

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

The Charter Revision Commission held a meeting on Thursday, April 30, 2015 in the Council Chambers in the Municipal Building, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT. Chairman Jeff Capeci called the meeting to order at 7:33pm.

**Present:** Kevin Burns, Jeffery Capeci, Dan Wiedemann, Eric Paradis, James Ritchie, Deborra Zukowski, George Guidera, Bob Hall. Jim Ritchie, Tom Long (8:30)

**Also present:** one member of the press and four members of the public

**VOTER COMMENTS:** Maureen Crick Owen, 16 Tamarak Road – expressed concern over proposed changes to the charter with regards of the BOE. Decisions by the BOE should be for the best interest of the children and then for our town. If the proposed language is approved allowing a 5/2 political balance on the BOE politics will play a significant roll which it should not. Political balance on the board would guarantee comprehensive discussions before decisions are made. Respectfully requests that the CRC specify that majority representation not exceed 4 members out of the 7.

Michelle Embree Ku asked how they are taking into consideration the letters the CRC received from the public. Mr. Capeci explained that the e-mails will be entered into the record of the meeting minutes.

Ms. Roche, Vice chair of the BOE - The voters voted for the people they think should be on the board. She does not feel that they are a political board at this time but understands it is not always that way. The community voted for the people they wanted in. Ms. Roche is fine with how it is written in the current charter.

**MINUTES:** Dan Weidemann moved to accept the minutes from the 4/21/15 meeting as presented Eric Paradis seconded. Ms. Zukowski requested that comments she made during the meeting, concerning transparency regarding private sale, be added to the minutes. She had commented that the current process for private sale included both notice and a formalized method for ensuring highest bid for the property up for private sale. While the current language includes a provision for public notice, it does not include a formalized process for others to use when a private sale is used for property disposition. The motion was unanimously approved with the noted amendment.

**COMMUNICATIONS** – The board received several e-mails this week regarding the BOE section 2-70 (Attachment A).

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*Charter Chapter 2, Elections and Elective Offices Including 2-70 Board of Education; Chapter 3, Board of Selectman and 4, Appointive Boards* - Mrs. Zukowski explained that they have gotten 22 e-mail responses, in addition there is a comment from Jim Gaston, Jim Juliano of the Democratic Committee and Al Craimer. 15 specifically say that the public expectation when they voted for this they thought it was a bare majority which was a 4/3 split. 5 have language that ask for a change to the language to ensure is says what they thought they voted on.

Mr. Hall articulated that to him the numbers are not as important as the concept. It is clear there is an issue as to what the voters thought they were voting on.

Mr. Paradis explained that it isn't the number of correspondences, but the thoughts when they voted. They thought they were voting for a 4/3 membership of the BOE.

Mr. Burns explained that there were relatively few comments and that many people didn't realize that there is an issue until it became controversial.

Mr. Ritchie explained that there are a number of people that have a fairly solid rational for wanting a 4/3 but has not heard a solid rational for a 5/2 split. The original intent was to have a 4/3 split on the board. Most people in the community do not pay attention to these things are under the impression that it is a 4/3 split.

Mrs. Zukowski moved to have the minority representation 4/3 and that it be based on the full board and not on elections. The number of members of any one political party to serve on the BOE should be no more than 4. Mr. Paradis seconded. Mrs. Zukowski firmly believes that in 2008 people were voting on a 4/3 split. There are strong parties with strong ideology. In terms of an unaffiliated person being elected on the board, a 4/3 would be more likely to happen than a 5/2.

Mr. Hall articulated the minority representation law is anti democratic. What kind of a chance do you have to give the person who lost a seat on the board. The charter is clear 5/2 and can't understand how it would be misunderstood. The 4/3 split is more political than a 5/2. He would not change the language.

Mr. Long read and re-read every e-mail he received. You cannot tell a democrats or a republican for local issues. Considering the current charter 5/2 provides a louder voice of Newtown.

Mr. Paradis does not feel minority representation is anti democratic. Looking at the current charter, it was clear as mud as to the outcome. People see bare majority as the entire board. He suggested that they go back and redefine bare majority as they have with other boards.

Mr. Wiedemann articulated that his point is that it should be up to the voter. He is 100% against a political party placing people on a board especially an important board as the BOE. Whatever the public wants, the public should get.

