

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

The Charter Revision Commission held a meeting on Tuesday April 21, 2015 in the Court Room at Edmond Town Hall, 45 Main Street, Newtown, CT. Chairman Jeff Capeci called the meeting to order at 7:40pm.

Present: Kevin Burns, Jeffery Capeci, Tom Long, Dan Wiedemann, Eric Paradis, James Ritchie, Deborra Zukowski, George Guidera, Bob Hall

Absent: Jim Ritchie

VOTER COMMENTS: NONE

MINUTES: Dan Weidemann moved to accept the minutes from the 4/1/15 meeting as presented Kevin Burns seconded, motion unanimously approved.

COMMUNICATIONS – Mr. Capeci has spoken with Mr. Geckle of the CH Booth Library board of trustees and invited him and other members of the board to come to one of the next three meetings. Mr. Capeci also reached out the John Voket of The Bee to get all the news articles related to the 2007 charter revision (Attachment A). Mr. Capeci also provided a copy of the 2008 ballot for review (Attachment B).

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Charter Chapters 2,3 and 4 Elections and Elective Offices; Board of Selectman; Appointive Boards – Changes proposed by the Reorganization and the Board Composition Working Groups affecting sections chapters 1-3 will be considered by the full Commission – Working draft is attachment C. Mrs. Zukowski requested that they begin going through the substantive changes now and go over the language at the end after everyone has a chance to review them.

BOARD OF EDUCATION-one change was to drop (c) so it didn't limit the number of candidates from one political party. The current charter has minority representation as 5/2. Mrs. Zukowski articulated that reading what the Bee said, it went from a 3 person minimum to a bare majority which is 4.

Mr. Paradis was against 5/2 because it should be an apolitical board. Second the idea that what people were voting on was the 4/3 bare majority.

Mr. Weidemann's opinion is that it should be up to the voters and it shouldn't be up to a party. At the end of the day you should know who that person is that you are voting for. People have various passion or interests and they do not fall on party line. There is no real need to change what the voters have asked for.

Mr. Hall's observation is that it doesn't see that it makes a difference.

Mrs. Zukowski articulated that the principle of what we have now works well. If we change anything we need to have a good reason. The assumed status quo, people think the board is a 4/3 split and that is where she would stay.

Mr. Burns articulated that people should know who they are voting for. The people are surprised that it is a 5/2 board when they think it is 4/3.

Mr. Guidera has not been asked by anyone to change the 5/2 to 4/3. Minority representation law contradicts the will of the public. The plan in Newtown is to go with the state minority representation. Given a demand by the public to change it to 4/3 he would vote 4/3.

BOARD OF FINACE - The full board would vote on filling a vacancy within 30 days. After that it would go the First Selectman. They would also increase the term to 4 years and have staggered every 2 years. Mr. Capeci disagrees with that because it makes it more difficult fill the position with the 4 year term. Doubling the term length and stagger would not fix their perceived issues. Mr. Long thinks doing the 4 year staggered is a good thing.

BOARD OF MANAGERS – Added a vice chair

BUILDING BOARD OF APPEALS AND PUBLIC BUILDING AND SITE COMMISSION - can have out of town members if there is no local expertise available. 2-05(d)(5) This could be worded, Nonresidents may be considered for membership in the absence of qualified Resident Electors in accordance with the General Statutes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION – Is not in the current charter but will be added.

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION – Is currently in the charter and will stay in the charter.

BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS – 4 year terms.

Charter Property Disposition Sections; 7-90 and 7-90D – Mr. Hall presented the draft (Attachment D). Mr. Hall's request is to review the document as a new document rather than comparing it to the current charter. The overall concept is that there are only so many ways to acquire property. There are procedures for acquiring property which the First Selectman having a lot of power. There is a section on real property for the non payment of taxes. There is one thing completely new which is the ability to sell open space that is of no value. The proceeds would have to go into an open space fund. There is also the opportunity to swap land but it needs to be treated like a sale.

Mrs. Zukowski prepared and described a flow chart to illustrate how the process should work (Attachment E) and also a breakdown of the changes made to the section (Attachment F). Her concern with the document prepared by Mr. Hall is the document does not require any property to be sold at the highest price. If there are no other interests the town has in the property, highest price will prevail. Mr. Hall will review that.

Charter Writing Style Standards – Not discussed

VOTER COMMENT - NONE

ANNOUNCEMENTS – The April 30th meeting will be held at the Municipal Building.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:17pm

Respectfully Submitted, Arlene Miles, Clerk