

CHARTER COMMISSION

Robert Russell, Chairman
Michael Kaelin, Vice Chairman



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TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897

**CHARTER COMMISSION
May 14, 2009
Wilton Town Hall, Room B**

PRESENT: Robert Russell, Louise Herot, Marilyn Gould, Paul Burnham
Mike Kaelin, Alice Ayers, Chris Weldon
ABSENT: Toni Lee, Doug Levene

GUESTS: Warren Serenbetz, Chairman, Board of Finance

Chairman Russell called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m. in Meeting Room B.

All members were in receipt of the latest draft version of the Charter incorporating the recommended changes of each subcommittee. Ms. Ayers congratulated Mr. Burnham and Mr. Levene for the excellent job they did on Sections 28-34, which is now much easier to understand. Mr. Kaelin was thanked for his efforts in putting all subcommittee sections together in one document and in one format.

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by Ms. Gould the minutes of the 4/30/09 meeting were unanimously approved (Mr. Burnham abstained as he was not present). Upon motion by Ms. Gould, the minutes of the 5/7/09 meeting were unanimously approved with correction.

Review updated timeline:

First Draft Report prepared	by Friday May 15, 2009
Suggest that we delay this until after our May 18 meeting.	
Public Hearing	Wednesday June 3, 2009, 7:30pm
Draft Report Submitted	Friday June 19, 2009
Meet with BOS, if requested	Monday July 6, 2009
BOS Public Hearing	Monday July 20 (proposed)
BOS makes final recom. to CC	Monday August 3 (or earlier)
CC meetings if necessary	August 5, August 12, 2009
Final Report to BOS	BOS requested by Monday August 17 (new date)
BOS votes on August 17 to approve Charter and place it on Nov. 3 ballot	

The First Draft of the Charter will be available to the public on the Town website before the public hearing on June 3, 2009.

A letter was received from First Selectman Bill Brennan regarding comments from the 5/7/09 Charter Commission meeting that were made by Mr. Alper and Mr. Pforzheimer. Mr. Brennan stated that the comments inferring that the Board of Selectmen budget is growing at a slower rate than the Board of Education budget because the Board of Finance has line item control is inaccurate. This is not how the Board of Selectmen works on the budget. Ms. Gould agreed that the BOS makes decisions based on policy issues, and a desire to control the budget and control hiring. Ms. Ayers also agreed.

Mr. Russell advised that he looked into the records and found that in 1979, the BOF reduced the DPW budget by \$100,000 for plow trucks; reduced the request to restore the old Town Hall that was in a state of near collapse from \$60,000 to \$40,000; and cut a flood control project on Long Meadow Road from \$70,000 to \$50,000. The BOF used line item control twice during his tenure, in 1983, they cut \$70,000 from BOS capital for the first phase of a town hall computer system. It has been used, but Mr. Russell remembers working cooperatively with the BOF during his tenure as First Selectman.

Continuation of review of the consolidated Charter document for content, consistency and clarity.

The Commission went sequentially through sections C1 – C20, making word changes in different areas for better clarity.

Other changes discussed included:

Section C5B(1) - *add* “provided that organizations receiving financial support from the Town shall, *unless otherwise authorized by the Town Meeting:*”

Section C9 - A change was made from requiring 50 signatures to requiring 2% of the total electorate on a petition to call a Special Town Meeting. Also it was decided to require a majority of 15% of total electors of the Town to approve a petition proposal at said STM.

A question was raised about who is authorized to initiate lawsuits on behalf of the Town. This will be further researched and discussed at the next meeting.

Section C19 – “The First Selectman shall be an ex officio member of all Boards and Committees of the Town,” is now preceded by “except as provided by ordinance or other law”. By ordinance, the First Selectman is Chairman of both the Water Pollution Control Authority and the Wilton Water Commission and therefore has voting rights.

C20 (E) - After discussion, it was decided to remove the requirement that the First Selectman receive the budget 75 days prior to the Annual Town Meeting and change to “on or prior to a date determined by The First Selectman”. It was felt that 75 days is not enough time and the

First Selectman should decide when he wants to receive budget requests. It was also added that the First Selectman shall receive the Board of Education proposed budget at the same time it is submitted to the Board of Finance.

Due to the late hour, it was decided to resume the review of the remaining sections at the meeting scheduled for Monday, May 18, 2009. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Jan Andras
Recording Secretary
Minutes taken from audio recording

DRAFT