

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 19, 2015**

**Present:** Bob Brooks, Bob Parks, Brian Fitzgerald, Bobbie Kling, Jeff Kew, and Brian Dudack. Also present First Selectman Edward McAnaney. Chairman Brooks called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes from February 12, 2015 Regular Meeting**

Mr. Parks made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 12th Regular Meeting of the Charter Revision Commission (CRC). Second by Ms. Kling. Jeff Kew asked that the following be added to the discussion on minority representation, "Jeff Kew noted that currently registered Republicans (30% of the electorate) hold 2/3 of the seats on most boards (e.g. BOF, BOS, Planning and Zoning, etc)." Vote 6-0 in favor to accept the Minutes of the February 12, 2015 Regular Meeting of the CRC as amended.

**Correspondence:**

Mr. Kew asked that the following email correspondence be acknowledged:

Amy Reay of 125 Bridge Street  
Kristin Allard of 1167 Mountain Road  
Paul Wersaukas of 1240 Mapleton Avenue  
Christine Davidson of 103 Plantation Drive

**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.

**Discussion regarding the possible Finance/Treasurer changes.**

Chairman Brooks asked for comments after the discussion with Ed Basile. The group agreed that Mr. Basile has a wealth of knowledge. Mr. Basile noted that it would be a challenge to find someone to act as a CFO. Mr. Fitzgerald suggests that the CRC look at how other towns structure their Finance area, such as Avon, Granby and Simsbury. Mr.

Fitzgerald said that the Selectmen struggle getting the information they need and require more professional help. Mr. Dudack noted a website that showed other Town charters. He noted Simsbury has a CFO/Treasurer. Mr. Brooks said next steps would include – talking to other Towns (East Granby, Simsbury, Canton); speak to WPCA on their interaction with Finance; trying to find more information from CCM and discussing the entire Finance Department structure in other Towns. Jeff Kew noted that Mr. Basile said that the CRC may not want to include the detail of some of these positions in the Charter. Mr. Brooks thought that the Town Attorney would need to be consulted. He noted that Charter should include the reporting relationships for chain of command as well as the hiring and firing process since a committee comprised of BoF and BoS members was suggested. Mr. Kew asked if another person in Finance could be hired? Mr. Fitzgerald said that the BoS could recommend a new position, budget for it and recommend it to the Board of Finance. If approved by the BoF, then the position would be approved at the Budget Town Meeting. Members agreed that high level positions should be noted in the Charter including reporting lines without detailed job descriptions. Mr. McAnaney said he is working on some language to include in the Charter for these new positions. Jeff Kew noted that Mr. Basile was in favor of keeping an elected Treasurer and the group should keep that in mind. Discussion followed regarding the unopposed election of Treasurer, Tax Collector and Town Clerk. Ms. Davidson said that she knew of only two instances when the Treasurer ran unopposed. Ms. Kling said it was a testament to the Town Committees to know when there's a good person in the position to not run anyone against them. It was also suggested that if you run unopposed maybe the position should be appointed. Ms. Kling said that power to appoint is a real power. It was also noted that the Tax Collector and Town Clerk have certification requirements although to run for the office you only need to be an elector. Mr. Parks asked if we should look to appoint those positions. Ms. Kling said no. Chairman Brooks thought it was something to consider. Ms. Kling thought being able to deal with the public is a key requirement. Certification can only be required if you appointed/hired the position. After discussion, the idea of appointment of a Tax Collector and Town Clerk was dismissed.

### **Discuss the petition process/percentage for a referendum**

First Selectman McAnaney said that Selectman Reynolds has been advocating for a reduced number of signatures to petition a referendum as 10% is too high. Ms. Kling suggested 6%. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that there are two different petitions with 10% requirement noted in the Charter, one for the Town Budget Meeting and one for all other Special Town Meetings. Mr. Fitzgerald said he doesn't like to call the Town out twice on important matters. Currently, the BoS calls a Town Meeting where the item is voted on and then the Selectmen send the item to a referendum for a day-long vote. Mr. Fitzgerald said that the Town Meeting is important as an informational tool but the Town Meeting should be adjourned and then the vote takes place at the referendum. The Town meeting then becomes a Public Hearing which is needed for education on issues. Ms. Kling said that the danger of the referendum is that many people come out to vote no. Selectman Fitzgerald read Charter section 1008 which says "No appropriations may be authorized by any town meeting unless such appropriation has been recommended by

the Board of Finance, or such appropriation is requested in a petition signed by not less than ten percent of the registered electors of the Town as determined by the most recent official list of registered voters”. He cautioned against lowering this threshold as it is playing with fiscal fire.

The charge from the Board of Selectmen was regarding section 1009C to consider a reduction of the petition percentage. Section 1009C states “Regardless of the vote at a Town Meeting, except for the Annual Town Budget Meeting, a petition may be presented to the Town Clerk within ten days after the town meeting requesting a referendum on the issue or issues which were either approved or rejected by the Town Meeting. The petition must be signed by at least that number of voters equal to ten percent of electors of the Town. The Board of Selectmen must schedule the referendum for a date which is no more than twenty-one days from the receipt of a valid petition by the Town Clerk.” First Selectman McAnaney noted that the Town Meeting is the legislature of the Town and although the charter changes were meant to strengthen the Town Meeting it helped increase attendance but still did not yield the desired effect. A lengthy discussion followed and it was decided to invite Tim Reynolds to a meeting to discuss his thoughts and to look at the thresholds of some other towns.

### **Minority representation on Commissions**

Mr. Parks talked to chairs of the Town Committees and said they were neither strongly in favor or opposed to the idea of changing board and commission membership counts to a simple majority. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that during the Charter Revision when the BoS was changed to 5 members there was concern that there could be a 4-1 party representation so the simple majority (3-2) requirement was added. Ms. Kling noted that the Zoning Board of Appeals has statutory requirements and works well with 5 full and 3 alternate members. She also noted that the BoF has 6 voting members and a tie vote is not always a bad result. Mr. Kew spoke in favor of a simple majority rule regardless of whether or not any commission membership counts were changed. Mr. McAnaney said to set aside members positions for a party when other candidates receive higher vote counts and not be elected is not democratic. Mr. Parks noted that after the election, party affiliation doesn't come into play and the Boards work together in the best interest of the Town. Mr. Kew said it's the opportunity to get on the board that he would like to see changed. Mr. Brooks said that having set asides means that you could have elected members who didn't actually win. Mr. McAnaney said the intent of the charge was trying to determine a good/standard size for commissions and whether or not there should be odd number of members. Mr. Brooks asked if the focus should be on elected boards over appointed boards. Regarding the number of members on a commission, Selectman Fitzgerald noted that Boards and Commissions today should be setting policy. In years past, they performed work for the department but now paid staff exists to do the work. He noted that the Boards and Commission used to have fiscal functions but now they have become advocacy groups. Ms. Kling asked why we would reduce the membership of Boards and Commissions if there are people who want to help. She said the Board and Commission members do a tremendous job for the Town and it would hurt the Town by reducing the number of members who are willing to help.

**Vacancy on CRC**

Mr. Kew asked about the vacancy for the 7<sup>th</sup> member of the CRC. He said he would like to see the Democratic Town Committee endorsed candidates who were not selected when the CRC was formed. Mr. McAnaney said his preference was to appoint an unaffiliated voter since that was Mr. Cervione's affiliation.

Mr. Fitzgerald moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Kling seconded. After a unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Trase  
Recording Secretary