



Town of Ridgefield

Form of Government Committee Approved Meeting Minutes Meeting of May 19, 2025

1. Call to Order

The Form of Government Committee meeting convened at 7:00PM on Monday, May 19, 2025 in the Town Hall Main Conference Room.

Members present: Laurie Christiansen, Michael Rettger, Jonathan Seem, Charles Robbins, Todd Zagorec, Rachel Sondheimer, Steve Zemo, Dennis Tracey

Members absent: Robert Hendrick

2. Public Comments

None

3. Minutes of the May 19, 2025 Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2025 meeting by Mr. Robbins, seconded by Ms. Christiansen. All in favor.

4. Work Plan – Draft Report

Members discussed their comments on the several sections of the committee's draft report that had been developed and circulated for review prior to the meeting.

Mr. Rettger suggested that in light of the several town meeting votes that had been scheduled just since the committee's last meeting, the committee should reconsider its proposal to have the town move to a system of quarterly or every-fourth-month town meetings. He proposed that the committee consider the alternative of having the town set a fixed monthly date for town meetings, as a balance between a stable schedule and the need for timely action on many items. Members discussed what would happen if no action was required in a given month. It was suggested that the time could be used for general reports and discussion of town activities and developments.

After further discussion,

Motion by Mr. Robbins to modify the recommendation concerning the schedule of Town Meetings from a quarterly/every-fourth-month schedule to a monthly scheduled on a fixed date (e.g., third Thursday), and add a proposal to consider also using the time for information and discussion sessions about town topics, as well as any required voting actions. Seconded by Mr. Seem. All in favor.

Members agreed that the Process section of the report should come later in sequence, after the sections on legislative authority changes and on town administrator. Members also discussed the Executive Summary. Mr. Zagorec offered to draft a summary and circulate it for comments. There was also agreement to add a section to the report summarizing the suggestions received about improving communication about town activities and on disseminating information about proposed changes that get adopted by the Board of Selectpersons. The members agreed to add an appendix section with information about electronic voting options and towns that have implemented electronic voting for town meetings.

The members discussed a concern raised by Mr. Tracey and Ms. Christiansen, that depending on timing, there could be confusion around the appointment of a town administrator if both that recommendation and the proposed shift in legislative authority regarding permanent boards under Charter Section 3-13 were implemented,

Following discussion,

Motion by Mr. Rettger to remove recommendation 3C concerning changes to Town Meeting authority for the creation of permanent boards under Sec 3-13 of the Town Charter in the Legislative Authority section of the report. Seconded by Mr. Tracey. All in favor.

Members discussed suggestions for editorial changes to the current drafts of the Legislative Authority and the Town Administrator sections of the report.

Members discussed the content and structure of the material to be presented in the appendix section of the report, as well as which portions should be included in both a hard-copy version of the draft and the version of the report that would be available on the committee's page of the town web site.

Following discussion,

Motion by Mr. Robbins to include the Summary of Comments and Correspondence ("Comments Tracker") spreadsheet as an exhibit in the hard-copy version of the report. Seconded by Ms. Sondheimer. Vote was Mr. Seem in favor, all others opposed. Motion failed.

Motion by Mr. Zagorec to include the Summary of Comments and Correspondence ("Comments Tracker") spreadsheet as an electronic exhibit in the on-line listing of supporting documents for the report. Seconded by Mr. Zemo. Vote was 6 in favor, Ms. Christiansen against, Mr. Seem abstaining. Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Tracey to include as exhibits to the hard-copy version of the report copies of all written correspondence received by the Committee as well as the minutes of the two public hearings. Seconded by Mr. Seem. Vote was Mr. Zagorec, Mr. Tracey, Ms. Christiansen, Mr. Rettger, and Mr. Seem in favor, Mr. Robbins, Mr. Zemo, and Ms. Sondheimer opposed. Motion passed.

Motion by Mr. Tracey to include the write-ups of interviews with towns concerning their form of government as exhibits in electronic form in the on-line listing of supporting documents for the report. Seconded by Mr. Robbins. All in favor.

It was agreed that the table summarizing the town interview findings would be included as a hard copy appendix. It was also agreed that all other items in the proposed Appendix B would be included in electronic form in the on-line listing of supporting documents.

5. Communication

Ms. Christiansen discussed the content and suggested release timeframe for the press release about the June public hearings. She also distributed a proposed information flyer about the hearings to be posted at various sites around town. Following comments, Ms. Christiansen said she will circulate a second draft for approval. She reported that she is working with a town hall high school intern who will be assisting her in getting the flyers posted. The target date for posting is June 2.

The members agreed that having hard copies of the report available at town hall and the library would be sufficient.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:30 PM by Mr. Zemo, seconded by Ms. Sondheimer. All in favor.

Submitted by
Michael Rettger