

7. I'd like to thank the selectboard and administrator for the thoughtful Report on pages 31-41. I also like to thank them for their work in helping make the town I have lived in for the past 22years such a good place.

I hope some progress can be made on these points. Thank you.

Robert Bernstein