

# **TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION**

**Regular Meeting  
Monday, September 24, 2018  
Scout Hall, 28 Abbe Road, East Windsor, CT.**

## **Commission Members**

**Co-Chairman:** John Matthews, Keith Yagaloff

**Members:** Don Arcari, Cher Balch, Betsy Burns, William Loos, John Mazza,  
Rachel Safford, Charlie Szymanski, Bonnie Yosky

## **MEETING MINUTES**

*\*\*\* These Minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting\*\*\**

### **1. TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:**

Co-Chairman Matthews called the Meeting to Order at 7:03 p.m. in Meeting Room 2, Scout Hall, 28 Abbe Road, East Windsor, CT.

### **2. ATTENDANCE:**

**Present:** John Matthews, Co-Chairman; Keith Yagaloff, Co-Chairman; Don Arcari (arrived at 8:06 due to work commitments), Cher Balch, Betsy Burns; John Mazza, Rachel Safford.

**Absent:** William Loos, Charlie Szymanski, and Bonnie Yosky

**GUESTS:** Paul Anderson

**Press:** No one from the Press was present.

### **3. AGENDA APPROVAL/ADDED AGENDA ITEMS:**

**MOTION:** To ADD under CORRESPONDENCE, Discussion of resident survey.

Burns moved/Mazza seconded/**DISCUSSION:** None

**VOTE:** In Favor: Unanimous  
(Matthews/Yagaloff/Balch/Burns/Mazza/Safford)

### **4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES/A. September 10, 2018:**

**MOTION:** To ACCEPT the Minutes of the Charter Revision Commission dated September 10, 2018 with the following amendments:

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**Page 3, CORRESPONDENCE, second paragraph: “Mr. Arcari arrived at 7:55 p.m. (due to work commitments).”**

**Page 4, ADJOURNMENT, “~~Balch moved/Loos seconded~~ (Yagaloff moved/Burns seconded.....)”**

**Burns moved/Yagaloff seconded/**

**VOTE:        In Favor:        Matthews/Yagaloff/Arcari/Burns/Mazza/Safford  
              Opposed:        No one  
              Abstained:       Balch**

- 5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** *The public is encouraged to provide their thoughts as succinctly as possible. CRC members will not comment on the merits of an idea at this meeting, but may ask questions to clarify the proposal. A time limit may be imposed.*

**Paul Anderson, 89 Main Street:** Mr. Anderson submitted Legal Notices posted by Ellington and Tolland as examples of notification of Charter Public Hearings.

Mr. Anderson also proposed the following Charter changes:

- 1) Unlimited votes/referendums until the budget passes:** Mr. Anderson recalled the current budget process limits voting to three referendums, with the budget being set at a 2% default increase after completion of the third vote. Mr. Anderson would propose unlimited referendums until the budget passes; Mr. Anderson suggested the Board of Finance (BOF) would do what they need to do to make the budget passable.

Mr. Yagaloff suggested if the BOF doesn't make modifications to move the budget amount downward it forces multiple referendums to wear people down. Mr. Anderson proposed holding a Public Hearing after the second failed referendum. Mr. Anderson felt it's inappropriate to think the budget should always go down; maybe it needs to be higher. The obligation is on the BOF to make the number passable.

- 2. Set term limits on elected officials:** Mr. Anderson suggested every elected official should have a limited time to serve; their job is to do the job rather than making choices to look good to get elected. We have a \$38 million corporation which is run by a popularity contest. Mr. Anderson felt there should be more people serving. He suggested “term limit” is loose terminology; maybe an official could run again after a specified time period.

Mr. Mazza felt the two year term for the Selectmen isn't enough time to know the position; he felt we would need to have some positions longer to know how it works. Mr. Anderson felt that was how we got to a four year term for the First Selectman. Mr. Anderson clarified he wasn't looking at individuals; he was

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introducing the concept for discussion. He didn't have a number to offer but he didn't feel anyone should serve for more than three terms.

The Commissioners briefly discussed a paid stipend for the Selectmen. Mr. Anderson felt not; the Commission concurred.

