

RECEIVED AND FILED  
TOWN OF SUFFIELD

JUL 30 2015

*Kathleen A. Dennis*  
SUFFIELD TOWN CLERK

## Public Comment/ Emails

2/5/15

Hearing: Public Comment

**Christine Davidson of 103 Plantation Drive** identified herself as the Town Treasurer. Ms. Davidson spoke regarding the suggestion to Section 302D and Chapter 6 - Town Treasurer to being appointed rather than elected. She stated that this suggestion dismantles some of the fundamental checks and balances presently in the charter. The Town Treasurer is effective because he or she answers to the town by election and is not accountable to any one board or commission over another. She asked that the Town Treasurer position remain as an elected position and present staff relationships kept the same.

**Mel Chafetz of 803 Mapleton Avenue** identified himself as a former Selectman and the current Interim Superintendent. Mr. Chafetz noted that the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) can look at the whole charter and asked them to consider a Town Manager. Mr. Chafetz stated the Town needs a professional leader. He added that if they chose not to recommend a Town Manager that the CRC does not recommend a 4 year term for the Board of Selectmen. He also recommended that the Board of Education continue to be allowed to appoint members to fill vacancies and that the number of members remain as is and not be reduced from 9 to 7.

**Jeanne Gee of 13 Willow Creek** identified herself as a member of the Board of Education. Ms. Gee said she appreciates the efforts of the CRC. She recommended that the Board of Education membership remain at 9 members and that the Board of Finance and Board of Education retain the ability to appoint members to fill vacancies on their boards.

**Gordon Stagg of 1575 North Stone Street** spoke in favor of a Town Administrator as recommended in the last Charter Revision effort. It's a professional position that doesn't challenge the authority of the First Selectman.

**Paul Wersauckas of 1240 Mapleton Avenue** was concerned about the Board of Selectmen having more control. He doesn't know the rationale for some of these changes and fears that the voting public will be left out of more than they should.

**Wally Rodger of 48 Deep Brook Harbor** identified himself as a WPCA Commissioner. He attended with many other commission and WPCA staff members. He spoke regarding their concern for a WPCA structure change. After their next meeting they will provide Statutory documents, financial management and public health requirements for keeping the WPCA separate. He offered the CRC to contact the WPCA as needed.

**Christine Rago of 22 Brookside Drive** asked what charge #11 meant. It is to consider clarifying language as to executive authority of the First Selectman with respect to town employees. Chairman Brooks said the CRC haven't had any substantive discussions on the charge document so he couldn't comment.

**Bruce Rietberg of 12 Devine Road** spoke in favor of retaining a 2 year term for Board of Selectmen. There should be a not too onerous procedure if you want to remove a Selectman.

**Christine Rago of 22 Brookside Drive** remarked that a number of Boards and Commissions benefit by having many members. She said if we have people to serve why reduce the number of members.

**Ernie Petkovich of 40 Valley View Drive** identified himself as the chairman of the previous Charter Revision Commission. He congratulated the members of the CRC to help move the Town into the 21st century and to learn more about Town government. He discussed the process used by and recommendations made by the former CRC. Mr. Petkovich explained that the Board of Selectmen rejected all 8 of the recommendations made by the last CRC. He said the 5 members of the Board of Selectmen should not make the decision for 8300 voters. He said that the CRC needs to sell its

recommendations through the media and at the Board of Selectmen meeting where the CRC recommendations are voted on. He spoke in support of the Town Administrator position that was recommended by the last CRC. Mr. Petkovich said that the current charter is lacking a provision to remove a Town Attorney and it should be added. He noted that 11 of 24 of the current charge items focus on increasing the power of the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Petkovich was also in favor of reducing the number of signatures needed to force a referendum. He also suggested standardization of the number of days to hold a referendum. Mr. Petkovich suggested that the CRC recommend 6-10 changes otherwise everyone will be confused. He noted that 11 of 24 of the current charge items focus on increasing the power of the Board of Selectmen. He thinks that is the wrong direction. Mr. Petkovich said that there is a risk since Brian Fitzgerald will not be able to vote on the recommendations as a member of the Board of Selectmen. He is concerned that with only 4 Selectmen left to vote there may be 2-2 ties which count as a failed motion. Mr. Petkovich offered his assistance and wished the CRC success and to have fun.

