

CHARTER COMMISSION

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Robert Russell
Chairman

Michael Kaelin
Vice Chairman

TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897

CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING

July 23, 2009

Wilton Library

PRESENT: Robert Russell, Marilyn Gould, Louise Herot, Doug Levene, Chris Weldon, Michael Kaelin, Toni Lee

ABSENT: Paul Burnham, Alice Ayers

GUESTS: Dr. Richards, Karen Birck, Charlie Clemmens, Fred Herot, John Kalaramides

Chairman Russell called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

Acceptance of Minutes: Upon motion by Ms. Herot, the minutes of the 6/19/09 meeting were unanimously approved as presented.

Discuss and Act on Comments from Board of Selectmen

Final Review and Recommendations from BOS, dated 7/10/09

Preamble – The Selectman suggest that the current preamble be expanded, if possible, to include a reference to previous amendments that were made. Ms. Herot had recommended to BOS that they have an accompanying document that could explain things that are in the Charter in normal language. Ms. Lee and Mr. Kaelin will draft an executive summary for the front of the Charter.

Elimination of Latin phrases – Commission members decided that these should be left as written in the Draft.

Voting Procedure – The Selectmen suggest a separate section be written to detail the voting procedures at Town Meetings, Special Town Meetings, Adjourned Town Meetings, etc. Mr. Russell proposed a standard definition of “machine voting” for the definition section. Any section of the Charter that talks about “machine voting” should say “see definitions”.

Definition of “Board” and “Committee” – Add to definition: “authority”, “council”, “task force” etc.

C-6-A (5) Real Estate Leases – The Board of Selectmen suggest deleting sections B and C. Ms. Gould feels there should be more oversight over leases than just the First Selectman or BOS and that C-6-B and C-6-C should remain. It was decided to leave as in Draft.

C-9-C (b); C-9-C (c) – The Board of Selectmen suggested re-writing these paragraphs to make them less confusing. Mr. Russell drafted changes.

C-14-A – The Board of Selectmen suggested making last sentence clear. It was decided to eliminate the last sentence.

C-15-A (5) – Agreed to add “...or the Water Pollution Control Authority”.

C-39-B – The Board of Selectmen suggest removing restrictions on Treasurer. It was decided to remove.

C-45-A – The Board of Selectmen suggest reducing the number of constables from 7 to 5. The Commission agreed.

C-46-B – Regarding board and commissions choosing a chairman, the recommended wording was accepted.

C-28 through C-34 – Appropriations, Budget and Finance was re-written by CFO Joe Dolan (7/22/09).

C-29 It was decided to add to the provision giving the Board of Finance access to books of account for any organization receiving grants or subsidies from the Town “*provided such access is in the agreement between the organization and the Town.*”

C-30-A - Mr. Weldon wants it to be clear that the Board of Finance has the right to ask for line item budgets from any agency. They are limited at to what they can do with the line items, but they can require them to be presented.

C-30-E (1) - Responsibilities of the BOF following Public Hearings – There was a lengthy discussion about the inclusion of “to the extent permitted by law”, in reference to the Board of Finance line item authority in the Board of Education budget.

Ms. Lee moved to delete any reference to the Board of Education line items. Motion seconded and carried: 4 YES (Herot, Kaelin, Lee, Russell) – 3 NO (Weldon, Levene, Gould)

C-30-E (2) - Mr. Russell moved to eliminate all reference to the Board of Education in this paragraph. Motion seconded and carried: 4 YES (Russell, Herot, Kaelin, Lee) – 3 NO (Weldon, Levene, Gould)

C-30-F - The Annual Town Meeting – Add: The Town Meeting may not*“reduce the employer’s pension or Other Post Employment Benefits contributions below the actuarially calculated annual required contributions.”*

Mr. Kaelin moved to add: *“the Board of Finance shall set the Recommended Rate of Taxation for the ensuing fiscal year, reduced proportionally by the amendment”* if the budget is passed with a reduction. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

In Section C-31, the previous clause shall also be added to apply to the Reconsidered Budget.

Term Limits - Ms. Herot suggests drafting language to clarify when terms end for those who are appointed to fill a vacancy in an elected position. Town Counsel advised the Town Clerk to use election day, and not November 30. The Commission recommends that all terms end on the same date, November 30. Language will be drafted for the next meeting.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:26 pm.

Jan Andras
Recording Secretary
(Minutes taken from audio recording)