3. **Professional Manager:** Mr. Anderson reported he is in favor of a professional manager. We're dealing with a major corporation and a huge amount of value, both monetary and property. Mr. Anderson felt a professional manager is much better for those employed by the Town; employees are concerned for their jobs at the turnover of management. Mr. Anderson suggested we could still have a Board of Selectmen (BOS) but we would have the professional manager who would offer consistency.

6. **HOUSEKEEPING:**

No discussion this evening.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE AND LOCAL NEWS/Discussion of resident survey:**

Ms. Safford provided the Commissioners with a draft resident survey. The Commission's four objectives are introduced at the top; residents are then asked to provide their opinions regarding a dozen questions – some open ended, some not, some are multiple choice. The Commission reviewed the survey; they discussed the following two questions:

- ***#2 The East Windsor Town Government is a traditional small town form of government utilizing a Town Meeting structure. If you could change/add something to enhance its governing effectiveness, what would it be?*** The Commission suggested adding a fourth choice - "To ensure that all Boards/Commission have accurate information at the time of making decisions."
- ***#12 In our Charter today, all appropriations valued at over a million dollars go to referendum rather than the Town Meeting vote. Items less than one million dollars (outside of the budget cycle) are voted on in Town Meeting. Would you change this threshold?*** Mr. Matthews recalled that the Charter was silent on the \$1 million limit, except when related to bonding. He suggested a fourth survey choice – "If your choice is to set a threshold what would that amount be?"

Mr. Yagaloff liked the concept as it's non-confrontational. The goal of the survey is to get more public participation; resident attendance at CRC Meetings is low.

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The Commission considered how to promote the survey. Ms. Saffard reported she's found a source that will post an online survey free of charge. The Commission suggested dropping hard copies at the Broad Brook Library, the Warehouse Point Library, the Town Hall, the Town Hall Annex, and the Senior Center. Collection boxes could be left at the same locations.

**MOTION: To make the revisions discussed and formalize the survey and promote it through the entities named.**

**Burns moved/Balch seconded/DISCUSSION:** Ms. Burns congratulated Ms. Saffard on her preparation of the survey; the Commissioners shared Ms. Burns' remarks. Mr. Matthews questioned if the survey should include a completion date? The Commission was split on a completion date; Mr. Yagaloff felt people will participate if they choose. Ms. Burns asked if the survey could be completed by the end of October as she'd like to present it to seniors at the monthly birthday party. The Commission indicated the completion date of the survey should be October 31<sup>st</sup>.

**VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous  
(Matthews/Yagaloff/Balch/Burns/Mazza/Safford)**

**8. OLD BUSINESS/A. Review Line Item Budget Referendum proposal:**

Mr. Matthews referenced page four and five of the Commission's August 27<sup>th</sup> minutes regarding discussion of line item vote on larger ticket budget items.

Mr. Matthews opened discussion on the 2% default budget increase. He suggested many people are unhappy with the automatic 2% increase. They felt if the BOF didn't propose a passable budget there shouldn't be an increase. In Mr. Matthews scenario there would be the three referendums. Some line items would pass at the first referendum and receive the proposed amount. Those that fail at the first referendum would go on to the second referendum and the scenario would be repeated. Those items that fail to pass at the third referendum would not receive the 2% default increase. In years that are slow the Town doesn't layoff people but there would be years without increases.

Ms. Saffard didn't like the line item vote; she has a problem just going automatically to zero as she felt that makes it more divisive. Ms. Burns recalled that groups that benefit from budget increases usually get out and vote.

Mr. Yagaloff suggested that currently, with regard to the allocating the 2%, the public has no say regarding the priorities. The BOF can decide the priorities; there's nothing in the Charter that requires them to allocate the 2% across the board. He also felt with the line item budget there will be two or three items the public loves; those will be chosen and the others will drop down to the 2%. Mr. Yagaloff recalled Mr. Anderson's proposal for dropping the cap; if the casino comes in then we won't have to worry about a default.

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Mr. Yagaloff cited discussion at the BOS's meeting regarding the Casino Impact Fund Ordinance. The BOF said they had created the fund. Mr. Yagaloff suggested the ordinance is the people's vote on the expenditures. There was also discussion on line item votes for the casino money; some wanted professionals to make those decisions, others wanted the boards and commissions – so that's an indication that a Town Meeting should decide how the money is spent. There is a difference of opinion.