**Gordon Stagg of 1575 North Stone** stated that he is concerned with Mr. Petkovich's assessment that there is a possibility of a 2-2 tie (meaning a failed motion) by the Board of Selectmen. He asked if Mr. Fitzgerald's voting status was considered when the Commission was formed.

**First Selectman McAnaney** said that he disagreed with Mr. Petkovich's position. He believes that Mr. Fitzgerald can vote as a member on the CRC and when the matter comes to the Board of Selectmen.

**Gordon Stagg of 1575 North Stone** asked that the issue be cleared up.

**Ernie Petkovich of 40 Valley View Drive** said that there appears to be no violation from a State Statute or Ethics perspective but from common sense and a realistic standpoint it doesn't make sense to put Brian Fitzgerald in that position.

**Ginny Bromage of 576 North Main Street** stated that she thought Board of Education and Board of Finance members have a better handle on the needs of their board members than the Board of Selectmen. She also questioned the elimination of the Public Works Commission.

**Kendra Wiesel of 37 Willow Creek** asked how the public would get information regarding the CRC decisions and impetus for some of the items on the charge. How does the public get up to date on your efforts/rationale? Chairman Brooks noted that there will be a second Public Hearing before the draft report is sent to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Fitzgerald said that minutes would be published for the CRC weekly meetings. Public Comment will also be available at each of the weekly meetings. Ms. Kling said the CRC should consider Public Comment at the beginning and end of each meeting.

**Bruce Rietberg of 12 Devine Road** asked that with the availability of the internet can decisions be posted by the CRC? Chairman Brooks said that the goal of the CRC is to be transparent. It is early in the process to make a determination. The short time frame may make posting decisions difficult.

**Ginny Bromage of 576 North Main Street** asked why 6-30-15 was the drop dead date? Chairman Brooks said that the attempt is to have a special election in the fall. The hope is to have the CRC recommendations take place at the General election.

**Kendra Wiesel of 37 Willow Creek** asked what's the rush? The last CRC took 16-18 months and all the time needed should be allowed.

**John P. Murphy of 18 Downing Way** stated that he was on the last two CRC and the scope was much bigger in the last two efforts but thought that the June deadline would be difficult to meet. As a co-chairman of the Republican Town Committee finding people to run for Boards and Commissions has gotten more difficult over the past 15 years. Not enough people step up to volunteer for the Boards and Commission openings. He doesn't believe 5 months is sufficient to get the work completed.

**Ginny Bromage of 576 North Main Street** stated that it would be more fiscally responsible to hold the referendum at a general election.

**Email**

**Scott Gilmartin 1/29** Suggests CRC consider the following: If an elected or appointed board or commission member has not attended a meeting for a period of 6 months and has not communicated the reason for their absence then the chair of the commission/board shall notify the member by certified mail that unless they can attend meetings the BOS shall be notified and their term shall be terminated. BOS shall act within 30 days of documentation provided.

**2/12**

**No Email**

**Public Comment**

**Chris Childs of 338 South Main Street** raised concerns about the concept of the Treasurer being appointed by the Board of Selectmen. He stated that he had an audit concern as the Treasurer and First Selectman are co-signers of checks. He also noted that the Director of Finance position should be a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) position and that the Town would need to be prepared to pay the wage of a CFO.

**2/19**

**Email**

**Paul Wersauckas 1240 Mapleton Ave.** Questioning the CRC committee's action of Town Mgr and why it should not be up to the voters to decide and why the BOS would have the authority as to what goes to a referendum?

**Amy Reay of 125 Bridge Street** expressed concern about power allowed to B of S and stated she is opposed to 4 year term proposal.

**Kristin Allard of 1167 Mountain Road** is opposed to B of S filling board vacancies and stated that the party endorsed candidate should be the first choice to fill vacancies. Also stated that all boards and commission should be the same number, preferably seven and that the term limits for the selectmen should not be changed.

