

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION  
July 16, 2015**

**Present:** Bob Brooks, Jeff Kew, Brian Fitzgerald, Charles Watras, Bob Parks, Bobbie Kling and Brian Dudack. Chairman Brooks called the meeting to order at 7: 01 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes from July 2, 2015 Regular Meeting**

Mr. Parks made a motion to accept the minutes of the July 2, 2015 Regular Meeting of the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) as presented. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. **Vote 7-0 in favor.**

**Approval of Minutes from July 9, 2015 Public Hearing**

Mr. Brooks made a motion to accept the minutes of the July 9, 2015 Public Hearing of the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) as presented. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. **Vote 5-0 in favor with Ms. Kling and Mr. Dudack abstaining since they were absent.**

**Public Comment: None**

**Correspondence Received:** 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 was not in favor of changing the time allowed to create a petition for referendum to sixty days. He thought this was too long. 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.

**Discussion regarding input from the Public Hearing**

Chairman Brooks reported that he discussed a possible extension with First Selectman McAnaney but it wasn't supported by multiple selectmen. It was acknowledged that the appointing authority (Board of Selectmen) defined the due date for the report. It was agreed to try to finish all of the open items in this meeting.

### **Regarding the proposed change to 502F.**

Proposed language:

F. On matters requiring consistency and coordination across Town departments\* and their employees, the First Selectman shall have executive authority, in consultation with any respective board or commission, over Town employees for such matters.

\*With the exception of the Board of Education, WCPA, and the Director of Finance

Tom Frenaye, Tom Bellmore, Lester Smith and others said the language was vague. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that the proposed language was a compromise. Mr. Brooks stated that Chairman Brooks noted that Ernie Petkovich and Tom Frenaye agreed that the change had some merit but Tom was concerned about unintended consequences. A brief discussion followed and it was agreed to leave the language as previously proposed.

### **Regarding the language added to 611A – Director of Finance**

Proposed language:

The Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen shall meet at least 90 days prior to the expiration of the present Director of Finance's term to discuss and approve the appointment of a new Director of Finance for a term of up to four years or the reappointment of the present Director of Finance for an additional term of up to four years.

Mr. Frenaye had commented that it shouldn't be in the Charter. Mr. Fitzgerald said the language was included to remind the Board of Selectmen (BoS) and Board of Finance (BoF) that they need to meet to agree to reappoint the Director of Finance. It was agreed to leave the language as previously proposed.

**Regarding the removal of the Public Works Commission (706P)** Mr. Frenaye said that the Highway Dept and Landfill functions were not assumed by the Permanent Building Commission (PBC). Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the Public Works Commission was added in the last Charter Revision in 2001 as an advisory commission and didn't work. It was agreed to leave the recommendation to remove it from the Charter.

**Regarding the change of Office of Civil Preparedness (706F)** to Emergency Management Department, Mrs. Kling said the proposed change would create a department which is incorrect. Mr. Brooks acknowledged the error. Mr. Frenaye had noted that the Commission has not met. Mr. Brooks made a motion to change Emergency Management Department to Emergency Management Office. Ms. Kling seconded. **Vote 7-0 in favor.**

**Regarding proposed changes for 1008 and 1009C** for reducing the percentage of electors needed to sign a petition and the change to allow up to 60 days for a petition to be created, there have been many comments. Since the percentage was reduced the CRC had agreed to allow a longer time for collecting petition signatures. Mr. Watras said he advocates for a still lower percentage and Derek Donnelly said he thought petitioning for a referendum should be difficult. Mr. Watras said there's a difference between difficult and impossible. After discussion, Mr. Brooks made the motion to amend the

language approved on April 23<sup>rd</sup> changing the requirement for collecting the signatures needed from 60 days to 21 days. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. **Vote 7-0 in favor.**

Mr. Kew made a motion to amend the previously approved language in 1008 to have a petition signed from 8% of registered electors to 7%. Mr. Brooks seconded the motion. Mr. Watras said he was in favor of a lower percentage. **Vote 6-1 in favor with Mr. Fitzgerald voting against the motion.**

**Regarding section 804D,** Lester Smith suggested changing the first line which says “For the purpose of meeting a public emergency threatening the lives, health and property of citizens”. Mr. Brooks made a motion to modify **section 804D to say** “For the purpose of meeting a public emergency threatening the lives, health or property of citizens”. **Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion and it passed unanimously 7-0 in favor.**

**Regarding section 604 Administrator for Social Services** it was agreed to leave it in the Charter even though this function is currently being done by the Emergency Aid Association.

Mr. Watras noted that the Chapter numbering on the first page of the Charter should be corrected. It was also decided to remove the heading Part 1.

### **Town Manager (TM)/Administrator (TA) Discussion**

Mrs. Kling said that she was not in favor of considering a Town Manager at this time. She thought it was too late in the process, a few people want it and it wasn't on the charge list from the BoS. Mr. Brooks said that Mr. Petkovich had suggested using the prior CRC work to adopt and recommend a TA. Chairman Brooks agreed with Mrs. Kling and said that the Town has had a problematic relationship with appointive personnel like the past two police chiefs and a number of former superintendents. He also said a TM would be hard to get rid of. Mr. Kew said he would like to see a TM and lots of people came to say they were in favor. Mr. Watras supported Mr. Kew's position but said that the summary report should acknowledge that there has been a persistent calling within the community for a change in the form of administration. He said that the CRC agreed to the BoS limiting the time and scope of the CRC effort and we're denying the electorate their constitutional right of self determination. Mr. McAnaney said that those who seek change tend to come to meetings and that the majority who are satisfied won't come to a meeting to retain the current form of government. He noted that there was a CRC effort many years ago that did propose a TM but it was soundly defeated. Mr. Parks said that it will be necessary to elect candidates who support a TM and the caucuses are up coming. Mr. Parks admits that he vacillates on the proposition of a TM he doesn't want to take closeness to people away but agrees that financial managerial talent is needed for a \$50Million budget.

Mr. McAnaney said if people really want a TM they can petition for it. Mr. Watras said that a TM is not an end all solution but it is a form of administration that can bring continuity and professionalism into the community. He noted that many other communities have overcome the concerns and have determined a workable model. Mr. Kew made a motion to request an extension from the Board of Selectmen for the purpose of creating recommendation for a Town Manager/Town Administrator. Mr. Kew wanted to honor the wishes of those residents who came to the Public Hearings. The motion was seconded by Mr. Watras. Mr. Brooks said that an extension would make the CRC recommendations take place after the fall election. Mrs. Kling said she likes the Town Meeting. Mr. Dudack said he appreciated the motion and supports the inclusion of the proposed language to the final report by Mr Watras. Mr. Parks said that the issue is important and needs a lot more time. He also said everyone knows how the BoS feels and he feels that some of the TM supporters were really trying to play politics to force the BoS to vote the recommendation down. He believes now is not the time to look at a TM. Chairman Brooks called for a vote. **The motion failed by a 2-5 vote with Mr. Kew and Mr. Watras voting in favor.**

Chairman Brooks will draft the final changes and summary report and will solicit feedback from the CRC members and the Town Attorney. Then it will be submitted to the Town Clerk as required.

Mr. Watras made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Mr. Parks. Vote 7-0 in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Trase  
Recording Secretary