

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION  
MAY 14, 2015**

**Present:** Bob Brooks, Brian Fitzgerald, Jeff Kew, Brian Dudack, Charles Watras and Bobbie Kling. **Absent:** Bob Parks. Chairman Brooks called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes from April 30, 2015 Regular Meeting**

Ms. Kling made a motion to accept the minutes of the April 30th Regular Meeting of the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) as presented. Mr. Watras seconded the motion. Mr. Kew questioned the language in a sub paragraph but it was deemed to be correct. Vote 6-0 in favor.

Chairman Brooks stated that Mr. Parks has resigned from the commission and as vice chairman due to an injury. The Commission members voiced their gratitude for Mr. Parks' work on the CRC. Chairman Brooks will request that the Board for Selectmen (BoS) appoint a member to replace Mr. Parks. Charlie Watras nominated Jeff Kew as Vice chairman. Ms. Kling seconded the motion. The members voted unanimously in favor of Mr. Kew's appointment as Vice Chairman. Mr. Watras asked if it was appropriate to send a letter of thanks to Mr. Parks as his contributions were many and he was a valuable member of the CRC.

Mr. Fitzgerald suggested that the CRC ask the BoS to consider extending the timeframe of the CRC effort. He noted that since most of the changes impacting the election have not been recommended the Charter changes could be voted upon at the November general election. Timing was discussed and Mr. Fitzgerald moved to extend the timeframe of the CRC so the draft report would be completed by August 31, 2015. Mr. Kew seconded the motion. It was suggested that the BoS provide guidance and that the public would have time to consider the items before the election. Timing of the Public Hearing was also discussed. The motion passed by a vote of 5-1 in favor. Ms. Kling voted against the motion.

**Correspondence Received:** None

**Public Comment:** None

Chairman Brooks noted that he sent an email to former First Selectmen Lingenfelter, Frenaye, Sarsynski, Skinner and Packard with questions regarding the consideration of many of the issues before the commission. Mr. Packard responded with his comments. Mr. Frenaye and Mr. Lingenfelter said they'd draft a response and submit it to the CRC.

It was noted that First Selectman McAnaney was not able to attend. Mr. Brooks had planned to ask about the charge for consideration for the Board of Selectmen to approve easements and acceptance of subdivision roads rather than to require Town Meeting approval.

Mr. Fitzgerald said that acceptance of roads from subdivisions is a formality. Ms. Kling said the Town Engineer must submit an 8-24 report for acceptance. It was noted that the provision should not be extended to private roads.

### **Selectmen's term of office – 2 years or 4 years**

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that he will not vote on Board of Selectmen matters but can vote on items relating to the First Selectman. Chairman Brooks noted that there has been overwhelming input from the public not in favor of changing to a four year term. Discussion followed on the difference between taking no action vs. not recommending a charge item. It was agreed that the public would like closure on the matter and deserve a response. Mr. Kew made the motion to leave the term of office at 2 years for the Board of Selectmen and First Selectmen. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dudack. Mr. Fitzgerald recused himself from the vote. Vote in favor 5-0-1 with Mr. Fitzgerald abstaining.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if the CRC wanted to consider allowing the loser of the First Selectmen election to be counted in the Board of Selectmen race. Chairman Brooks said he was not in favor of this idea since they are viewed as two different offices. Ms. Kling said that if the loser of the race was a past Selectman they have a lot of experience that could be good on the Board of Selectmen. This was changed in the 2001 charter due to personality issues. Mr. Kew charted out the mathematical improbability of the candidate getting enough votes to outplace a Board of Selectmen candidate. It was noted that it has become difficult since the Board of Selectmen was expanded from three to five members. It was agreed to take no action on the idea of the loser of the First Selectman race votes to be counted in the Board of Selectmen race.

### **CFO/Treasurer**

Chairman Brooks stated that the BoS already has the ability to have a CFO position in the charter. He was looking for members' thoughts on that as well as the possibility of a combined Treasurer/Director of Finance (DoF); eliminating the elected Treasurer and changing the reporting line for the Director Finance.

Ms. Kling supports retaining an elected Treasurer. Mr. Kew said he'd encourage a charter change for the CFO to the BoS and BoF to actually hire the position. Mr. Brooks said that most people responded the DoF should report to a singular party or board and not both. Mr. Watras added that the DoF responsibilities are detailed in the charter and in order to get the support that both the BoF and BoS need, the reporting relationship was split to avoid conflict of who gets support at critical times. He was concerned about losing the checks and balances if the treasurer function is changed. He said there are many examples of good people in public service who have succumbed to temptation. He

said it's a small sacrifice to maintain public trust. Mr. Watras noted that with a different form of administration these problems would be worked out. Mr. Fitzgerald said that per charter the Director of Finance position should be reappointed every 4 years but that is not being done. He also said that by having two masters, the position in effect has no master. Mr. Brooks said decoupling the DoF from the BoF doesn't feel right. Ms. Kling moved to keep the treasurer as an elected office in Town as is dictated in the Charter. Mr. Kew seconded the motion and it passed 6-0 in favor.

Ms. Kling made a motion that the Director of Finance position remain as is reporting to both the BoF and BoS as stated in Charter section 611. Seconded by Mr. Watras. Mr. Fitzgerald said he'd vote against the motion since he thinks there needs to be a better line of authority. Mr. Kew said that perhaps the problem is the review process and we should remove the 4 year appointment and eliminate the review process. Mr. Watras said the Charter does define some responsibilities for the DoF and the Town should allocate money in the budget for additional services. He's heard we need more financial reporting but doesn't feel like specifics have been defined. Experts exist who could be consulted and act as resources for hire. The motion failed by vote of 3-3 with Ms. Kling, Mr. Watras and Mr. Kew in favor while Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Brooks and Mr. Dudack voted against the motion.

#### Zoning and Planning to Planning and Zoning

Chairman Brooks contacted Zoning and Planning Chairman Frank Bauchiero and he was agreeable to changing the name of the Commission from Zoning and Planning to Planning and Zoning. Mr. Brooks made the motion to change Zoning and Planning to Planning and Zoning to be compliant with State Statutes. Seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald.

Vote 5-1 with Ms. Kling voting against. There are cosmetic and policy name changes to be modified.

#### Miscellaneous

Mr. Kew said since Public Comment has been in favor of a Town Manager and Mr. Watras suggested a referendum question previously he would like to consider some action. Mr. Fitzgerald said advisory questions don't typically yield the same answer as final results and he is concerned about possible inaccurate results. Mr. Kew suggested the CRC recommend a non-binding vote to provide information for the next Charter Revision to determine the level of public interest. The phrasing of the question would be crucial. Mr. Brooks suggested possibly asking the electorate whether to consider moving from an elective to appointive form of government. He said it would be difficult to shape Town government based on one question. Mr. Fitzgerald said those are charged words. To accomplish it you would dissolve the BoS and BoF and develop a Town Council. Mr. Watras noted that there are many local government structure models across the state. Discussion followed about an objective body to be appointed to consider changing the form of government. Mr. Fitzgerald said that a resident group could petition for a charter change outside of the Board of Selectmen directive. Mr. Watras said he could live with the structure either way but the community is being denied its

right to self-determination. Mr. Fitzgerald hoped this Charter Revision effort would be a compromise between Town Manager and our current form of government.

Ms. Kling moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald and by unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Next Meeting will be held on May 21st.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Trase  
Recording Secretary