

**Brookfield Charter Revision Committee**  
**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**Thursday October 6, 2011, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Selectman's Conference Room (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor), Brookfield Town Hall**

Vice Chairman J. Park convened the meeting at 7:03 p.m. and established a quorum of members.

**Present:** Chairman L. Miller (arrived at 7:08 p.m.), Vice Chairman J. Park, Secretary D. Miles, M. Labadia, R. Jaffe, G. Dembowski, D. Propper

**Absent:** P. Scalzo, S. Martone

**Also Present:** Recording Secretary D. Cioffi, Research Intern D. Salvato

**1.0 Public Comments (15 minutes).**

*No one present.*

**2.0 Correspondence.**

Secretary Miles moved to table Correspondence until Chairman Miller arrived. Commissioner Propper seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

**3.0 Review and accept September 15, 2011 Meeting Minutes and September 29, 2011 Special Meeting**

**Vice Chairman Park noted that the Minutes of the September 29, 2011 should have been titled "Special Meeting". Commissioner Dembowski moved to accept the Minutes of the September 15, 2011 meeting as submitted, and the Minutes of the September 29, 2011 Special Meeting, as amended with Vice Chairman Park's correction above. Commissioner Jaffe seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**

**4.0 Student intern research – status report and discussion.**

*D. Salvato was present.* She explained that her research has involved contacting municipalities of a similar size to Brookfield, and inquiring about the advantages and disadvantages of the Town Manager form of government. She stated that the results of those calls indicated that there was a consensus among many of the towns in support of a Town Manager.

*L. Miller arrived at 7:08 p.m.*

Ms. Salvato advised that the only negative comment related to the salary. Upon inquiry from Commissioner Jaffe, she will notify the Commission from which town this comment came at the next meeting. She further indicated that most towns were in favor of the Town Manager because the individual that holds the position is a professional with experience in municipal operations.

Ms. Salvato advised that the Towns making change to Town Manager had educated their residents of the reasons for the change in a variety of ways, including on-line groups and forums.

Vice Chairman Park asked if the towns Ms. Salvato contacted had changed their form of government recently, and if the Selectmen in those towns were paid or volunteer. Referencing the summary she had submitted earlier, Ms. Salvato noted that she had contacted the following municipalities: Avon, Berlin, Cheshire, Coventry, E. Hampton, and Enfield.

Ms. Salvato indicated that outside of salary, another disadvantage cited by a municipality related to limited communication. There was discussion regarding the Town Manager's role with Board of Education matters. Commissioner Dembowski noted that Ms. Salvato's research summary also indicated that other disadvantages include: "too much government," turnover, and residency requirements. It was noted that a residency requirement is very restrictive.

Commissioner Propper reiterated the question of how recently the towns she spoke with had made the transition, and if the town had realized dollar savings as a result of a professional being in the position. Ms. Salvato indicated that none of the municipalities spoke of this. Commissioner Propper suggested that a follow up call be made on this topic so that the savings in town costs could be noted.

Discussion followed regarding the analogy between the role of a town manager role and the role of a school superintendent. Commissioner Dembowski advised that residents might see this as a disadvantage, as some believe the superintendent is paid excessively. Secretary Miles reviewed the progress, and lack thereof, that has been made in Brookfield over the years. She believes that a professional in the town manager role would help revitalize the town's progress in land development as well as increase the efficiency of town operations. Commissioner Jaffe likened the First Selectman to the Chief Executive Officer, and the Town Manager to the Chief Operating Company of a "mature" organization. It was further noted that the Town Manager would be an employee overseen by the Board of Selectmen.

Upon inquiry from Vice Chairman Park, Ms. Salvato indicated that in her Internet research, she found the use of public forums by towns to educate its citizens interesting. She did note, however, that many of these towns that utilized this method were not in Connecticut.

Ms. Salvato will follow up with the municipalities with Town Managers to determine how many times a month their Boards of Selectmen meets for both regular and special meetings (over the past year). Commissioner Propper noted the importance of making the distinction between municipalities that have a Town Council, and those, which have a Board of Selectmen.

With regard to the Town Treasurer role, the Commission indicated that it has reached agreement to recommend that the position stay as a ceremonial role, but in a volunteer capacity.

There was discussion regarding the concern among Commission members regarding posing too many questions on the ballot for the Charter Revision.

## **6.0 Percentage of voters required for petition, town meeting, etc.**

There was additional discussion regarding the percentages necessary and the inconsistencies among them required for petitions, referendums and town meetings. Section 1(4)(7)(c) of the Charter was read, and Commissioner Propper offered to rewrite it to make it more clear. Vice Chairman Park reviewed the percentage recommendations of First Selectman B. Davidson.

