

Brookfield Charter Revision Committee
MINUTES (Approved 11/17/11)
Thursday October 20, 2011, 7:00 p.m.
Selectman's Conference Room (2nd Floor), Brookfield Town Hall

Acting and Vice Chairman Park convened the meeting at 7:06 p.m. and established a quorum of members.

Present: Chairman L. Miller (arrived at 7:10 p.m.) Vice Chairman Park, Secretary D. Miles, P. Scalzo, R. Jaffe, S. Martone, G. Dembowski

Absent: M. Labadia, D. Propper

Also Present: Student Intern D. Salvato, Recording Secretary D. Cioffi

1.0 Public Comments (15 minutes).

No one present.

2.0 Correspondence.

See Section 5.3 below

3.0 Review and Accept October 6, 2011 Meeting Minutes.

Commissioner Dembowski moved to accept the Minutes of the October 6, 2011 Meeting as submitted. Secretary Miles seconded the motion, and it carried, 4-0-2, with Commissioners Scalzo and Martone abstaining.

4.0 Student intern research – new information and follow up discussion.

Ms. Salvato indicated that she has researched various municipalities to determine: how their town charters address the duties of the First Selectman; how their residents were informed of a change in the form of government (i.e., public hearings, commentaries, etc.). She referenced a report that she drafted and will send via email to Commission members.

Ms. Salvato advised that of the six Town Manager salaries she found, all were over \$100,000; and these salaries were set by the Town Council of the respective municipality. She stated that at present, the Town of Cromwell is in the midst of a change from Selectmen to Town Manager, and the public comments regarding the change are favorable. She has an email into Cromwell's Charter Revision Commission seeking more information. Vice Chairman Park requested that Ms. Salvato find out if Cromwell is keeping its Board of Selectmen or if it is switching to a Town Council.

Chairman Miller arrived at 7:10 p.m.

Ms. Salvato also reported on possible changes to Council/Manager from the Towns of Stonington and North Haven. It was noted that North Haven has a much larger population than Brookfield.

5.0 Review draft charter changes.

5.1 Boards and commissions (Joni Park)

Vice Chairman Park passed out a sheet summarizing the relevant sections of the current Charter that would have to be revised to institute the following three changes:

1. Having a nine-member Library Board of Trustees with no alternates;
2. Having a seven-member Police Commission with one alternate; and
3. Combining the Planning and Zoning Commissions into one Board with seven members and three alternates.

It was suggested that page numbers be utilized when the Charter is revised.

The following text changes will be necessary:

- Article III – Delete 7.I and modify 7.G. to read, “Planning and Zoning Commission shall consist of seven regular members, each of whom is elected for a term of four years. At each biennial Town election there shall be elected sufficient members to succeed each member whose term expires.”
- Article VII – to eliminate references to alternates, in 20.T, 25.Y., and 33.GG, and add “Planning/Zoning Commission Alternates”
- ADDENDUM A (Appointed Boards) – the numbering must be corrected; eliminate I; in II, eliminate F, change J (one Police Commission alternate) and eliminate M; and make I “Planning and Zoning”; in III, subsection G, to change “6 electors” to “9 electors”

There was additional discussion regarding the transition related to the merger of the Planning and Zoning Commissions, and current members’ terms of office. It was suggested that Attorney Grogins be consulted as to how this transition is handled, so that the Commission can answer questions from the residents about this topic at a public hearing. Additionally, Ms. Salvato may inquire of the municipalities that she contacts who have recently made the change as to how long it took for the transition to occur in their towns/cities.

5.2 Highlighted language requiring changes in the duties of First Selectman (Mark Labadia).

Commissioner Labadia is not present. Chairman Miller may highlight the relevant areas of the current Charter and email them to the Commission members by next week unless Commissioner Labadia does it first.

Secretary Miles passed out a handout entitled, "Handout "Brookfield's Charter Revision Commission Meeting October 20, 2011" (attached hereto) and reviewed the statutes, charter sections and ordinances from the State of Connecticut, and Towns of Granby, Mansfield, East Hampton, Avon, Cheshire, Brookfield and Ridgefield. She noted that Granby has a Town Manager and a five-member Board of Selectmen. With regard to the duties of the Council of the Town of Mansfield, it was suggested that Brookfield use that model and substitute "Council" with "Board of Selectmen". Secretary Miles also noted that most of the towns she researched had Boards of Selectmen or Councils that met twice a month. She also suggested that the Commission look at the Town of Mansfield's "General Guidelines". Additionally, the language of the Town Manager descriptions of East Hampton, Avon, and Cheshire were reviewed.