Mr. Ritchie articulated that with the language in the charter, there are people that get elected that don't get seated because of minority representation. People that are elected into office should seat. He comes at it as a superintendent for 13 years and has worked with political and no political BOE's. He is in favor of the 4/3 split.

Mr. Guidera articulated that this is the most troubling and political issue and doesn't believe this should be with this commission. The LC has not asked them to change this. Newtown is a premier town and to introduce politics one way or another into the BOE should not be discussed. There is a state minority representation law. To change it to 4/3 means that Newtown has a different plan. He doesn't see a need for a change. He will vote for 5/2 as it is now because the LC has not asked for it to be changed.

Mr. Burns explained that letting the voters decide is a great thing. We have been presented to look at something that wasn't done right 5 years ago and let the people vote.

Mr. Capeci is for a 5/2 split. If the voters choose the board they live with the board they choose. If the 4/3 rule applied, it can disenfranchise voters. Since the election in 2013, there have been 283 votes. There was only one vote that went down party lines. It is a solution in search of a problem.

Motion failed 5 to 4, No (Guidera, Weidemann, Long, Hall, Capeci), 4 yes (Burns, Paradis, Zukowski, Ritchie).

Mr. Hall moved that the CRC take no further action with regard to the issue of minority representation on the BOE. Mr. Hall withdrew his motion.

Mr. Hall moved to delete section two in the exceptions in 2-10 Minority Representation. Mr. Weidemann seconded. Language for a bare minority, this helps clarify the charge by striking this. Motion passes 8 to 1. Yes (Hall, Capeci, Zukowski, Ritchie, Wiedemann, Burns, Long, Guidera) NO (Paradis).

Mr. Paradis moved to approve the Summary of General Responsibilities prepared by Mr. Ritchie (Attachment B) with the change from shall provide and maintain good, to, shall provide and maintain quality. Mr. Hall seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Charter Property Disposition Sections; 7-90 and 7-90D –Mr. Hall moved that the draft as presented to the commission in late march be adopted as amended to sections 7-90 to 7-95. George Guidera seconded. Mr. Hall spoke to the comments made about a lack of a procedure for a private sale as having an opportunity to have someone else come in an offer more money. There is an auction procedure that is open and advertised. The idea that someone is going to come in and in good faith negotiate with the town and then his offer, which presumably is accepted, would go back to the public for an offer of more money is can't happen. You will not have anyone that can negotiate for the town in the terms of coming to a contract because there can always be a higher price.

Mr. Capeci explained they are looking for an understanding of concepts today and final language is not required at this point.

Ms. Zukowski talked about the fact that there is no requirement for highest price on any disposition of land as written currently and Mr. Hall will work to incorporate the following:

- Highest price is needed unless the town has a specific purpose for the land at which point that purpose would be made and would be highest bid within that purpose.
- Also, that there would be proper deed restrictions that would require that anyone that purchases the land would in fact adhere to the purposes that they said that they would actually do.
- The highest qualified bid needs to be included, because there will be people that will come in that are not qualified to pay the price and not qualified to build what is required.

Mrs. Zukowski read from page 34 of the current charter, paragraph 7-90H - What we have now is public notice, but we also have a formal procedure for private sales. If someone approaches the town it needs need to be transparent. There is a process that allows people to come in an offer a higher bid. Mrs. Zukowski commented that they have a process that is transparent for those who pay attention and for the CRC to remove the transparency is a concern for her. In the proposed language 7-95H, there is a public hearing by state statue, but there is no process for people who come out of the hearing that say that they want to do a higher bid. Maybe something can be said in 7-95A, during the appraisal process, is where you would want to give other people to do the same. The town is going to want to have a purpose for land that they are selling; the highest qualified bid is the one that the town should take.

- Once you have negotiated a contract, it is too late for other people to come in with a higher bid. Mr. Hall will try to put it together in section A and clarify that it is to the highest qualified bidder.

The current charter has a super majority but the proposed language just has majority for the Legislative Council. Because it was super majority they will leave it that way.

