

TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
Monday, October 29, 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 7:04 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, William Loos, John Mazza arrived at 7:15 p.m., Rachel Safford, Charlie Szymanski, and Bonnie Yosky

Absent: Cher Balch, and Betsy Burns

GUESTS: Paul Anderson, Andy Hoffman, Bob Leach.

Press: No one from the press was present.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL/ADDED AGENDA ITEMS:

MOTION: To APPROVE the Agenda for the October 29th Charter Revision Commission Meeting as presented.

Yagaloff moved/Szymanski seconded/**DISCUSSION:** None.

VOTE: In Favor: Matthews/Yagaloff/Arcari/Loos/Safford/
Szymanski/Yosky
(No one opposed/No Abstentions)

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES/A. October 15, 2018:

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MOTION: To ACCEPT the Minutes of the Charter Revision Commission Regular Meeting dated October 15, 2018 as presented.

Yosky moved/Arcari seconded/

VOTE: In Favor: Matthews/Yagaloff/Arcari/Szymanski/Yosky
Opposed: No one
Abstained: Loos/Safford

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: Mr. Anderson reported he's received a lot of feedback that the resident survey should be mailed out. Many people have said they don't use computers, or don't visit the Town Hall to pick up paper copies.

Mr. Anderson also wanted to discuss the number of Selectman. While he doesn't have a problem with the five member Board he felt the Board should include one or two alternate members. He noted the Board of Finance has alternate members; he felt the Board of Selectmen should as well. Co-Chairman Matthews indicated the Connecticut General Statutes allows alternates for the Board of Finance. Mrs. Yosky volunteered to call the State to discuss the option of alternates for the Board of Selectmen.

Bob Leach: Mr. Leach wanted to congratulate Ms. Safford for her work on the survey. Mr. Leach questioned if he was correct in understanding that the Commission intended to do a mailed survey as well? Co-Chairman Yagaloff indicated the Commission had intended to send out a more detailed survey via mail later.

6. **HOUSEKEEPING:**

The Commission had, in the past, discussed the lack of public participation at meetings, and had considered if meeting at Scout Hall rather than the Town Hall had any impact on attendance. The Recording Secretary advised the Commission of the availability of the Town Hall Meeting on the second and fourth Wednesday evenings in the coming year. The Commission deferred any decision until discussion with the members absent this evening.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE AND LOCAL NEWS:**

Mr. Mazza joined the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Mr. Loos noted a recent Journal Inquirer article which discussed the Charter questions Somers residents would be considering at the November election. Co-Chairman

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Matthews noted Mr. Arcari had also provided a legal notice for the questions being presented to voters in Ellington.

8. OLD BUSINESS/A. Review Safford Survey Status:

Ms. Safford reported that prior to this meeting 104 responses have been received to the online survey; Mr. Mazza has just presented her with the first returned paper copy. Co-Chairman Matthews questioned how people were notified of the online survey? Ms. Safford indicated she had appeared at the October 4th Board of Selectmen Meeting and made a presentation regarding the survey, and had posted on various social media sites. Discussion followed regarding the availability of paper copies. Mrs. Yosky volunteered to drop copies off at the Senior Center, Park Hill and Spring Village; Mr. Anderson indicated he'll take copies to the Broad Brook Library.

The Commission discussed the process and the cost of sending mailings to each household. Mr. Hoffman recalled the 250th Anniversary Committee had prepared a mailing which was sent to 6,000 or more households at an approximate cost of \$1600. Co-Chairman Matthews suggested Town Treasurer O'Toole had sent a household mailing prior to the 2018 Budget referendums; he indicated she worked with Allied Community Resources to prepare that mailing. The Commission felt a large segment of the public either didn't use the internet, or didn't visit the Town Hall or other locations to pick up a paper copy. The Commission felt that a significant amount of residents would miss the opportunity to voice their opinions without a household mailing.

MOTION: To request that the Board of Selectmen fund, in an amount not to exceed \$1800, a mailing of one resident survey per household, and to make the funding available as soon as possible to enable the results to be included in the November 20th deadline of the online survey.

Yagaloff moved/Loos seconded/

DISCUSSION: The Commission will discuss with Town Treasurer O'Toole the process used for the mailing sent prior to the 2018 budget referendums.

**VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (Matthews/Yagaloff/Arcari/Mazza/Loos/Safford/Szymanski/Yosky)
(No one opposed/No abstentions).**

9. NEW BUSINESS/A. Brainstorm for additional changes, Round Two:

Co-Chairman Matthews questioned CRC Members regarding additional issues they would like to consider for change. He requested that we go around the table and that each member be given an uninterrupted opportunity to add his//her concerns/thoughts.

Co-Chairman Yagaloff would like to consider additional topics after results come in for the Somers and Ellington Charter questions.

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Mr. Arcari liked the proposal for the line item votes during the referendums, and also liked increasing the Board of Selectmen to seven, which would include alternates.

Mrs. Yosky would like to review putting checks and balances on the Police Commission authority, define/clarify the Town Attorney selection/term process, and the new Board of Selectmen should pick their Town Attorney.

Mr. Mazza would like to see the Board of Selectmen include two alternate members who could assist the other members so they could come more prepared. Mr. Mazza suggested the alternate would sit in any time one of the Selectmen is absent, even if they have a quorum; the alternates would only vote when they're seated. Mr. Mazza would also assign work to the alternates

Mr. Mazza noted Manchester is going to one fire department. Mr. Szymanski noted he and Mr. Hoffman are working with the fire departments in East Windsor. He also clarified that the situation in Manchester is that they are seeking a name change for one of the departments. Mr. Arcari cited Manchester is in the same situation as East Windsor; the 8th Utilities is a district while the others are departments.

