

Brookfield Charter Revision Committee
MEETING MINUTES (Approved December 1, 2011)
Thursday November 17, 2011, 7:30 p.m.
Principal's Conference Room, Brookfield High School

Chairman Miller convened the meeting at 7:52 p.m. and established a quorum of members.

Present: Chairman L. Miller, Vice Chairman J. Park, Secretary D. Miles, S. Martone, R. Jaffe, D. Propper, M. Labadia, G. Dembowski

Absent: P. Scalzo

Also Present: Recording Secretary D. Cioffi

1.0 Public Comments (15 minutes).

No one was present.

2.0 Correspondence.

Commissioner Labadia's document entitled "Duties of the First Selectman" and Commissioner Martone's document entitled "Article V, First Selectman" were submitted for the record, and are attached hereto.

3.0 Review and Accept October 20, 2011 Meeting Minutes.

Vice Chairman Park moved to accept the Meeting Minutes of the October 20, 2011. Commissioner Jaffe seconded the motion, and it carried, 6-0-2, with Commissioners Labadia and Propper abstaining.

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

Ms. Salvato was not present.

5.0 Review draft charter changes.

5.1 Boards and commissions (Joni Park)

No new discussion.

5.2 Highlighted language requiring changes in the duties of First Selectman (Mark Labadia). – Commissioner Dembowski noted that if you compare the draft of "Article V, First Selectman" to the current Article V, it does not reference a state statute as the current Article V does. Commissioner Propper pointed out that in Section C5-2B "he/she" should be replaced with "The First Selectman". However, Vice Chairman Park remarked that subsection C contradicts subsection B, and that subsection B should be deleted.

Commissioner Dembowski advised that with the draft of Article V, the Town Manager duties could now be defined. With regard to the appointment of members of the BOS as ex officio

members of Board, it was noted that while the Charter can set the expectation that BOS members will attend Board and Commission meetings, it cannot ensure that it will happen.

Discussion followed regarding the procedure for drafting and tracking changes in the draft that will go to the Town Attorney. Commissioner Dembowski indicated he would insert the comments related to Commissioner Martone's document, as well as the drafts previously received from Vice Chairman Park, Secretary Miles, and Commissioner Labadia and Dembowski.

Commissioner Jaffe returned the discussion to Section C5-1 of the "Article V, First Selectman" document. He pointed out that "absence" is not defined. Commissioner Propper suggested that when the draft is sent to Town Counsel Grogins he be asked to evaluate the sufficiency of the definitions of terms and/or language in the Charter.

Commissioners discussed who would run the Town in the absence of the First Selectman, the various circumstances (illness, incapacitation, vacation, etc.) that might result in his/her absence, and the length of absences. It was suggested that the towns with town managers be consulted as to how they address the absence of the Town Manager.

Brief discussion ensued regarding having a full-time First Selectman as well as a Town Manager, and the difficulty of getting voter support for that arrangement. It was suggested that the BOS have a contingency plan to hire an interim Town Manager in the event of a long-term absence. Commissioner Jaffe noted that the current Charter addresses the chain of command if the First Selectman is absent. Secretary Miles will research how other towns with Town Managers handle the transition in an absence.

Secretary Miles noted that it is important to communicate to residents that what is being proposed is a "Board of Selectmen/Town Manager with a Town Meeting" form of government.

5.3 Proposed duties of Town Manager (Dottie Miles)

See below.

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

See below.

5.5 "Tasks and Targets" for drafting changes to show additions and deletions. Subsequent review by town counsel.

It was proposed that Commission members take portions of the remaining sections of the Charter for revision. Commissioner Dembowski offered to take the previously discussed document regarding threshold limits to the Brookfield Republican Town Committee for its information.

Secretary Miles and Commissioner Labadia will begin looking at the duties that will be retained by the First Selectman, and those that will become those of the Town Manager. Secretary Miles indicated that a previously submitted document from Commissioner Dembowski was helpful to her regarding the “Duties of First Selectman”

The Commissioner members requested that Commissioner Dembowski send them the current Charter as a word document.

Commissioner Propper will look at drafting the language for the advisory question.

Vice Chairman Park has reviewed and revised the land use sections, and those that relate to appointed boards, membership and addendums.

It was also recommended that Commission members review past meeting minutes for suggested language for the Charter.

Commissioner Propper will send Commissioner Dembowski the section of the Charter regarding the election of the First Selectman and the handling of the loser of that position. Additionally, it was pointed out that the language regarding salary for the Selectmen be removed from the Charter. It was also suggested that in the drafting of the document, that the proposed number of Selectmen be changed to five, where three are currently discussed; and to four, if the section(s) involve discussion of under-Selectmen (as in Article IV).

Vice Chairman Park will take care of the Land Use Commission sections, as well as the Library Board and Police Commission.

With regard to the section related to the role of the Treasurer, a discussion regarding the salary being at the discretion of the Board of Selectmen was recalled.

Commissioner Labadia will handle the language about the succession of the First Selectman.

It was further noted that the Charter is on the Town website as a searchable document, to facilitate locating sections related to the above topics.

6.0 Target date for public hearing is January 26, 2012. Develop presentation and other communications materials.

Chairman Miller and Commissioner Martone will begin working on a presentation about the proposed Charter revisions. There was discussion regarding drafting press releases about the public hearing and what the Commission has been charged with as well as its progress to date. Chairman Miller will also contact newly elected Selectman G. Walker and invite him to attend CRC meeting(s). Suggested venues for the press release include: *The News-Times*, *The Patch*, and *The Housatonic Times*. Commissioner Labadia reminded the Commission that the public

should also be advised about what is *not* being changed. Chairman Miller will have a draft of the press release ready for review at the December 1, 2011 meeting.

It was noted that the Legal Notice for the Public Hearing must be filed thirty days prior to the hearing date.

7.0 Open Discussion.

None.

8.0 Public Comments (15 minutes).

No one present.

9.0 Adjourn

Vice Chairman Park moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. Commissioner Propper seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

*****Next regular meeting to be held December 1, 2011*****