The difference in 7-90G language between existing and proposed language is the notice of auction has been changed to at least 30 days prior for first notice and not more than 15 days prior for second. Previously it was not less than 14 days for first notice and unspecified for second. The extension for

balance of payment if provided was reduced to 30 days, it was 60 days. Mr. Hall explained that the changes were done because the number of days for the publication was that he felt you wanted to get one out far enough ahead of the auction to make sure people could have a chance to react and 2 weeks was a little short. If you are going to have an auction you want to get everyone that might be interested to know about it.

Sale or disposition for real property acquired for non-payment of taxes currently calls out a 90 day period. The proposed language breaks the 90 period into two pieces. It still has the 90 days but ownis is on the LC that they have to have a vote within the first 35 that says it merits further examination. The existing charter does not provide for any review of the LC decision. If the LC looks at it and says we don't want this, it should be the end of it. Once they say we might want it, it needs to be exposed to everyone. If the LC decides that they do not want to retain the property, then they don't need the 35 days. The difference is with the 35 days, that is when the process begins. The circulation can take up 70 days.

7-91C -In the current charter the LC can decide to accept land that is not free and clear of title. In the proposed language the LC cannot accept land that is not free and clear. You have to have clear title to the property before you can record you subdivision map. Accept the document as presented. Mr. Hall will work on the areas discussed above. Mr. Hall Amended his original motion that 7-90 – 7-95 as proposed is accepted subject to language revisions as discussed at this meeting. Mr. Guidera seconded, motion unanimously accepted.

**VOTER COMMENT - NONE**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS –**

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:47pm

Respectfully Submitted, Arlene Miles, Clerk

# Attachment A

April 30, 2015

To the Charter Revision Commission

I am writing to request that you unanimously support the original intention of the 2008 Charter Review Commission and the 2008 voting public when they approved changes to the composition of the Board of Education.

In 2008 the town recommended to the public that a seventh member be added to the BOE and made clear in its explanatory text as published by the Newtown Bee, that doing so would allow a maximum of four members to be from the same political party. The purpose of the town providing explanatory text to the public prior to referendums has always been to help voters understand the questions they would be asked to vote on. The text provided in 2008 is as follows:

“Question #7 - Currently there is a maximum of three members from any party on the six-member Board of Education. This amendment would increase the total number of members to seven, and allow up to four members from any one political party. This vacancy will be filled by the current Board of Education, and the appointee would serve until the November 2009 local election.”

Because the term “bare majority” was used in the official Charter language rather than any reference to “a maximum of four” the Town Attorney’s incredulous interpretation allowed him to seat five members of one party in the 2013 elections, despite the record of intention from 2008.

Today, as the new Charter Revision Commission, the solution here is a very straightforward one and I hope that you will not risk having voters throw the baby out with the bathwater by letting politics interfere with this important responsibility.

Thank you for your service to Newtown.

Kevin Fitzgerald

24 Old Farm Hill Road

Subject:	Minority Party Representation
From:	Alisa Robinson (alisa.robinson@ymail.com)
To:	jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistribute.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dggw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;
Date:	Wednesday, April 29, 2015 1:49 PM

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission:

Please change the language in the Newtown Charter to ensure that minority party representation for the Newtown Board of Education is 4/3 rather than 5/2. Giving one political party five votes on a seven-member board gives the majority party significant advantage over the minority party. I do not believe this system is best for our students, teachers and our schools.

Sincerely,  
Alisa Robinson  
16 Rowledge Pond Rd

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**Subject:** Charter change?  
**From:** Judy Dubois (chuckjudydubois@charter.net)  
**To:** kevin@klbattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistribre.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 29, 2015 9:28 AM

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Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission:

I would like to encourage you to change the language in the Newtown Charter to ensure that minority party representation for the Newtown Board of Education is 4/3 rather than 5/2. Giving one political party five votes on a seven-member board gives the majority party significant advantage over the minority party. I do not believe this system is best for our students, teachers and our schools. Making decisions about schools should involve thorough discussion about finances, education, equal opportunity, and the civic good, among many other ideals. Traditionally, the political parties have differing views on these matters. Having a political balance on the Board ensures that thorough discussion takes place before important decisions are made. I do not understand why we have allowed the 5/2 situation to take place.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Judy and Chuck Dubois

7 Marlin Rd, Sandy Hook

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**Subject:** Charter Revision Commission  
**From:** John Bestor (mmjjbbtej@gmail.com)  
**To:** kevin@klbattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistribre.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 28, 2015 8:33 PM

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I hope that you will amend the charter to retain a balanced BOE by ensuring 4-to-3 elected representation so that one party is not able to wield unfair advantage during closely contested votes. The language of the Newtown Charter needs to protect the will of the people in our predominantly two-party system. Thank you for your efforts.