**Christine Davidson of 103 Plantation Drive** sent a copy of the statement that she had made at the public hearing.

**Public Comment**

**Christine Davidson of 103 Plantation Drive** spoke regarding last week's discussion with Joe Sangiovanni and First Selectman McAnaney. She noted that there is no connection between the Board of Finance (BoF) and the Treasurer. She said that Mr. Sangiovanni's statement that the Treasurer keeps the books is a narrow view of what the job is. That is a responsibility of the Director

of Finance. She stated that she (as Treasurer) goes to BoF meetings for information enhancement and the BoF doesn't know all of the work that the Treasurer performs. Mr. Parks said that a list of Treasurer responsibilities would be helpful and Ms. Davidson agreed to provide one. Mr. Parks also said a list of the meetings the Treasurer attends and why would be helpful too.

**Roger Ives of 584 Thompsonville Road** asked for acknowledgement that the CRC received the information sent from the WPCA. Chairman Brooks noted that they had received the helpful information and are scheduling a meeting to discuss their operations. Mr. Kew noted that the packet was very thorough.

**2/26**

#### **Email**

**Lisa Trase** of 617 Halladay Avenue West provided information on the Town's breakdown on party affiliation and unaffiliated voters and expressing an opinion on commission minority representation.

**Christine Davidson** of 103 Plantation Drive provided a list of tasks she performs as Treasurer

#### **Public Comment**

**Kerry White of 995 Newgate Road** spoke in favor of keeping the membership of the Library Commission at its' present level of 12 members. Mrs. White is the chairman of the Friends of the Library book sale and has been a member of the Friends for over 30 years. She noted that the members work well together due to their diverse skills. She questioned the motivation of the First Selectman in asking for the reduction in membership. She noted that the commission of 12 members saves the Town money since they staff library events and perform tasks that the Town would otherwise have to pay for. She said Suffield needs all of its volunteers.

**Bob White of 995 Newgate Road** spoke as a member of the Library Commission. He is against the proposed reduction of members on the Library Commission. He noted that the Library Commission has seven permanent committees and currently two temporary committees. He noted that the Personnel committee is responsible for evaluating the Library Director. He discussed some of the other committees and their responsibilities. He would actually like to see the commission membership increase to 14 so each member could sit on two committees. He noted that the Library Commission members discussed reducing their commission size and they were against it.

**3/5**

#### **Email**

**David Bahlman** suggesting to increase the number of Alternates (to 3) on the Historic District Commission to be in compliance with State Statutes.

**Darlene Burrell** regarding the need for consistent naming for some Boards and Commissions.

**Tom Frenaye** regarding his concerns over minutes for the telephone conference with Ed Basile and for the Public Hearing that were posted in the wrong area.

**Eric Harrington** with suggestions of items for the CRC to consider including a reduction in minority party representation on the B of S, annual referendum on Town budget or a lower referendum threshold for budget referendum,, Town referendum on Bonding and improved ballot access for unaffiliated voters.

**Ernie Petkovich** Two e mails, the first regarding the Ethics opinion and correction to the minutes. The second stating that with two exceptions, all of the suggested recommendations increase the authority of the BOS and are absolutely the wrong direction to be taking Suffield Town government. Stating we should be moving to a professional (Town Administrator or Town Manager) to provide continuity. Also opposed to changing the term for all five selectmen to four years.

**No Public comment**

**3/12**

**No Email**

**No Public Comment**

**3/19**

**No Email**

**Public Comment**

**Ms. Christine Rago of 22 Brookside Drive** stated that it is time for a Town Manager. She said that the Town needs a person who is trained to manage the Town not a political person elected. She said she has come to this conclusion over time.

**3/26**

**Email**

**Ben Rodriguez** asking for reasons for proposals for charter changes and supporting double threshold for referendums and not in support of changes in commission/committee members or the method used by the B of E in choosing replacement members.

**No Public Comment**

**4/2**

No Meeting

4/9

No Email

No Public Comment

4/16

**Email from Tom Frenaye**, Chairman of the Democratic Town Committee (DTC) stating that the DTC has endorsed more than 2 candidates for the Board of Selectmen in the 2003, 2007 and 2009 elections. He also said that the number of candidates there are in a race is often not how many could run, but how many chose to run, and is a result of the party caucuses held each time.

**Public Comment**

**Ernie Petkovich** of 40 Valley View Drive recommended that the CRC consider reverting back to the pre-2001 charter change where the losing First Selectman candidate could use their votes in the Board of Selectmen race. Mr. Petkovich also noted that the Town Administrator recommended in the 2009 CRC was a compromise among members of that group. He noted that the last two First Selectmen have been knowledgeable in Town government but that there have been past and will be future candidates who don't know what they are doing. He said that coupled with a change of term from 2 years to 4 years would be a disaster. He also said that the CRC appears to be an extension of the Board of Selectmen and that the CRC should make their own recommendations and sell them to the electorate. He closed by saying that the CRC needs more time to complete their work.