Ms. Safford had no comments regarding additional brainstorming items.

Mr. Szymanski reported he and Mr. Hoffman have been working on improving the annual report. Currently the Charter assigns responsibility for the annual report to the Board of Finance. Mr. Szymanski reported the Chairman of the Board of Finance has indicated to him that she would like the preparation of the annual report returned to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Szymanski also felt the Town should undertake operational audits of the various departments. Maybe the first year the audit would concentrate on the department with the largest funding, while the second year the audit would concentrate on the next highest funded department. On the third year the audit could be performed on the smaller departments. The audits would be performed by an independent entity. Mr. Szymanski suggested the audits would review operation compliance of each department, and compare the status of actual expenditures to authorized and projected expenses. Mr. Szymanski felt fuel use should be allocated to each department rather than shown collectively under the DPW. Mr. Szymanski felt the audits would result in a savings of 5 to 10% in the first year following the audits. Discussion followed regarding the definition of "operational audit"; would it be defined in the Charter or by ordinance? Mr. Hoffman felt it's important for departments to meet on a monthly basis to compare progress vs. spending and note the milestones accomplished. Co-Chairman Matthews compared the monthly meeting to progress reports. Mr. Anderson recalled that in the past cash was passed from departments; now the cash goes directly to the Treasurer. Co-Chairman Yagaloff felt the sealed bid process should be revised to require that all sealed bids should be received in the First Selectmen's Office and should be opened in Town

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Hall by the First Selectman. The First Selectmen's Office should also maintain records of the bid documentation.

Mr. Mazza also expressed disappointment at the audio system in the Meeting Room. He cited his recent attendance at a Board of Selectmen's Meeting; it was extremely difficult to hear people making presentations. Individuals presenting information to the Board sit in front of the Selectmen, who are lined up on one side of the table, while the presenter sits on the other side with their back to the audience. Mr. Mazza felt the Board members and the individual making presentations should have microphones when speaking; members of the audience should go to a podium with its own microphone to speak.

Mr. Loos indicated he's currently sitting on the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) Committee; he questioned where the 3% CIP budget figure is set? Mr. Loos indicated he didn't see 3% referenced in the Charter, and it's not set by ordinance. Mr. Leach, who is also a CIP member, suggested they recently determined the 3% is an arbitrary figure. Mr. Loos noted the CIP Committee has received numerous funding requests; some of those requests will go through the budget process. Discussion continued regarding supplemental appropriations vs. bonding vs. CIP requests. Mr. Leach indicated the supplemental appropriation process is Statute driven. Co-Chairman Yagaloff recalled the Commission is considering setting a funding limit which would trigger passage through a referendum. Mr. Loos indicated he'd like to look at the CIP budget procedures; he questioned how much should be funded through the CIP process vs. bonding.

NEW BUSINESS/B. Pension Board Authority changes:

Co-Chairman Matthews felt the Commission should review the responsibilities of the Pension Board. He suggested that currently five people determine the pension plans for hundreds of employees which commits the Town to significant expense for dozens of years; the Pension Board then manages the fund. Co-Chairman Matthews suggested the Pension Board should only be responsible for management of the fund while the legislative body of the Town should determine the plans chosen. He cited a pension plan for the Police Department negotiated by the Pension Board which changed the pensions for the Police Department. Co-Chairman Matthews noted the Chairman of the Pension Board signed the plan without authority from the Charter, as the First Selectman did not; he questioned if that action was consistent with the Charter?

Co-Chairman Matthews noted that in Ellington they can rescind decisions made by the Board of Selectmen. He referenced two East Windsor ordinances related to the Pension Board, noting Ordinance 70-1 established that the Pension Board has the authority to establish a negotiated plan; Ordinance 11-1 amended the original ordinance to make the Pension Board responsible for the fund. Co-Chairman Matthews suggested the ordinance amendment should have replaced 70-1 but erroneously added to it. This made it inconsistent with the Charter Revision of 2009 and consequently should be void. Mr. Anderson noted that with the WPCA (Water Pollution Control Authority) they assign a

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negotiating committee to negotiate with the union but the WPCA and the union must both sign off on the contract, which requires an officer (1st Selectman) to sign off rather than a member of the committee. Mr. Anderson noted if the contract isn't signed then it goes to arbitration. Co-Chairman Matthews noted that a Town can use their own plan, or use the State plan, which includes a cost-of-living clause. Discussion followed comparing components, and the cost, of town plans vs. the State plan.

NEW BUSINESS/C. Discuss changes from Item a. as time permits:

No additional discussion this evening.

10. 2ND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Bob Leach: Mr. Leach said much of the stuff the Commission was discussing is pretty well set in the Connecticut General Statutes. Regarding the daily cost vs. expenditure for department budgets that information should be available in the Treasurer's Office and is public information.

Regarding the CIP, Mr. Leach said the acquisition of quotes isn't within the authority of the CIP Committee. As far as a long term financial plan, Mr. Leach said that doesn't exist. Co-Chairman Yagaloff noted the Commission had discussed adding a Chief Financial Officer or Town Manager position; part of those job requirements would be to set benchmarks. He also noted that part of the reason for the discussion of quotes or bids was when CIP projects or supplemental appropriations came to the Board of Selectmen to pass on to Town Meeting people asked about quotes for the projects. Co-Chairman Yagaloff suggested that requiring bids in the Charter would improve the flow of information to the Town Meeting. Co-Chairman Matthews also suggested it would enable people to have confidence in the value of the projects as well.

11. SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING AGENDA:

Continue to work on current brainstorming list.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

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

Safford moved/Yosky seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary for the 2018 Charter Revision Commission