John Bestor  
Sandy Hook

**Subject:** Board of Education  
**From:** Alan Embree (e2mbrees@live.com)  
**To:** kevin@kibattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; deborraz@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; eric@paradistrike.net; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net;  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 28, 2015 7:40 PM

To the Charter Revision Commissioners:

Re: Party affiliation of Board of Education Members

It goes without saying that members of the Board of Education should be dedicated above all to the betterment of the local schools. In an ideal world, dedication, not party affiliation would be the primary factor in the election of board members. Of course, as you well know, what is earnestly held as "betterment of the schools" often aligns more with party position than with thorough research and creative policy formulation. I believe that given this reality, the most practical means of realizing the best work from the Board of Education is to balance political positions as nearly as possible.

The current structure that seats a possible two member majority of any one party makes deadlock unlikely but also discourages constructive deliberation. Structuring a minimum three member minority in a seven member board would foster more serious consideration of alternative policies. It would also better accommodate a possible third party member should that ever happen in the future.

Therefore, I recommend that the Commission specify that no party have more than a one seat majority on the Board of Education.

Thanks for all your work on the Commission!

Alan Embree, 25 Old Green Road, Sandy Hook, CT 06482

Sent from Windows Mail

**Subject:** minority representation on BOE  
**From:** Robin Fitzgerald (rif222@aol.com)  
**To:** kevin@kibattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net.; eric@paradistrike.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 28, 2015 10:56 AM

Hello members of the CRC,

Thank you for donating your time and expertise to the CRC this year! It is a critical, but not easy, job that allows our town to grow and prosper into the future.

I would like to be counted among those who believe that our BOE should not be politically motivated. In fact, political motivation is extremely destructive to a school system because a school system's product is educated children who do not, themselves, have a voice in the process. Therefore, keeping the political affiliations of the members of the BOE as balanced as they can be is crucial to achieving and maintaining an excellent school system for our town. Please do everything in your power, individually and as a group, to return simple language to our town charter which supports not more than 4 members from any one political party ever be allowed to sit on the BOE while it is made up of 7 members. Include the definition of a bare majority as 4-3 total, including 2-year and 4-year terms combined, within the language of the Charter. This will remove the necessity of interpretation. The current 5-2 split is a product of one person's interpretation of the charter's vague and confusing language which must be improved.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my opinions and suggestions. Good luck!

Regards,

Robin Fitzgerald  
24 Old Farm Hill Road  
Newtown, CT 06470

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**Subject:** BOE  
**From:** Joan Plouffe (jplouffe@earthlink.net)  
**To:** kevin@kbbattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistrie.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Cc:** lereinebus@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 28, 2015 9:37 AM

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Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission:

Thank you so much for serving on the CRC. Having both served on a prior CRC, we know how much effort and dedication is involved.

We were members of the 2008 CRC which added the seventh member to the Board of Education. When this change was being discussed, we felt very strongly that one party must not have more than four members on the BOE at any one time. Previously, when the BOE was a six member board, there was a maximum of three members from any one party allowed, which of course guaranteed balance on the BOE. We would have opposed any change to the charter that would have allowed an unbalanced 5-2 split.

Additionally, one of the considerations of our CRC was seeking ways to give Unaffiliated and Independent candidates more opportunities to serve our community. Having a seventh member of the BOE, while limiting the maximum members from any one party to four, provides that opportunity to have more diverse membership on the BOE.

We continue to believe that having a bare majority, no more than four members from any one party, is appropriate. This will ensure that differing views will be heard and considered, and that decisions will be made in the best interests of the district, without undue political influence. Please take whatever steps are necessary to maintain this balance on the BOE.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joan Plouffe  
LeReine Frampton

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**Subject:** Charter changes BOE  
**From:** Bruce Walczak (bw.reloconsult@snet.net)  
**To:** kevin@kbbattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistrie.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 28, 2015 9:35 AM

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Thank you for your time serving on this commission, it is much appreciated. The previous Charter Commission and the voters approved a new BOE structure with increased membership and a bare majority rule. This rule was, I believe, mis-interpreted by the town attorney and lead to a super majority of one party on the BOE. I urge the Commission to correct the language in the charter to only allow a 4/3 party majority on the BOE. The BOE ultimately manages too large a segment of the community to allow one party to have such control, and thus denying representation of a large segment of the voters. The Charter Commission has an obligation to review the Charter on behalf of all our residents, not have an objective of consolidating power for the Commissions majority party. I have not heard an outcry or even a voice from voters asking for clarification for a 5/2 structure.

