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# TOWN OF NEWTOWN

## Minutes

The Charter Revision Communications Ad Hoc Committee met on Thursday, August 18, 2016 in Meeting Room One of the Newtown Municipal Center. Committee Chairman Judit DeStefano called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

VOTER COMMENT: None.

Present: Ms. DeStefano, Mr. Lundquist, Ms. Zukowski, Mr. Capeci, Town Attorney David Grogins (until 8:45), and one member of the press.

MINUTES:

MR. LUNDQUIST MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF 7/8/4, MS. ZUKOWSKI SECONDED. 3 IN FAVOR, WITH MR. LUNDQUIST ABSTAINING.

COMMUNICATIONS: None.

### NEW BUSINESS

Discussion on uses for and length of Explanatory Text and Informational Text. Explanatory text to fit on one page, Informational Text (first iteration) to fit on tri-fold. Discussion on importance of not taking on advocacy role (ie: letters to the Bee and discussion at forums must be informational only).

Informational Text -Working session on explanatory text (draft attached). Ms. Zukowski to draft remaining section on Budget. Ms. DeStefano to finish drafting introductory section and work on compiled draft to make stylistic changes for consistency.

Discussion on Timeline/Communications - Some preliminary outreach work at Labor Day parade; Mr. Capeci to lay out business cards for distribution. Participation at Arts Festival; Mr. Capeci to reach out to Community Center Commission members to take booth shifts; Ms. DeStefano to secure booth; Mr. Lundquist to design banner.

Question arose regarding production of materials for polling places. Is that done by the Clerk's office? Ms. DeStefano to follow up. Confirmed by Mr. Grogins that use of town seal is allowed.

VOTER COMMENT: None.

With no further business, Mr. Capeci motioned to adjourn at 9:51 pm and Mr. Lundquist seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Judit DeStefano,  
Chairman, Charter Revision Communications Committee

## DRAFT INFORMATIONAL TEXT - Final Version 8/18

### **For possible mention:**

#### **Boards and Commissions Added**

Government Bodies: 7 Commissions, 3 Authorities and 1 Board added to Charter; all currently in existence, have been codified in the proposed charter.

#### **Minority Representation on the Board of Education (BOE)**

The State of Connecticut requires that no more than 5 members of a 7 member board be from any one party. The Minority Representation for the BOE [subsection 2-30(c) in the existing charter and subsection 2-10(b)(2) in the proposed charter] has been modified as follows:

Proposed Charter — The number of members of any one political party who may serve on the 7-member Board of Education shall not exceed 4. Minority representation is based on the full membership of the board.

Existing Charter — A maximum of 5 members from the same political party is permitted, as determined by provisions of Section 9-167a of the CT General Statutes. At most 2 from any one party are permitted to be elected during elections when 3 Board of Education seats are open, and 3 are permitted when 4 seats are open.

#### **Appropriations**

The elimination of town meetings necessitates changes to the appropriations processes [section 6-30 in the existing charter and section 6-35 in the proposed charter].

Proposed Charter - The LC has authority to make Special and Emergency appropriations up to \$1,500,000 for any one purpose with a maximum of 1 mil of the grand list (currently about \$3 million) allowed annually. Appropriations in excess of \$1.5 million will appear on the annual budget referendum ballot unless prohibited by timing or other factors. In such a case a special referendum will be called.

Existing Charter – The LC has authority to make Special and Emergency appropriations up to \$500,000, with a maximum of \$3 million allowed annually. Appropriations over \$0.5 million and less than \$10 million are voted on in Town Meetings. Appropriations of \$10,000,000 or more are sent to a Town Referendum.

#### **Acquisition and Disposition of Real Property**

The processes for acquisition and disposition of real property [section 7-90 in the existing charter and chapter 8 in the proposed charter] have been modified. The proposed Charter increases the authorization limit of the LC for both acquisitions and dispositions of real property in line with the new appropriation caps resulting from the elimination of the Town Meeting. The proposed Charter also requires that procedural details for all processes described in the proposed Charter be codified in Town ordinances. Key changes include:

##### **Real Property Acquisition**

Proposed Charter — The Board of Selectmen initiates the acquisition of real property. The property must be appraised by a professional. If the acquisition requires an appropriation less than or equal to \$1.5M, the Legislative Council may authorize the acquisition. If an appropriation is over \$1.5M, a referendum is also required.

Existing Charter — The Legislative Council may authorize a single real property transaction up to and including \$500,000. A Town meeting is also required for transactions over \$500,000 and less than \$10M. (Match) A referendum is required, in addition to Legislative Council authorization, of \$10M or more (Match).

##### **Real Property Disposition**

Proposed Charter — The Board of Selectmen initiates the disposition of town-owned real property. The property must be appraised by a professional. For properties under or at \$1.5M, the Legislative Council, with input from all boards having an interest in the property, may authorize the disposition. Properties over \$1.5M require authorization from the Legislative Council along with a referendum. The process requires signage and local publication.

Existing Charter — The Legislative Council approves the disposition of town-owned real property and a town meeting is required for authorization.

**Method of Sale:**

Proposed Charter — Town-owned real property can be disposed of by one of two methods: public auction or private sale. **The procedure(s) for private sale will be codified in a Town Ordinance.** Use of private sale requires the Legislative Council to approve such a sale. The Legislative Council may authorize the sale of the property based, in part, on a potential buyer's binding commitment to use the property for a specific purpose.

Existing Charter — Town-owned real property can be disposed of by one of three methods: sealed bid, public auction, or a private sale. Use of private sale requires the Legislative Council to approve such a sale. All properties must be sold to the highest bidder.