

Stow Board of Selectmen
Standard Operating Procedure
Committee Management
September 13, 2009

Background

The Selectmen appoint approximately 20 committees composed of 100 volunteers; however, there is little oversight once the appointments are made. In addition, we rarely lay out specific charges, deliverables, or deadlines when committees are first established. On the other hand, when the Selectmen have established various “task forces”, they have been able to deliver on concrete, project-specific goals.

Objective

To make committees more effective, focused, and productive.

Actions Required

1. When possible, set up task forces rather than committees.
2. Do not appoint volunteers for “indefinite” terms. Instead, use staggered 3-year terms. For example, a 5-member committee/task force would begin with two people at one-year terms, two people at two-year terms, and one person at a three-year term. Upon expiration, each term would renew for three years.
3. Prepare a charge, deliverables, and deadlines for each new and existing committee/task force as needed. Committees and task forces may also do this on their own using guidance and suggestions from the Selectmen.
4. Inform each committee/task force that initial charges cannot be modified without Selectmen approval.
5. Provide annual goals when the expectations of a committee cannot be well-defined.
6. Require quarterly progress reports. Committees and task forces will be expected to adhere to the Open Meeting Law and also post their agendas and meeting minutes on the town website so that the Selectmen can follow progress between reports.
7. Make sure each potential appointee understands the expectations and is able to fully participate and contribute.
8. Require that the chairs of each committee/task force change annually.
9. Ensure that all committees/task forces follow the requirements for “multiple member bodies” as provided in the Stow Town Charter, Article V, Section 5-4, and Article VII, Section 7-8.
10. Recommend that other appointing boards in Stow adopt this same Standard Operating Procedure.