Thanks you in advance for listening to the voters.

Bruce Walczak  
12 Glover Avenue  
Newtown CT, 06470  
203-270-9520

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**Subject:** Charter Revision Commission  
**From:** Lea Embree (2embrees@gmail.com)  
**To:** jeff@thecapecis.com;  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 28, 2015 9:28 AM

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To the Charter Revision Commission:  
April 28, 2015

Dear Commission Members:

I believe the intent of the previous Charter Revision Commission regarding the desired makeup of the Board of Education is clear -- a bare majority (4-3), not an overwhelming majority (5-2) -- whether it be Republican, Democrat, or as I vote, Independent. This only makes sense for the town.

The previous Charter Revision Commission was obviously trying to serve the community in a constructive, fair-minded way. We voted to uphold their intent as published in the Newtown Bee (indicating a bare four-member majority).

Without offering good reasons to establish a larger majority on the BOE, it would seem questionable to change what was surely a good-faith attempt to serve the community in the best possible way. Rule by consent is a lot better than rule by force.

Sincerely,

Lea Embree  
25 Old Green Road  
Sandy Hook, CT 06482



**Subject:** minority representation  
**From:** Jacqui Kaplan (jacquelyn.ottomeyer@gmail.com)  
**To:** kevin@klbattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistribene.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 28, 2015 8:51 AM

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission:

I am writing to express my concern over the possible changes to the intent of the original minority representation language in the Charter.

I believe (and have heard from several original members of the commission that added this language that this was so) that the minority representation language was meant to limit majority membership on town Boards (especially the Board of Education) to a "bare majority," which to me can only mean 4 out of 7 members.

I believe that any changes to the interpretation of this language, though possibly well-intentioned, have appeared to have nefarious and partisan motivations, and this undermines public trust in our town government.

Please consider codifying the language about minority representation to make clear that town Boards should be limited to a bare majority, as was the intention of the Commission when this language was written.

I would also like to address some public comments by Commission members that they have not heard any discussion expressing concern about this language. There has been vigorous and robust discussion about this on both the "Newtown Education Supporters" and "Accountability in Newtown" Facebook groups. I am sorry that this has not reached your attention, but please be aware that there is, and has been, concern about this for some time.

Thank you so much for reading my thoughts.

Sincerely,  
Jacquelyn Kaplan  
34 Osborne Hill Road  
Sandy Hook, CT

**Subject:** Newtown Charter  
**From:** Claudia Sieber (claudia.sieber@att.net)  
**To:** kevin@klbattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistribene.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 28, 2015 6:43 AM

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission:

I would like to encourage you to change the language in the Newtown Charter to ensure that minority party representation for the Newtown Board of Education is 4/3 rather than 5/2. I attended numerous Charter Revision Commission meetings when the commissioners increased the size of the Board of Education from six to seven and I do not believe the spirit of their decision is being honored with the 5/2 minority party representation. Giving one political party five votes on a seven-member board gives the majority party significant advantage over the minority party. I do not believe this system is best for our students, teachers and our schools.

Thank you for your consideration.

Claudia Sieber

**Subject:** Town Charter  
**From:** Frank Rohrbacher (frankatrc@aol.com)  
**To:** kevin@klbattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistribene.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2015 6:08 PM

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission:

I would like to encourage you to change the language in the Newtown Charter to ensure that minority party representation for the Newtown Board of Education is 4/3 rather than 5/2. I do not believe the spirit of their decision is being honored with the 5/2 minority party representation. Giving one political party five votes on a seven-member board gives the majority party significant advantage over the minority party. I do not believe this system is best for our students, teachers and our schools.