**Mel Chafetz** of 803 Mapleton Ave. said he was disturbed after reading the last minutes and said the CRC should be an independent board not driven by the Board of Selectmen. He also noted that there are no qualifications to be First Selectman except to be an elector living in Suffield. He said the town needs a Town Manager with trained, experienced and shown leadership qualities. Discussion followed about the First Selectman qualifications and it was suggested to ask the Town Attorney for an opinion on establishing a more extensive list of qualifications. Mr. Chafetz said since 1984 there have only been three non-Republican First Selectmen. He doesn't agree with the four year term he thinks a 2 year term keeps the person accountable. He is not in favor of the CFO position either. He suggests giving the Director of Finance the staff needed.

**Roger Ives** 584 Thompsonville Road was in the audience and offered Public Comment. He said he is in favor of a Town Manager and said the Town is at the point where we need the professionalism and continuity that position would provide. He also is opposed to a four year term and sees more hazards than benefits for a four year term.

4/23

**Email Ms. Krystal Holmes** of 42 Michael Lane sent an email in support of a Town Manager.

**Public Comment**

**Bruce Rietberg** of 12 Devine Road suggested that in light of the issues surrounding removal of Registrars in Hartford the CRC should consider ways to remove people in applicable positions.

**Warren Packard** of 2 Oxford Drive began by thanking the members for serving on the commission. He noted that he was glad to a point to see two Selectmen involved in the discussions since they were

a good source of information. He cautioned that people who have been involved for a long time and part of the present administration may not have the best interest for the future of the Town in mind and may find change difficult. Mr. Packard came to say that as a former First Selectman he was here to provide his opinion since it was noted in the April 9<sup>th</sup> minutes that interviewing former First Selectmen past the last few, may not be worthwhile. Mr. Packard was in favor of keeping the Selectmen terms at 2 years. Over 40 years the average tenure has been less than 2 terms. He suggested not putting too much authority in the First Selectman to ensure that the position is not too powerful in case you have a non-fully qualified person in office. He went on to say that he believes the First Selectman should be a politician, known and liked in town and he said others can do the administration. He also recommended that both candidates for First Selectmen get elected to the Board of Selectmen if they are among the top vote getters. Chairman Brooks noted that in the elections of 2003, 2007 and 2009 where multiple candidates for Selectmen were endorsed, the losing First Selectman candidate did not have enough votes to displace any of the other candidates. Mr. Watras asked Mr. Packard if he'd recommend reverting back to an old practice where the highest vote getter in both races was elected First Selectman. Mr. Packard responded that he would not. Mr. Books noted that they are fundamentally different positions.

Mr. Packard said the way the treasurer position is defined, it isn't needed. He said we need a strong financial person to help the Board of Finance (BoF) and Board of Selectmen (BoS). He noted that the reporting line should be to the BoS. He noted that the First Selectman effectively works as the BoS but the reporting line should be to the BoS. Mr. Packard said the Treasurer is not needed unless defined by State Statute. He noted that the Town always hires experts for difficult decisions. He noted that the CFO and Treasurer can be synonymous since we're using the position effectively in the same way.

Mr. Packard disagreed with a comment made by Mr. McAnaney (April 9<sup>th</sup>) that the electorate would lose their involvement in the government with a Town Manager. Mr. Packard said he sees the BoS and the First Selectman as a political and policy making board. Administration and planning can be done by a manager. People should know who their Selectmen are. Mr. Packard finished by saying that the town needs two strong people a strong financial person who can help the Selectmen and the BoF and some kind of administrator in case of a weak selectman.

Mr. Parks asked if running the town is different than a business and if two years is enough time to get acclimated. Mr. Packard responded that budget development is difficult in the first year due to timing of the election. He said that the difference between municipal and private business is the interference by the State of Connecticut. There are lots of laws and rules to abide by. He noted that union negotiations are similar in both environments. Mr. Parks asked for Mr. Packard's opinion on changing the Police and Fire Chiefs to report to the BoS. Mr. Packard thought that was a terrible idea since they are professionals in a narrow dedicated field and having them report to a politician would be awkward.