There was discussion regarding the authority of the Town Manager to hire and terminate employees. Commissioner Scalzo suggested that Attorney Grogins be consulted with regard to Connecticut General Statutes Section 7-98 and the institution of a "process" for hiring/firing decisions. He further recommended that a Town Manager job description be drafted and given to Attorney Grogins.

Commissioner Scalzo left the meeting at 7:44 p.m. to attend a Planning Commission meeting

Commissioner Jaffe noted the importance of negotiating a contract for a Town Manager. He further stated that when a search firm is hired, that it meet with the Board of Selectmen and town residents to get their thoughts on requirements and priorities for the position.

There was discussion regarding which job description should be drafted first: that of the Town Manager position, or that of the Selectmen. Secretary Miles suggested that the work begin utilizing the information she provided from the Town of Granby.

There was additional discussion regarding the Town Manager position making recommendations on policy to the Board of Selectmen.

It was noted that the duties of the First Selectman are currently listed in Article V. Article IV relates to the authority of the Board of Selectmen. It was suggested that they be revised, and then the description for the Town Manager could be drafted. Commissioners Martone and Dembowski will work on redrafting Articles IV and V before the next meeting on November 17, 2011. It was noted that the November 3, 2011 meeting will be canceled.

5.3 Voter requirements and financial thresholds (Ron Jaffe and Greg Dembowski).

Commissioners Dembowski and Jaffe discussed the Voter Quantity and Financial Threshold information that they sent to the Commission (attached hereto). Chairman Miller asked for

clarification regarding what “town budget” is, and Commissioner Dembowski explained that it is only the Town budget and does not include the Board of Education budget.

Commissioner Dembowski inquired what the “plus month” comment on the chart meant, and Commissioner Jaffe explained that it relates to checks and balances for the voters. Commissioner Dembowski further inquired regarding the change from thirty to forty-five days for Board of Finance action, and it was noted that the change seeks to correct a scheduling problem between meeting dates for the BOS and BOF.

Commissioner Jaffe advised that the changes seek to provide consistency among the voter quantity requirements as well. There was discussion regarding the amounts necessary for petitions, town meetings, and repeals of ordinances.

Commissioner Scalzo returned to the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Commissioner Jaffe added that the proposed changes would improve the balance between the right to petition for change and the population of the Town. Commissioner Dembowski advised that he has shared the proposed changes with the Republican Town Committee (“RTC”), and welcomed its questions, input and comment. There was discussion regarding the rationale for the change in Voter Quantity Requirement #4.

Commissioner Dembowski went on to explain Items #5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, reiterating that the proposed changes seek to make the quantities required more consistent. He offered to go to the RTC with this information and get some feedback.

Commissioner Dembowski then discussed the notes from his conference call between himself, Commissioner Jaffe, and Albert Ilg (“Notes from October 19, 2011 conference call between Ron Jaffe, Greg Dembowski, and Albert Ilg – search consultant contact provided by CCM”; also attached hereto). Mr. Ilg has offered to appear at a CRC meeting. There was discussion regarding the data collected regarding tenure of Town Managers in the State. Commissioner Jaffe explained the contract process for the Superintendent of Schools. The Commission was pleased with the information provided by Mr. Ilg, who recommended doing a national search.

Vice Chairman Park indicated that it would be helpful to know how the candidates for the upcoming municipal elections feel about the change in membership on the Board of Selectmen from three to five.

6.0 Open Discussion.

The following assignments among the members, as discussed above, were noted:
Chairman Miller will highlight the relevant areas of the current Charter and email them to the Commission members;

Commissioners Dembowski and Martone will draft Charter provisions regarding the duties for both the Town Manager and the First Selectmen;

Additionally, Secretary Miles requested that the fellow Commissioners read through her handout, referenced above.

It was noted that the target date for public hearing is January 26, 2012. Chairman Miller will call Attorney Grogins regarding a possible extension of the Commission's time to complete its charge. After the public hearing, the Commission will make its final recommendations to the BOS (also at a public hearing); and it can accept the proposals, reject them in total, or ask the Commission for additional changes. The CRC has the option to say that what it has proposed is its final recommendation. If the BOS is in favor of only five of the nine changes, only those five will go to the voters on the ballot.

7.0 Public Comments (15 minutes).

No one present.

8.0 Adjourn.

Commissioner Scalzo moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 p.m. Commissioner Jaffe seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Next regular meeting to be held on November 17, 2011