Thank you  
Frank Rohrbacher  
8 Nighthawk Lane  
Sandy Hook, Ct 06482

**Subject:** Charter Revision - Minority definition BOE  
**From:** Carla Kron (carlagkron@gmail.com)  
**To:** jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistribel.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2015 5:45 PM

Please change the language in the Newtown Charter to ensure that minority party representation for the Newtown Board of Education is 4/3 rather than 5/2. I believe this was the intent of the original Charter Revision Commission.

I would appreciate your vote to ensure that we adopt the original intent and keep the BOE more balanced between the political parties.

Thanks for your consideration.

Carla Kron  
4 Clapboard Ridge Road  
Sandy Hook, CT 06482

**Subject:** To The Charter revision commission  
**From:** Mary E Burnham (mmjbb@earthlink.net)  
**To:** kevin@klbattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistribel.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2015 5:25 PM

I would like to encourage you to change the language in the Newtown Charter to ensure that minority party representation for the Newtown Board of Education is 4/3 rather than 5/2. Giving one political party five votes on a seven-member board gives the majority party significant advantage over the minority party. I do not believe this system is best for our students, teachers and our schools.

Mary E. Burnham  
Sandy Hook, CT

(H) 203-426-3925  
(C) 203-240-5569

"From the child to myself is but a step.  
But from the newborn to the child of five  
is an appalling distance."  
Leo Tolstoy, Russian author & philosopher (1828-1910)

It is paradoxical that many educators and parents  
still differentiate between a time  
for learning and a time  
for play without seeing the vital connection between them.  
Leo F. Buscaglia

**Subject:** minority representation  
**From:** Kathryn Mayer (kate@kathrynmayer.com)  
**To:** kevin@klbattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistribel.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2015 4:43 PM

Dear Members of Charter Revision Commission:

I urge you to alter the Newtown Charter language to ensure minority representation for the BOE is 4/3 rather than 5/2. Unfortunately, political party divisiveness is rampant in our country, and spilling over to our small towns and cities. The current representation leaves no room for conversation and the potential of a balanced approach to education. I urge you to reconsider the current allotment so that our students, educators and community receive the best discussion and outcome our town has to offer.

Thank you.

Kathryn Mayer  
5 Hyvve Drive  
Newtown CT 06470

Kathryn Mayer  
storyteller  
Newtown, CT 06470  
203-240-0785  
www.kathrynmayer.com  
twitter instagram facebook

**Subject:** Minority Representation for the BOE  
**From:** Po Murray (pomurray25@gmail.com)  
**To:** kevin@kibattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistrib.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2015 4:19 PM

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission:

I would like to encourage you to change the language in the Newtown Charter to ensure that minority party representation for the Newtown Board of Education is 4/3 rather than 5/2. I attended numerous Charter Revision Commission meetings when the commissioners increased the size of the Board of Education from six to seven and I do not believe the spirit of their decision is being honored with the 5/2 minority party representation. Giving one political party five votes on a seven-member board gives the majority party significant advantage over the minority party. I do not believe this system is best for our students, teachers and our schools.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Po Murray  
38 Charter Ridge Drive  
Sandy Hook

**Subject:** Proposed Revisions to Charter  
**From:** Maureen Owen (maureencrickowen@gmail.com)  
**To:** kevin@kibattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistrib.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Sunday, April 26, 2015 7:47 PM

Dear Commission Members,

I am writing about a specific change that your commission is considering with regards to the Board of Education. You are proposing to delete from Section 2-30(c) of the Town Charter the following language: "At each Town Election the number of candidates of any one political party elected to serve on the Board of Education shall not exceed a bare majority of the number of candidates to be seated". And instead your commission is proposing that minority representation on the Board of Education follow Connecticut General Statutes §9-167(a) which states that if the total membership of a board is 7 the maximum from one party can be 5.

The sentence you are proposing to delete was added as a result of a proposed change in 2008 by the then Charter Review Commission which the voters approved and was codified into the charter. Why should we take it out now? Is this not a disservice to the voters who approved this change? And more importantly, is this not a disservice to our Town and the children of our Town?

Decisions regarding our schools and the education of our children should not be dominated by any one party. Decisions by the Board of Education should be first in the best interests of the children and then for our Town. Unfortunately, I feel that if the proposed language is approved - allowing a 5-2 political balance on the Board of Education - politics will play a significant role on this Board. It should not. A political balance on the Board of Education would guarantee comprehensive discussions before decisions are made. Again, this is in the best interest of our children and our Town.