Mr. Watras noted that Mr. Packard saw no need for two financial positions of Treasurer and CFO. He asked Mr. Packard how he would see the check and balance work out. Mr. Packard responded that in his experience it wasn't a problem. He said one person doesn't do everything and other qualified people working in the office can perform some of those duties.

4/30

**E Mail:** Chairman Brooks noted the email received by Ginny Bromage 576 North Main Street on March 29<sup>th</sup>. It was not listed in prior minutes. Ms. Bromage was concerned about how possible Board

and Commission membership changes could negatively impact selection of candidates for this year's elections.

**Public Comment:**

Mel Chafetz of 803 Mapleton Ave said that he still has concerns about the lack of qualifications needed for a First Selectman. Since the concept of a Town Manager doesn't have traction he suggested that the CRC think outside the box. Mr. Chafetz said that as the interim superintendent he is responsible to the Board of Education and must work within parameters. He would like to see the First Selectman position be more accountable. He said the First Selectman position is 1/5th of the vote on the BoS and even more if someone is absent. The First Selectman is accountable to the Board of Finance (BoF) for the budget. He is concerned that regarding the operation of the Town on a day to day basis there is no monitoring outside of finances. Mr. Chafetz suggested that the First Selectman position be changed to report to the Board of Selectmen (BoS) and become a non-voting member of the BoS. It's hard for the BoS to take an independent vote when the First Selectman is a member of the Board. Mr. Brooks said in this scenario you may need to add another selectman or switch the board to 3 members. Mr. Watras said in one corporate model the CEO is a member of the Board of Directors and asked Mr. Chafetz why the CEO wouldn't be a member of the Board. Mr. Chafetz replied that it's difficult for the Board of Selectmen to go against the First Selectman. He believes there needs to be more independence and review by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Chafetz explained in a non-profit model the Executive Director is hired and is accountable to the Board of Directors but doesn't have a seat on the board. Mr. Chafetz concluded by saying that the Town government has a complex budget, lots of employees and unions and a different structure is needed to make people accountable for what they do.

Chris Childs of 338 South Main Street suggested that Mr. Chafetz seemed to be proposing a workaround to a Town Manager. He believes that the Town Manager is still the right solution. He cited the recent BoF discussion to implement a merit pool for raises. This wasn't workable since there is no performance review process and not all job descriptions are up to date. He said a Town Manager would enhance operating efficiencies and be a better way to encourage good behavior from our employees.

Mr. Childs came to clarify the discussion noted in the April 16<sup>th</sup> minutes regarding the CFO and Director of Finance (DoF) positions. He said that in the charter we already have established a CFO position, we just call it the DoF. He said the Town would need to be prepared to spend at least \$125,000 annually to a CFO. He said the DoF had requested an Assistant DoF position in the budget but it was removed by the First Selectman. He said in the April meeting he said he was okay with a CFO position but we should call it what it is (a Town Manager). We are making the DoF become a CFO which becomes a Town Manager based on the responsibilities discussed. Ms. Kling said that the assistant DoF has been proposed multiple times and has been removed from the budget. Mr. Childs said that quality financial reporting is missing. Mr. Chafetz agreed that there was no monthly financial report when he was on the BoS. He said if you want that information you need the support staff.

Mr. Brooks asked Mr. Childs his opinion regarding the DoF dual reporting to the BoF and BoS. Mr. Childs said he felt that the BoF should have an executive session with the DoF annually to discuss strengths and weaknesses but believes the position should ultimately report through the First Selectman but the BoF should have input. Mr. Watras agreed that the DoF is a defacto CFO in the charter. He asked if the BoF has discussed the level of reporting needed with the DoF. Mr. Childs said that it was discussed in open session with a plan to discuss it in executive session but that didn't materialize. Mr. Watras said it is nearly impossible to report to two masters and asked how to achieve both groups getting what they need. Mr. Watras asked how the BoF could have oversight over the BoS? Mr. Childs said he'd think about it. Mr. Chafetz suggested merging the two boards. Mr. Fitzgerald said the power of the purse is a strong influence that the BoF holds.

