

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE  
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS  
July 9, 2015**

**Present:** Bob Brooks, Jeff Kew, Brian Fitzgerald, Charles Watras, and Bob Parks.  
**Absent:** Bobbie Kling and Brian Dudack. Chairman Brooks called the meeting to order at 7: 32 p.m.

**Chairman Brooks acknowledge the following correspondence that had been received:**

*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.

At this point Chairman Brooks opened up the meeting for audience comments:

*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 Wersauckas 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 Chaftez 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.

Chairman Brooks thanked everyone for their input. The Public Hearing ended at 8:28 p.m.

Next Meeting will be held on July 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Lower Level Conference room.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Trase  
Recording Secretary