Mr. Mazza felt if people have to look at line items they won't vote. Ms. Safford indicated she didn't want to figure out if a department needs money or not; she felt the people who have been elected should make those decisions. She felt that with line item budgets she would need to do more research to decide how to vote. Mr. Mazza felt this is where a professional administrator would be beneficial. He would make presentations to the Boards as he would have the expertise. Mr. Yagaloff noted the casino will bring the Town \$3 million before opening and an additional \$5 ½ million per year for the first five years. Mr. Yagaloff cited the Board of Education has said they don't want the money up front, but, as an example, if he wanted to enhance the school system—do you want the chance to vote on that if you have \$8 ½ million available? Ms. Safford felt the elected officials should make that decision. Ms. Burns felt if you don't have a professional administrator it becomes political; she felt the Town needs the town administrator to guide the new people coming in what the lay of the land is. The Town needs that position for the community.

Discussion continued regarding the diverse philosophies of the Boards. Mr. Matthews questioned how the Town would manage the situation of disagreement with the town manager? Mr. Mazza felt the responsibility for the town administrator rests with the BOS. Ms. Safford felt a town manager carried more weight as to what the boards and commissions do; the town manager oversees the departments, handles the human resources issues, they provide the comparative information that the departments need. This would leave more time for the BOS to set priorities; the BOF should be collaborative with the BOS.

Mr. Arcari arrived at 8:06 p.m. (Mr. Arcari works a private job prior to joining the Charter Revision Commission.)

Mr. Mazza felt the town administrator would run everything; as an example, there would be no board for the Police Commission. Ms. Safford didn't like one person running everything; it's too limited; it concentrates the power. She felt that government could be made more efficient without losing the boards and commission as they are today. Mrs. Balch felt the Town needs someone with expertise running a \$38 million corporation. Mr. Arcari suggested it's difficult and expensive to find people with expertise. Mr. Yagaloff felt the Town has boards and commissions that are knowledgeable.

Mr. Arcari wanted to acknowledge that he's in favor of the line item budgets. The voter can choose what they want to fund.

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Mr. Yagaloff suggested that under the proposed system the BOS can't move to the next step on projects without receiving bid information. They' can't vote on CIP projects unless they've been given the work statements, which have been signed off by the CFO. Mr. Yagaloff felt it gets to the issue of trusting the boards and commissions who must be more accountable and more transparent.

Discussion continued. Mr. Arcari indicted his issue is controlling spending, and the line item budget is a way to do that.

There was no consensus tonight regarding moving the line item budget to a Charter change.

**B. 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman Prior Correspondence:**

Mr. Matthews opened discussion of prior correspondence from First Selectman Maynard regarding three proposals for Charter changes:

- 1. The Charter currently references a Treasurer as the Town's financial professional. First Selectman Maynard suggested the Charter should now reference the position as Chief Financial Officer.**

Mr. Matthews and Mr. Yagaloff felt the Commission had concurred with a change to a CFO, with related responsibilities.

- 2. Debt service shouldn't be limited by a budget referendum default.**

Mr. Matthews cited First Selectman Maynard's concern that the 2% budget default hinders the Town when bonding; purchasers of the bonds would be concerned the Town would not have the ability to commit to the full value of the bond if necessary. Discussion followed. Mr. Mazza felt the debt service was already considered in the budget at its full value. Mr. Yagaloff needed more information.

- 3. The BOS should, within a reasonable time, provide the First Selectman with a Town Attorney with whom they can work.**

Mr. Yagaloff cites that the current Charter says the BOS hires the Town Attorney. Mr. Matthews indicated he's seen charters in which the term of the Town Attorney coordinates with the term of the Selectmen; when a new Board comes in they could hire another person if they choose.

The consensus of the Commission was that the term of the Town Attorney be consistent with the terms of the BOS.

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**C. Review/Discuss Remaining Charges from BOS (See Attachment A):**

- 1. Changes to the charter should be separated so residents can vote on the changes separately in a referendum.....**

Mr. Matthews referenced the example of Legal Notices provided by Mr. Anderson regarding presentation of the Charter change questions.