Gordon Stagg of 1575 North Stone Street asked if the CRC was actively open to the idea of a Town Manager. He said the grapevine says the CRC has been told to not bother. Chairman Brooks said that in his opinion that the BoS will not view the concept of a Town Manager favorably so the choice as a commission is to spend time on a Town Manager or on other items. Mr. Stagg said he was part of a group (CAPS) that provided input to the last CRC he said there seemed to be support but then it just ended. He said that the Town needs change. Ms. Kling said that the last CRC was a big mistake since they spent 18 months and there wasn't support by the BoS. Ms. Kling was a member of that CRC. Mr. Childs asked if there is a provision for the charter revision to get to a referendum if voted down by the BoS. Ms. Kling said she doesn't think the time is now for a Town Manager. Mr. Watras shared his perspective on the last CRC. He said the last CRC included people who fought over the issues and reached some level of compromise. He said the BoS didn't like the idea of two Full time administrators (a First Selectman and a Town Administrator) and sent it back to the CRC for a stronger Town Administrator. Due to time constraints they couldn't change it. It went to the Board of Selectmen with a quorum of 4 members and the vote was 2-2 and the tie breaker wasn't at the table. Ms. Kling said do we want two full time leaders paid \$150,000? Mr. Page 3 of 5

Chafetz suggested a Town Manager full time and a part time First Selectman to be paid a stipend. Mr. Watras said that on this commission the decision has been to move on and not waste time. Mr. Stagg said it appears that our government doesn't facilitate change. Mr. Childs suggests that if there is a bonding referendum that perhaps a Town Manager question be included.

#### **5/8 No Meeting**

**5/14**

**Email: None**

**Public Comment : None**

**5/21**

**Email:**

Mr. Brooks noted that he did receive an email from **Tom Frenaye** regarding the Town Manager. He said he was in favor of a Town Manager and didn't agree with the CRC approach to not pursue it based on it not being recommended by the Board of Selectmen (BoS). He suggested the CRC pursue the Town Manager and force the BoS to reject it.

**Public Comment: None**

#### **5/28 No Meeting**

**6/4**

**Email:** Mr. Kew acknowledged the receipt of emails from **Joe Sangiovanni** (acting chairman of the Board of Finance (BoF)) regarding filling of vacancies on the BoF and allowing the BoS to transfer

monies between departments with BoF approval; **Bill Hawkins** (Town Planner) regarding easements; **Gerry Turbet** (Town Engineer) regarding acceptance of town roads in new developments and acceptance of easements; **Scott Lingenfelter** (former First Selectman) regarding questions regarding charge items pertaining to the First Selectman, etc; **Warren Packard** (former First Selectman) regarding charge items pertaining to the First Selectman, etc. and **Frank Bauchiero** (chairman of Zoning and Planning) regarding the possible name change from Zoning and Planning to Planning and Zoning.

**Public Comment**

**Jeanne Gee of 13 Willow Creek** identified herself as a 24 year resident of town who has been a Board of Education (BoE) member for the past 5 ½ years and is the current chair. She spoke in favor of retaining the charter provision that allows BoE members to fill vacancies on the BoE. She believes that people serving on Boards think deeply about which boards to join and as elected members, BoE candidates need to advocate, to be endorsed and must sell themselves. She believes that these elected officials would be able to use their expertise and knowledge to see what value candidates can add to the BoE. She prefers that the charter stays as is.

**6/11**

**Email: None**

**Public Comment: None**

**6/18**

**Email:** Mr. Kew acknowledged the receipt of emails from **Darlene Burrell** and Town Attorney **Charles T. Alfano, Jr.** regarding determination of the proper version of the Charter.

**Public Comment: None**

**6/25**

**Email: None**

**Public Comment: None**

**7/2**

**Email: None**

**Public Comment:** **Bruce Rietberg of 12 Devine Road** noted that the Board of Selectmen (BoS) rejected all of the CRC recommendations from the 2009 effort and said that the idea of a Town Manager wasn't pursued during this CRC effort. He asked how a Town Manager could ever be sent to the electorate. Mr. Brooks noted that the town would need to elect a BOS who supports a Town Manager form of government. Mr. Fitzgerald said that the State Statutes allow a path for residents to call for a CRC effort.