## **5.0 Continued discussion and draft ballot questions.**

Commissioner Jaffe suggested that Ms. Salvato look for any sample documents that could be utilized in presentations for the public hearing(s).

The discussion turned to the proposed revision to provide separate ballots for First Selectman and Selectmen, given that all of the Selectmen positions will now be non-paid. Commissioner Jaffe explained that unlike some of the other Boards, residents cannot vote for however many Selectmen seats are available. If the BOS selects its leader, then it will be similar to the other Boards and Commissions that elect the Chair. Commissioner members agreed that making the positions all volunteer should not reduce the caliber of qualifications and skills of the candidates. Commissioner Propper recommended that this discussion be continued when the Town Manager job description is discussed. Commissioner Dembowski suggested that Ms. Salvato also research how other towns handle the “losers” of the First Selectman race. It was noted that the Town Manager will report to the Board of Selectmen, not just a First or one Selectman. There was discussion regarding the increased responsibilities of the First Selectman. Ms. Salvato was asked to determine from those Towns that have a Town Manager and a First Selectman, or President of the Council, what the responsibilities of First Selectman or Council President are, and how that First Selectman or Council President is elected or chosen.

**Commissioner Propper moved to amend the Revised Minutes of the September 29, 2011 Special Meeting, on Page 3, to remove the reference to the \$50,000.** After discussion, Commissioner Jaffe clarified that the discussion should read: “Attorney Grogins indicated he would review the suggested Charter language to ensure that it is compliant with current law. With regard to the First Selectman’s responsibility to review the town ordinances, annually, Attorney Grogins also advised that there is a company called “General Code” that will conduct the review to ensure that the town code is complete and in compliance and to make recommendations regarding procedural consolidation and statutory issues. The work by this company is done in conjunction with Town Counsel. Attorney Grogins will provide a contact name to the Commission.” **Commissioner Jaffe moved to amend Commissioner Propper’s motion to reflect this change to the Minutes of the September 29, 2011 meeting. Commissioner Propper seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Jaffe’s checklist was reviewed. With regard to the First Selectman and Selectmen being on a separate ballot, it was noted that because of the minority rule state statute, the

Commission would look at Town Manager job descriptions from other towns, and determine what the responsibilities of the Board of Selectmen will be, before deciding what to recommend.

There was discussion about setting a percentage of the total town budget for dollars at which approvals are required, to help in the future in dealing with inflation. The Commission would also like to make the wording consistent (in the current Charter, some sections read, “total town budget” and others say, “annual town budget”). There was further discussion regarding expenses that may cross over into the education budget (i.e., lighting for the football field), and how those expenditures should be handled. Commissioners Dembowski and Jaffe will meet to discuss a recommended percentage for the group.

#### **7.0 Discuss outline for presentation at the next public hearing**

The Commission agreed that a reasonable estimated date for a public hearing is January 2012. It was noted that the Board of Selectmen might be able to extend the Commission’s term if it is necessary. It was noted that presenting the revision questions on the ballot with the national elections in November 2012 would be ideal. There was discussion regarding presenting the changes to the Board of Selectmen in April. Chairman Miller will check with Attorney Grogins regarding the time line, how much time the Board of Selectmen has to respond after being presented with the CRC recommendations, and whether the Commission’s term can be extended if necessary.

#### **8.0 Review schedule and assign tasks and targets (e.g. drafting charter changes, communication to the public, etc.)**

The Commission indicated it would start drafting the charter language as it relates to the town manager. Secretary Miles volunteered for this task, and Town Counsel will review it. It was suggested that there be limitations to the town manager’s authority. The Charter section that addresses the town controller will be reviewed. Additionally, the charter language will make clear how the hiring and termination of the town manager is handled, and specify the Town Manager’s responsibilities. Secretary Miles will work with Ms. Salvato and use the information she has collected.

Vice Chairman Park will draft the language concerning the changes to the Boards and Commissions that are being considered.

The changes to the duties of the First Selectman (administrative versus legislative) will be highlighted.

Commission members indicated a desire to expand their discussion of C5-4, which relates to the succession of power of the First Selectman.

The drafts will be completed in time for the October 20, 2011 meeting.

**9.0 Open Discussion.**  
None.

**10.0 Public Comments (15 minutes).**

*No one present.*

**11.0 Adjourn.**

**Commissioner Dembowski moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Secretary Miles seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**

***\*\*Next regular meeting to be held October 20, 2011\*\****