

Minutes of Charter Review Committee-Feb 3, 2016

Members present: Sandra Gibson-Quigley (acting Chair), Paul Zapun (acting Secretary), Bruce Boyson

Meeting was called to order at 6:35 P.M.

Bruce moved, Paul seconded to accept the minutes of January 20 as submitted. Passed 3-0.

Guests were Mike Suprenant, Board of Selectmen, (acting as advocate for the department heads present); Greg Morse, Director, DPW; Tom Ford, Police Chief; David Zinther, Fire Chief.

Greg wanted to know, regarding Section 7, why the DPW head and Principle Assessor duties were listed in the Charter while nothing was mentioned regarding the other department heads. The Committee replied that we had the same question.

Greg asked when the position of Facilities Manager would be hired, what the duties would be and what its relationship would be to the DPW. Tom Ford asked a similar question concerning the positions of "Emergency Management Director" and Coordinator within his department, as these positions were approved but have not been filled.

David Zinther brought up the issue of the "Strong Chief Law", as he believes that he was hired under the provision of this law and has since found out that there are no such regulations or bylaws regarding this title. They were advised that these are personnel/administrative issues that are not part of the mandate of the Charter Review Committee and, as such, need to be discussed with the Town Administrator.

Regarding the Charter: all of the participants had concerns over the content and wording of section 6.1 - not specifically what it said, but how it has been implemented within the Town. Examples were cited where people who were recruited and recommended for hire had their potential appointments questioned and delayed so that some ended up choosing not to accept the position because of the intervention of the Board of Selectmen. They felt that this section of the Charter should be clarified to clearly state that hiring of personnel within their department goes from them to the Town Administrator, with the Board of Selectmen having only an advisory (meet and greet) role once the candidate is selected.

Questions were also raised regarding Section 6.2. It was felt that members of the Police, Fire and DPW should not be listed in Section 6.2, as these persons are not appointed for a three year term as stated in the Charter, but rather hired by the Town in accordance with union contracts, and serve at the will of their respective supervisors and the terms of those contracts.

The department heads felt that Section 5.2 should not be changed (i.e. department heads should continue to be part of the appointive process).

After guests left at 7:30, members continued reviewing sections of the Charter.

Meeting ended at 8:35 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul Zapun

Acting Secretary