**Joe Sangiovanni** 150 South Stone and acting chairman of the Board of Finance commented that last week's vote to add language to section 501 gives the First Selectman too broad executive authority with respect to day to day operations. He believes that the language was too brief and too general. He

was concerned that the First Selectman could use his/her authority to override commission decisions. Mr. Sangiovanni was invited to join the conversation when the item came up on the agenda.

## **7/9 Public Hearing**

**Email:** *Mary Ann Zak of 14 Canborne Way* sent an email on July 6<sup>th</sup> urging the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) to retain the Code of Ethics in the Town Charter.

*Tom Frenaye of 489 Warnertown Road* sent a document that he will discuss tonight.

*Derek Donnelly of 6 Cheltenham Court* thanked the CRC for their efforts and did not support changes to 1009C to increase the timeline to petition for a referendum from ten to sixty days. He also believes that the timeframes in 1009 and 1005 should be consistent. Mr. Donnelly questioned the potential impact of the change on the annual budget referendum.

*Ben Rodriguez of 560 Thrall Avenue* thanked the CRC for their work and said he was in agreement with all of the actions being taken and not taken.

### **Public Comment:**

*Bruce Reitberg of 12 Devine Road* said he assumed the Charter would be reviewed for spelling errors and for removal of verbiage related to the implementation of the charter in 1985 and 1987. He questioned section 502F that the Police and Fire chief were not exceptions. Mr. Brooks replied that was correct.

Mr. Parks suggested that anyone noticing typographical errors bring them to the CRC attention.

*Ernie Petkovich of 40 Valley View Drive* said that section 502F recommended change was the right path to clarify executive power of the First Selectman but he believed that the proposed language doesn't clarify it. He questioned whether a Board & Commission or the First Selectman makes the decision. Regarding Section 1008 and 1009 changes to the number of needed signatures from 10% to 8%, Mr. Petkovich believes it is still too many to be achievable. Regarding Section 1009A he questioned who decides a Town Meeting has been adjourned. He agreed with the additional provision to allow technical amendments of a non-substantive nature to be added outside of a charter revision commission. He understood that the legislative body is the Town meeting but he couldn't find references to that in the charter. He noted that section 204 was changed but wasn't included in the summary document. He will send an email on any others he discovered. Mr. Petkovich agreed with the removal of sections 605-607 as appointive personnel. He also suggested that 604 – Administrator for Social Services should also be removed. Mr. Petkovich also said that we need a Town Manager/Administrator. He noted that we are fortunate to have our last two First Selectmen but in the past twenty years there have been some "human deer in the headlights" running our town. He would like the CRC to recommend a Town Administrator (TA) and force the Board of Selectmen to publicly vote against this. He said in reviewing the minutes there have been 15-20 people saying that it is time for a Town Manager.

*Mel Chafetz of 803 Mapleton Avenue* suggested that the gender be corrected in the document and pointed out section 807. He also was not in favor the increase to 60 days for a referendum especially since it could impact the fiscal year end for a budget referendum. He also spoke in favor of a Town Manager (TM) since a First Selectman can be elected without any qualifications. He said that public and private business requires a different skill set. He is aggravated that the Selectman said not to bring the recommendation of a TM/TA to them. He believes that it should be brought to Town residents for a vote.

*Warren Packard 2 Oxford Drive* said the CRC was a good commission and thought the TM seemed to be getting some legs but he is disappointed that the power structure in town convinced them to not bring the recommendation forward. He noted that change is scary and the Town needs to get to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some of the best managed communities have TM (Granby, South Windsor, Tolland,

Canton) they are well run and operate effectively. He asked that the CRC reconsider the TM before their final recommendation.

*Pat Reilly of 740 Mather Street* asked about the acceptance of Town roads and whether or not the same system of checks and balances with the Town Engineer will be in place. Chairman Brooks replied that they will remain. He asked what the next steps were in the process. Mr. Brooks replied that the CRC will meet next week to discuss the Public Hearing comments received. Then a final report will be presented. The Board of Selectmen (BoS) can suggest changes in a 10 day period and then they can accept or reject items. Any accepted items will be sent to referendum. It is up to the BoS to determine whether it is one or many questions on a ballot and when the vote will take place. It is assumed that it would be at the November election. Mr. Reilly said he was in favor of a TM/TA too. He thanked the CRC for their work.

