

**Charter Commission Meeting Minutes  
April 12, 2010**

**Meeting was held in the Moose Hill Council Chambers. 268B Mammoth Road, Londonderry.**

**In Attendance:**

Chairman Brian Farmer, Vice-Chair Cris Navarro, Secretary Lara McIntyre, Commissioners Al Baldasaro, Marty Bove, Chris Paul, Deb Paul, Kathy Wagner, Steve Young

**Absent:**

None

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Farmer at 7:07pm.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Dale Larie, a Boy Scout with Troop 1910, who is working on his Communication and Citizenship of the Community badges. Chairman Farmer followed the Pledge with a moment of silence for the men & women serving in our military both at home and abroad.

**Old Business:**

Discussion of Adoption of Rules for Charter Commission Meetings. Chairman Farmer could not find the briefer set of rules that he thought he had. Commission agrees to keep the format of the meetings civil, have the Chair run the meeting, have the Vice-Chair keep an eye on members who may want to bring something up and that a motion can be made to overrule the Chair if need be.

**Public Hearing:**

Commissioner Bove makes a motion to open the public hearing. Motion seconded by Commissioner Baldasaro. **Motion to open hearing passed 9-0 at 7:19pm.**

Pauline Caron, 369 Mammoth Road, asks if someone from the Commission could explain how things will change if SB2 is adopted. Chairman Farmer explains that if the Commission makes a recommendation to make a change, and if the voters adopt it in March 2011, it will do away with the Saturday Town Meeting. The Budgetary Town Meeting will be replaced by the Deliberative Session, which will occur before the Town Meeting on Tuesdays. The Budget Committee will still serve as an advisory committee like they currently do. The change, if adopted, would not occur until Spring 2012. Ms. Caron asks if part of the charter will be deleted? Chairman Farmer replies that we'd just be making changes to the charter, not deleting.

Martin Srugis, 17 Wimbledon Drive, says that if you can get more people to vote on budget issues, then the official ballot is the way to go. He questions the quorum – if it is too low, it would be just like town meeting with a small number making changes to the budget, but if too high, people may be discouraged

to attend. Commissioner Baldasaro explains that the deliberative session will be much like the town meeting, but makes the point that it will be done before it goes to the voters, and that the voters will have the chance to vote for it.

Jay Hooley, 25 Yellowstone Drive, speaks in favor of SB2. He says a majority of people do want change, according to how the vote went to establishing the Charter Commission in the first place. Mr. Hooley says the Commission should strongly consider some type of quorum.

John Curran, 6 Faye Lane, echoes his support for SB2. He said as a history major in college, he's sad to see Town Meeting go, but that this is the way towns of our size are going. He did some research on NPR, looking at both sides of the issue. Mr. Curran asks the Commission to consider the cost - maybe it's more cost effective to have all of the voting done on one day (ballots are already being printed for Tuesday), as opposed to having to pay staff to attend the Saturday budgetary meeting. With 3000 voters coming on Tuesday election vs. 300 who came out for the Saturday meeting, Mr. Curran believes you should give more people the opportunity to have a voice in town government.

Tom Freda, 30 Buckingham Drive, urges the Commission to adopt SB2. He says the votes on the past Tuesday election made it clear it's what the voters want.

Reed Page Clark, 79 Stonehenge Road, doesn't believe going into a booth, not having heard both sides of the issue, is the way to go. He is worried about uninformed people going into a booth and casting a vote. He reminds that the Commission that, although only 318 voters were at the Saturday town meeting, \$142,000 was taken out of the budget after much discussion out of the \$25 million budget. Mr. Clark says it is necessary to express your views, remembers a time when they used to have 1500-2000 people at both town meetings.

Pauline Caron, 369 Mammoth Road, asks if the Commission knew how many towns went SB2. Commissioner Baldasaro says that after SB2 passed in 1995 and as of February 2009, 65 towns have adopted SB2. He says that only 3 towns went SB2 and then changed back to town meeting. Chairman Farmer also mentions that there have been numerous school systems that have also changed to SB2.

Commissioner Bove makes motion to close the public meeting. Commissioner D. Paul seconds. **Motion passed 9-0.**

### **Charter Commission Discussion**

The Commission discusses different topics they would like to see addressed in future meetings. Commissioner Young recommends having Sue Hickey & Peter Curro come in to give information on a default budget, what makes it up, how it can be used, modified, etc. Commissioner Bove asks how the budget will be voted upon – will it be all in one lump sum, or individually voted upon. Chairman Farmer & Commissioner Wagner suggest having Dave Caron & Nate Greenberg come in as well to discuss the difference between an approved budget versus a default budget. Commissioner Baldasaro asks if the Commission could get someone from the DRA and/or Secretary of State's office to come in to talk about how SB2 has affected towns on the state level.

Chairman Farmer reminds the Commission that a draft report is due August 26, final report on October 26. He also reminds the Commission that a minority report is an option as well if the Commission is not in complete agreement. Chairman Farmer says that that the Commission will need to talk about the

quorum issue and also the cost of town meeting. Commissioner C. Paul asks if the Commission can discuss how the deliberative session will work.

Chairman Farmer sees the need for more meetings and at least one more hearing – probably between the draft and final report. Commissioners are in agreement. Vice-Chair Navarro says the Commission should have another hearing before the draft comes out, possibly in July. Reed Page Clark, 79 Stonehenge Road, asks if there was a lot of discussion / promotion for this hearing. Chairman Farmer says it was well advertised and the word went out. Mr. Clark thinks that people did not know enough about what was going to take place during the hearing.

### **Schedule of Meetings**

Chairman Farmer asks Commissioners if Mondays work for everyone. Vice-Chair Navarro says the Commission only as three months and suggests meeting every other week. The Commissioners agree. Next meetings will be April 26, May 10 and May 24. Commissioner Wagner says that the meetings should remain open and that the public are welcome to make comments. Commissioner Bove points out that the Commission will only have eight meetings until August 9<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Wagner says the Commission should have a goal of having the report drafted by August 9<sup>th</sup> so any further changes can be made by August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Wagner makes motion to adopt minutes from March 29, 2010 meeting. Motion seconded by Vice-Chair Navarro. **Motion passed 7-0 (Commissioners Baldasaro & Bove abstained).**

### **Other Business**

None

Commissioner Wagner makes a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded by Commissioner Baldasaro. **Motion to adjourn passed 9-0 at 8:47pm.**

**Next Meeting: Monday, April 26, 2010 at 7:00pm.**