

SAUGUS CHARTER COMMISSION

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

OF

JUNE 26, 2008

The twenty-seventh meeting of the Saugus Charter Commission was held on Thursday, June 26, 2008. The meeting was held in the auditorium, at the Saugus Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Peter Manoogian at 6:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS**

Six members of the nine member committee were present at roll call: Cam Cicolini, Karen Cote, Eugene Decareau, Joan L. Fowler, Peter Manoogian, Sr., and Thomas Stewart.

Karla J. de Steuben arrived at 6:26 p.m. Albert W. Diotte, Jr. was not able to attend due to a previous commitment and Debra Panetta was not able to attend due to a family vacation.

Thomas Stewart departed at approximately 7:00 p.m for a Board of Appeals meeting.

Mr. Manoogian asked if we could take our Invited Guests out of order to accommodate them. There was no objection.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **INVITED GUEST: JEAN DESMET – FIRST SELECTMAN WINDOR, CONNECTICUT**

Mr. Manoogian gave an overview of Windsor's government. It is a Partisan government, Ms. de Smet is part of the Green Party, their population is 25,000, they are going through the charter process also and she is the 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman which is basically the person who runs town hall.

Jean de Smet

- They have a town manager form of government
- 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman is the Mayor and Town Manager
- She serves the two branches at the same time
- They will have a weak mayor
- 10 member council plus mayor
- Town meeting, sell and buy property, ordinances not to many meetings
- 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman is elected for 2 years

- It's a paid position of \$60,000 full time position
- Town Manager will be paid \$100,000 and do half the work
- Town manager role will be to propose a budget to the Board of Selectmen by March 15<sup>th</sup> and have a meeting with both Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance
- Seven people are elected to the Board of Finance who can cut and add to the budget
- Town meeting decides on the budget
- Mayor will run the meeting and help set the agenda
- They do not have a good Capital Improvement plan
- They want to start a strategic Plan and hopefully the Town Manager can do this
- They have a 7 member School Committee
- 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman gives the bottom line budget figure
- Board of Education has control
- Turnover rate is high
- The new charter will stay partisan
- She would like to see how ours turn out
- They know no other way
- They have to declare their position they are running for
- They have a regional high school, 1 middle school and 3 grammar schools
- The town manager will be hire
- It will take two boards to hire and fire that person due to state statue
- Appointments are approved by the Board of Finance
- They will be going to a 4 year staggered terms
- Town clerk does the licensing
- The state does the liquor licensing
- They do not have a quorum for town meeting
- The way town meeting works is that the 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman and one other selectman need to check the voter registration list of anyone that shows up
- Capital Improvement plan is done by the 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman and one other selectman, Public Works Director, Town Clerk, Fire Chief and the Chairman of the Board of Finance
- They do not have a financial plan
- Board of Education has own budget
- Board of Finance can cut their budget
- Town Planner deals with zoning issues and land use issues
- Board of Selectmen receive a \$2,000 stipend
- There is no residency requirement for the town manager
- Department heads work independently
- They have approximately a \$60 million budget
- They have had this form of government for about 25 years
- They have vague job descriptions
- They do not have goal setting
- The comptroller does not monitor department expenses
- Town manager would run the day to day management
- This person will not be able to hire or fire department heads

- This person will have an annual review
- Their bond rating is very good
- They have a stabilization fund of \$6 million
- They have a strong Board of Finance who holds the purse strings
- They built in the reserve fund into the budget
- Average houses in the city are \$150,000 while in the villages it's about \$175,000
- Property taxes are around \$5,000
- They are heavily taxed
- Any tax increase or decrease is voted on at the polls along with the budget
- They usually have a spending freeze in April

## **5 MINUTE RECESS**

- **INVITED GUEST: PHYLLIS HULL – WAKEFIELD, MA SELECTMAN AND ALSO PAUL BETTANO – WAKEFIELD, MA CHAIRMAN OF THE CHARTER STUDY COMMISSION**
  - Oldest form of town government
  - They did not have a charter
  - The Tax Payers Association of Wakefield got together and started the signature process to put on the ballot to have a charter commission
  - Nine members were elected
  - They received \$10,00 to hire a consultant
  - They were the only town to present 2 charters on the ballot
  - One form was a Town Council and one was open town meeting
  - They had a split commission
  - They have a referendum for checks and balance of town meeting to protect the rights of those who could not make it
  - They recommend that we hire a consultant with experience in municipal law and not charter work
  - Felt town meeting was special interest group that is why they put the referendum in
  - One charter change was that the warrant goes to town meeting and then to the ballot
  - They have annual elections with staggered terms
  - They have 7 selectmen, 2-2-3, prior they had 5 selectmen, 2 -2 -1
  - They have 7 School Committee members, 2-2-3, prior they had 5 members, 2-2-1
  - Finance Committee is a 15 member board that is appointed by the Chairman of the Selectmen, Moderator, and the Chairman of the Finance Committee
  - Non financial articles go to the appropriate boards
  - Sponsor of the article speaks first, the appropriate board makes a recommendation

- Town accountant report to town administrator
- They do not have a quorum
- The warrant is published in the paper
- Finance Committee report is given at town meeting
- They have a \$47 million budget and about 65% goes to the Schools
- Their by-law states they have a review committee every 5 years and feels it should be a standing committee and they should meet more frequently
- Feels this committee should be separate from the charter review committee and feels that 10 years maybe to long
- Town counsel is appointed by the Board of Selectmen
- They have a permanent Capital Planning Committee that meets regularly

**ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES (JUNE 5, 2008)**

Mrs. Fowler made a motion to approve the June 5, 2008 minutes.

The Chairman seconded the motion.

Motion passed **6 – 0**

**READING OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (JUNE 12, 2008)**

The minutes were passed out to the members for their review till the voting at the next meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none at this time.

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

▪ **RFQ PROCESS – CHARTER COMMISSION CONSULTANT**

Mr. Decareau made a motion to have the Chairman and one other person to go forward with RFP.

The Chairman seconded the motion.

It was discussed the Ms. de Steuben and the Chairman will serve on the RFP Sub-Committee.

Mr. Decareau then withdrew his motion.



**PUBLIC FORUM**

There was none at this time.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Decareau made a motion to adjourn at 9:50 p.m.

The Chairman seconded the motion.

Motion passed                      **6 – 0**

**APPROVED ON:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_