*Tom Bellmore of 1031 Mountain Road* was in agreement with a TA. He had concerns about 502F giving extra authority to the First Selectman and away from the Police and Fire Commission. He noted that Special Acts will need to be deleted if the authority is taken away from the Fire and Police Commission to remove confusion. He said as a 46 year town employee and a 30 year department head he said the commission was a good cushion when there was a bad First Selectman in office. If a commission has no authority why would a department head interact with a commission? He said that a good set of rules and policies should exist to support the TA or First Selectman.

*Paul Wersaukas of 1240 Mapleton Ave* asked how the proposal of a Town Manager could get to a referendum for a vote by the residents since the Selectmen are not in favor of it.

*Ruth Zimmerman of 36 Gooseberry Drive* stated that the argument to give the First Selectmen more authority is because the commissions are not available to meet all the time and the First Selectman will fill in on day to day matters. She said that the Selectmen/commission form of government isn't working and the solution is a TM. She said that the Town is too complex to leave to a First Selectman who may not be qualified.

*Lester Smith of Marbern Drive* agreed that the language in section 502F is vague. He noted that 804 D the phrase "lives, health and property" should be changed to "lives, health and/or property". Mr. Smith also noted that the phrase "annual town budget" should be a consistent form in capitals or not. He also said he is in favor of a Town Manager.

*Jackie Hemond of 230 Fairhill Lane* came to observe but also is in favor of a TM.

*Roger Ives of 584 Thompsonville Road* stated he is in favor of a TM and it should be put up for a vote by town residents. Chairman Brooks thanked Mr. Ives and Mr. Reitberg for their presence at most of the CRC meetings.

*Tom Frenaye of 489 Warnertown Road* said he had sent an email to the CRC but wanted to highlight a couple of his comments. Section 502F has generated many comments and said in general it may be a positive step but it could have unintended consequences. He was unsure of the problem it is trying to solve. He question why the Director of Finance was excluded rather than the Board of Finance. He suggests that the proposed additional language to 611A doesn't belong in the charter. Mr. Frenaye noted that 706F regarding Emergency Management is supposed to be an advisory commission not a department. The commission hasn't met in the last ten years, has no electors and members have no terms defined. He believes the intention was to get the fire, ambulance and police groups to meet which would be beneficial. Regarding removal of the Public Works Commission (706P) Mr. Frenaye said it was a worthwhile commission and Public Works controls over 20% of the Town side budget. He said almost every other part of the town has a board or commission or an elected official. Chairman Brooks said that he believed the Permanent Building Commission filled the need for a Public Works Commission. Mr. Frenaye disagreed and offered to speak with Chairman Brooks offline. Mr. Frenaye noted that the position of First Selectman has too many direct reports and unclear lines of authority. He also agreed that gender should be handled in a better way in the charter. He also suggested that a list of technical changes be posted.

*Chris Rago of 22 Brookside Drive* was in favor of a Town Manager.

*Mel Chafetz of 803 Mapleton Avenue* re-stated that there are no qualifications for a First Selectman. He also asked if the First Selectman was a full or part time job. Mr. Fitzgerald read section 501 that states it is a full time position.

*Warren Packard of 2 Oxford Drive* said he agreed with some of Tom Frenaye's comments and that he tried to draw an organizational chart when he was First Selectman and it was impossible. He said the Public Works Commission was created since they were the only department without a commission. If you are staying with Boards and Commissions the Public Works commission should remain for oversight and help.

*Ernie Petkovich* challenged the CRC to use the work that was done six years ago and put the TM/TA on the list of recommendations. He said the TA was a lighter version of a TM. He suggested that the CRC force the BoS to vote in a public meeting against letting the people decide on a TA. He also noted that the CRC didn't have to complete their work in the next 3 weeks that they have another 10-12 months to complete their recommendation.

7/16

**Email:** Two emails were received from *Ernie Petkovich 40 Valley View Drive* one included technical changes and the other included the 2008-09 CRC work regarding a Town Administrator.

*Bruce Rietberg of 12 Devine Road* sent an email with suggested technical changes that Chairman Brooks will review.

*Tim Reynolds 56 Deep Brook Harbor* sent an email saying he supported a lower threshold for referendum signatures. Mr. Reynolds was also in support of a Town Manager.

*Edward Basile of 528 Hale Street* sent an email stating that allowing 60 days to create a petition could be problematic.

**Public Comment:** None