I am a member of the Democratic Town Committee but this letter represents my own opinion.

I respectfully request that the Charter Review Commission keep a bare majority of four from one political party on the Board of Education.

Regards,

Maureen Crick Owen  
16 Tamarack Road, Newtown

**Subject:** Letter to Charter Revision Commission to ensure fair minority representation on Board of Education  
**From:** Lisa Romano (lisaromano@gmail.com)  
**To:** kevin@kibattorney.com; jeff@thecapecis.com; westonlawfirm@aol.com; roberthall01@earthlink.net; tlong24@sbcglobal.net; eric@paradistrib.net; jamesritchie37@gmail.com; dgw0315@yahoo.com; deborraz@gmail.com;  
**Date:** Friday, April 24, 2015 12:19 PM

Dear Commission members,

First, thank you for your service. I know it's a long and detailed process, and I appreciate your dedication to revising our town charter.

Second, I strongly urge you to codify a majority of no more than four members from any one political party on the Board of Education. In small-town elections, like we have in Newtown, I've learned through personal experience that many voters aren't terribly familiar with individual candidates, and they vote the party line. This has led to a situation where a large majority of our Board of Education is chosen by a town committee rather than by voters. This is not in the best interest of comprehensive debate and democracy.

We have three large blocs of registered voters in Newtown: Republicans, unaffiliated, and Democrats. Limiting any one party's majority on the Board of Education to a bare majority allows the widest representation of our citizens.

Thank you for considering this input.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Romano  
28 The Boulevard

## Re: May CRC Meetings

Sun 5/3/2015 9:13 PM

**From:** Robert Geckle  
**To:** Jeffrey Capeci  
**Cc:** Bill Lavery, Arlene Miles



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Ok.

Can extend the invitation to the board but I not sure how that would be helpful ... Am I missing something here ?

Bob

Sent from my iPhone

On May 3, 2015, at 8:45 PM, Jeffrey Capeci <jeff@thecapecis.com> wrote:

Thanks Bob, I'll make sure LBoT is on the May 13 agenda. Please let the full Board of Trustee membership know they are welcome to participate.

Jeff

([http://accessories.us.dell.com/sna/category.aspx?c=us&l=en&s=dhs&cs=19&category\\_id=2999&mfgpid=167757&chassisid=-1](http://accessories.us.dell.com/sna/category.aspx?c=us&l=en&s=dhs&cs=19&category_id=2999&mfgpid=167757&chassisid=-1))

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**From:** Bob and Kathy Geckle <robertgeckle@gmail.com>  
**To:** Jeffrey Capeci <jcapzz@yahoo.com>; Bill Lavery <billandjoanlavery@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 3, 2015 12:27 PM  
**Subject:** RE: May CRC Meetings

Jeff

Judge Lavery and I would like to be scheduled for the May 13th meeting to discuss the library charter language .

Bob

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Date: Wed, 15 Apr 2015 14:23:44 +0000  
From: jeff@thecapecis.com  
To: robertgeckle@gmail.com  
CC: arlene.miles@newtown-ct.gov

Subject: May CRC Meetings

Bob,

The Charter Revision Commission will meet on the following dates:

Thursday, April 30

Wednesday, May 13

Wednesday, May 27

Dr Lavery, yourself and any other member of the Library Board of Trustees are welcome to discuss charter changes at any one of the three meetings. Please advise which is your preference so I can add you to the agenda.

Thanks,  
Jeff

([http://accessories.us.dell.com/sna/category.aspx?c=us&l=en&s=dhs&cs=19&category\\_id=2999&mfgpid=167757&chassisid=-1](http://accessories.us.dell.com/sna/category.aspx?c=us&l=en&s=dhs&cs=19&category_id=2999&mfgpid=167757&chassisid=-1))

# Attachment B

*Draft for Discussion Only: 03/06/2015*

Board of Education

## Summary of General Responsibilities

The Board of Education shall provide and maintain good public elementary and secondary schools and shall provide such educational activities as in its judgment will best serve the interests of the town. The Board of Education shall perform all acts required of them by the town charter or necessary to carry into effect the powers and duties imposed upon them by law.