

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
MARCH 12, 2015**

Present: Bob Brooks, Brian Fitzgerald, Jeff Kew, and Brian Dudack. **Absent:** Bobbie Kling, Bob Parks. First Selectman Ed McAnaney was also in attendance. Chairman Brooks called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Approval of Minutes from March 5, 2015 Regular Meeting

Mr. Kew made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 5th Regular Meeting of the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) as presented. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. Vote 4-0 in favor.

Correspondence Received: None

Public Comment: None

Discuss Town Treasurer/CFO proposal next steps

Chairman Brooks asked the group what the next steps should be. Should the group talk to more Towns or proceed with a draft proposal?

Mr. Kew updated the members on his discussion with the Simbury Board of Finance chair Peter Askham. He noted that most of their administrative positions are appointed and that helps with continuity.

Chairman Brooks noted that there is no standard structure across Connecticut Towns and that the "home rule" allows Towns to define their own structure. A lengthy discussion took place with the following language being proposed :

The Board of Selectmen may, with due regard to the political affiliation of the Board and after consultation with the Board of Finance, appoint a Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer of the Town. If appointed, such Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer (CFO) shall report to the First Selectman.

Discussion followed about possibly removing references to the Director of Finance from the charter since that position would be Comptroller reporting to the CFO.

Mr. Kew noted that there still may be a desire to have an elected treasurer who is accountable to the voters.

Chairman Brooks noted that the language is a starting point for continued discussion.

Discuss change to Director reporting relationship to the First Selectman

First Selectman McAnaney suggested language that all directors/heads of departments including Fire, Police and ambulance shall report to the First Selectman. It was noted that not all department heads have an associated commission. The First Selectman has a broader knowledge of the government of the Town; Boards and Commissions may have expertise in the operation of the department (e.g. Library, Fire and Police). Discussion

followed about making a differentiation between elected and appointed Boards and Commissions. When the Board of Selectmen has the appointing authority perhaps they should have the control. The members all agreed that they want Boards and Commissions involved but there needs to be a middle ground. The Town is now a big (\$55Million) business with departments (such as Human Resources) that provide insight and expertise that Boards and Commission may not be able to provide. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that Boards of Education (BOE) have gone through change. The BOE used to hire teachers, but have since assigned that function to superintendents. We may need to do this on the Town side having the department heads report to the Board of Selectmen as it is difficult to report to two boards. Mr. McAnaney said if a department head needs an answer immediately, they come to the First Selectman since that position has a larger view of what is happening everywhere. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that Boards and Commissions do not really have executive authority. It was noted that ordinances should be developed or modified to define the commission duties and responsibilities (not a CRC responsibility). Mr. Brooks stated that there are core tasks of committees in ordinances that need to be attended to. It was agreed that no one was trying to eliminate commissions but they are trying to figure out how to involve them, to keep them involved and to have them focus on items that benefit the Town (like their expertise in their fields).

It was agreed that Chairman Brooks and Jeff Kew would look at language in other charters and review commission ordinances and report back to the group.

Referendum signature limits discussion

Mr. Kew was tasked with finding the percentage requirements for petition from different charters. He distributed a document showing his findings. He noted that the processes and percentages varied across Towns. He highlighted Newington which requires that 5% of voters can petition an initiative to referendum. At the referendum at least 10% of the registered voters must vote affirmatively for the initiative to pass. Mr. Kew suggested that including the secondary rule of requiring a percentage of voters to vote affirmatively was a less risky way to lower the referendum percentage. Mr. Kew suggested that if the petition level is not attainable we should remove it from the charter. Mr. McAnaney stated that we should look for a happy medium so petitions are possible but not so easy that we could go to referendum all the time. Mr. Brooks suggested that 10% is too high. Mr. Fitzgerald said that it used to be 8%. He said that 8 or 10% could be achieved if you are committed to gathering signatures. Chairman Brooks suggested that the item be tabled until the CRC can speak to Selectman Reynolds who requested the item on the charge. He also said that the conversation with Mr. Reynolds should include both budget and non-budget petition percentages.

Mr. Fitzgerald moved to adjourn. Mr. Kew seconded. After a unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Trase
Recording Secretary