Governance Committee Report

For Overseers Meeting 11/14/21

The Governance Committee has met twice since the last Overseers Meeting. The current participants are Dan Webster, Elaine Moss, Beverly Crofoot, and Jeffrey Wilt.

Members Sandy Hall, Deanna Madvin, Gina Cressey, and Martha Beiser who were each essential contributors to the Committee’s efforts on the Parking Ordinance have each asked to step back and away from the Committee for now. We thank them for their conscientious work in the past.

The Committee has reviewed and presents to the public and to the Overseers two policies for review and adoption.

The first policy is the Policy for Public Access. The village has had a written policy for public access to its records for many years but it has not been updated since 2009. The laws have been change at least twice since that time, regulating copy charges, hourly rates for village time in complying with a request, and the manner in which requests are made, complied with, and evaluated in the event of a dispute about compliance.

This version addresses all the law changes through the 121st Maine Legislative session. It incorporates and does not deviate from the mandates of the law.

The second policy grows out of changes in the laws regarding remote participation and observation in Overseers and Committee Meetings. These changes arise out of the pandemic. In fact, the Village’s bylaws have allowed remote participation since 2012, allowing overseers to participate remotely as long as a quorum is physically present at the Village during meetings. This was aspirational in terms of the public’s opportunity to observe in real time until we acquired new equipment in September.

The Governance Committee recommends the adoption of a policy which will serve as a guidepost for public observation remotely. The Maine Municipal Association has drafted a sample policy that advances that goal. While the Committee has not yet completed its review of the policy, we would welcome public and overseer comment.

Both Policies are attached here.

The Committee next meets on December 5, 2021. It has set as agenda goals for the months to come:

1. Further review of Remote Participation Policy
2. Identifying and developing a uniform plan for management of the NVC real property assets.
3. Zoning Ordinance review and modification

Members of the public who are interested in joining or sharing ideas should contact me at metcalf442@myfairpoint.net

Judy Metcalf