- 2. Examine the budget default:**

See earlier discussion under Item 8. **OLD BUSINESS/A. Review Line Item Budget Referendum proposal.**

- 2.1 Should the number of budget referendums be limited?**

Mr. Matthews reported the Town Clerk has said the decision on the budget must be made by June 15<sup>th</sup> to be able to set the mill rate in time to issue correct real estate and personal property tax bills effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Matthews felt the current referendum schedule should be maintained. Mr. Mazza felt Mr. Anderson's suggestion for unlimited referendums mandates departments to scrutinize their budgets.

Discussion continued regarding the impact of revising the number of referendums. The consensus of the Commission was there was no interest in reducing the number of referendums to two.

- 2.2 If the number of budget referendums is limited, what should the number be?**

The Commission tabled discussion on this item.

- 2.3 If the number of budget referendums is limited, what should the default be?**

Mr. Yagaloff felt the money should be allocated with the line items as presented; some departments get more while some get less.

- 2.4 Clarify the method of allocating default budget money across departments.**

Discussion continuing.

- 3. Address ambiguities in the Charter – (see Attachment A):**

Mr. Matthews suggested these proposals are technical changes.



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- 4. Consider a Charter provision for a position that will research, organize, save money and make available information that is of value to the Town:**

Mr. Matthews felt the Commission is narrowing in on defining what the Town needs, including: increased information on the projects from departments, who would collect that data, who would that employee report to? The Commission continues to define the requirements of the role of the finance director; it would be up to the BOS to add staff.

- 5. Revise/clarify requirements for budget narratives through the budget process describing requests, the reasons for budget increases and decreases and the reasons for cutting and increasing requests:**

Mr. Matthews felt if the departments haven't given a justification for their budget requests then they wouldn't be eligible for an increase. Mr. Yagaloff felt the BOS and the BOF should not vote on the department budget unless they have the written justification. Mr. Mazza felt there needs to be some increase over the previous year's budget.

**D. Review CFO position and list of responsibilities:**

Minor discussion under other Agenda items.

- 9. NEW BUSINESS/A. Review Ordinance origination/change process:**

No discussion this evening.

- 10. 2<sup>ND</sup> PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

No further public input.

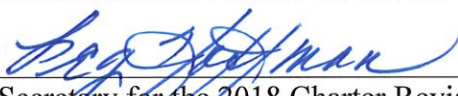
- 11. SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING AGENDA:**

Continue discussing Agenda items from previous CRC Meetings.

- 12. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION: To ADJOURN this Meeting at 9:01 p.m.**

**Safford moved/Burns seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous**

Respectfully submitted,   
Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary for the 2018 Charter Revision Commission  
**Attachment A: Charges from BOS**



# *Charter Revision Commission 9/24/2018* *Attachment A*

## **Charter Revision Commission charge from BOS May 17, 2018**

1. The changes to the charter should be separated so residents can vote on the changes separately in a referendum and if one change is defeated, the defeat change will not affect other changes that pass the referendum vote.
2. Examine the budget default. Consider:
  1. Should the number of budget referendums be limited?
  2. If the number of budget referendums is limited, what should the number of referendums be?
  3. If the number of budget referendums is limited, what should the default be?
  4. Clarify the method of allocating default budget money across departments.
3. Address existing ambiguities in the Charter as follows: utilize Municode system for maintaining Charter and Ordinances online; identify specific state statutes applicable to Charter provisions; identify specific state statutes for the establishment of boards and commissions; codification of all ordinances.
4. Consider a Charter provision for a position that will research, organize, save and make available information that is of value to the Town.
5. Revise/clarify requirements for budget narratives throughout the budget process describing, requests, the reasons for budget increases and decreases and the reasons for cutting and increasing requests. Also, consider line item approval by the voters of the budget that goes to referendum.
6. Clarify the Town Attorney selection process and term of service.
7. Consider Charter provisions for a Shared Services Commission
8. Reduce the number of signatures required for a petitioning referendum.
9. Clarify the Town's procurement, purchasing, and external department operations audit procedures.

