

APPROVED MINUTES
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
Wednesday, February 19, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.
MEETING ROOM #133 – TOWN HALL, 100 POCONO ROAD

APPROVED

1. Convene Meeting

Present: S. Parker, M. Grimes, G. Walker, L. Wagner, F. Ball and D. Smolnick

Absent: J. Van Hise

Also Present: Members of the Public:

2. Presentation of Board of Selectmen Resolution by Bill Tinsley: no discussion

3. Clarification by Town Attorney T. Beecher RE: Recall: no discussion

4. Initial Public Hearing (Sign Up Sheet):

G. Friedrich of 10 Cherokee Drive: Asked the Commission to modify three things. One being the powers of the First Selectman and the second being any Personnel issues within the Board of Finance should be resolved by themselves. He would like the First Selectman's power to vote on certain types of issues to be restricted on items such as Capital Expenditures, budget items and the final budget goes to the Town. Another matter to consider is how often the fund balance can be tapped in a Fiscal year. J. Friedrich feels this would enable the Board of Finance to be better Planners for the budget year.

P. Kurtz of 154 No. Lakeshore Dr: She feels the voters during the last Charter Revision made it very clear what they were in favor of and what they weren't in favor of. She did not think the voters were confused. She feels more voters come out during a National Election. Mrs. Kurtz then said she would like to know about the legality of Union Dues being deducted from Employees paychecks since a good portion of dues goes to front Political campaigns. It doesn't get reported as a political donation. She also feels there should be a Town wide robot call for elections to make everyone aware. She would also like to see a plan of maintenance for the Towns assets.

Valerie Maitland Smith 1 Cawdor Burn Rd: Feels the votes should be separate for the Town Budget and Education Budget.

R. Corris of 2 Andover Ct: Also would like Board of Ed and Town being separate votes. She feels the Senior Center is a good location to have a speaker come and explain to the seniors what is going on in Town. She also feels transportation for voting day would be a help to get the seniors out to vote.

Ron Jaffe: Is opposed to anyone other than elected officials voting on issues. He said the First Selectman is a full member of the Board of Finance with one limitation. He said if the First Selectman comes to the Finance Board for changes they always have the ability to say no, so he shouldn't be limited to be able to go to them. He said the Board of Finance's responsibilities are very clear in the charter.

There was discussion about the number of members on the Board of Finance. It was stated that when the the board is in a split decision the First Selectman is the tie-breaker. J. Freidrich wanted to clarify the type of Personnel issues he was referring to in his earlier comment. He meant issues such as the types of Committees they would be on, etc.

Recess the Public portion of the hearing and the regular portion of the Agenda will resume.

5. Approval of Minutes – 2/10/14:

S. Parker made a motion to approve the minutes of 2/10/14 and the motion carried unanimously.

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
BROOKFIELD, CT
APR 1 2014
Nichelle DiBella Asst. 12 PM
JOAN M. LOCKE TOWN CLERK

6. General Discussion among BCRC Members:

M. Grimes started discussion regarding Toms Beecher's email of election statutes. The disclosure form was discussed. There was discussion of the pros and cons of separate votes for the Town Budgets and what would happen if one passed and the other didn't.

They would like some research done on the disclosure form and see if the State would have to be in control of any changes to this form.

L. Wagner pursued further discussion on split budget votes. M. Grimes explained how he had done a lot of research about this in the past. G. Walker discussed advisory questions that the Town would vote on. M. Grimes said when the Board of Ed has to adjust their budget they only do a bottom line. He would like to see them identify by object how they are going to adjust the money.

M. Grimes said some of the other issues he would like to discuss are: Electing of the Police Commission. Another is elimination of outdated Committees. There was discussion regarding the amount of members for the Arts Commission which is currently at fifteen. Another area to look into is the Board of Finance with six members. There was discussion about a possible board with seven members or if it should stay at six members. M. Grimes said they would need to figure out institutionally which number would work best for the Finance Board.

M. Grimes said for the next meeting he would like to make a draft of the language for a bifurcation of the budget vote.

S. Parker brought of the subject of the possible combination of the Public Works Department and Parks and Recreation Department. They will ask the First Selectman for his comments on this.

L. Wagner said she would like to see the results of the votes on past advisory questions.

7. Scheduling of Commission Meetings for March and April:

Motion to approve meeting schedule approved unanimously.

S. Parker said they need to keep these discussions about changes simple.

8. Written Correspondence:

Email from H. Lasser discussed

9. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn carried unanimously at 8:50 pm.

R. Jaffe – 21 White Pine Drive

- 2012 CRC did significant amount of research
- Wants any recommendation we put forth to be unanimous
- Many people don't understand the charter
- Encourages us not to abide by the BOS' timetable.
- Against bifurcation – talked about advisory questions in last Charter Revision
- Talked about state v. home rule
- Town meeting can bifurcate budget now – no clear record
- “Public outcry” after the last election – wants all candidates to fill out a public disclosure form regarding any pending legal actions and bankruptcies, past or present.

I. Agard – 3 Cedar Hill Road

- Board of Finance – does a lot of work outside of board meetings in subcommittees
- 7 members would be helpful, should be considered
- Odd number would help and avoid the problem of the First Selectman breaking the tie.
- Bob Belden mentioned alternates in the past – might help with committee work

H. Lasser – 116 Tower Road

- Bifurcation – Against it because he thinks it diminishes the town meeting form of government
- Talked about history – used to vote for a budget about town meeting until people petitioned to take it to a referendum.
- Town meeting, with high attendance can make alterations
- Reconsider the question that failed in 2012 of allowing people to add to the budget.
- Consider taking mandatory pay for the 2 Selectmen (lower) out of Charter.
- Alternates on BOF may be good, but wants the First Selectman to be held responsible as a tiebreaker.

B. McIlvane – 127 Longmeadow Hill Road

- Library Board of Trustees – has 6 regular and 3 alternate; wants 9 regular.
- Number must be divisible by 3

Robert Appleby – 43 Candlewood Shores Road

- Mentioned he's a parent and would like to vote on the budgets separately
- Reminded of the overwhelming defeat of the last Charter Revisions.
- Give people choices and give them power
- First Selectman is currently trying to do thing that give people more power.

J. Friedrich – 10 Cherokee Drive.

- Supports Bifurcation, mandating the advisory questions
- Review the last CRC minutes and avoid rehashing what wasn't popular
- 7-member BOF, ok, or restrict the areas where the First Selectman would vote.
- Spending money – OK; First Selectman should not vote on Chairman

- BOF tapping the fund balance should be restricted to a limited number of times per year.

Pamela Kurtz – 154 N. Lakeshore Drive

- Supports what Bob Appleby said

- Last Charter Revision vote in 2012 – the voters spoke very clearly, were very clear about what they wanted and didn't want

- Voters were not confused; since it was a Presidential election and there were more voters, that's not a bad thing.

- Supports bifurcation of the budget – gives voters a choice and more feedback.

- Question if the Charter can allow union dues to not be deducted from an employee's paycheck if they opt not to.

- Should there be a town robo call for Town Meetings; supports an "all or nothing" ordinance similar to other towns

- Supports Jerry Friedrich's comments – the fund balance should reflect planned maintenance

V. Maitland Smith – 1 Cawdor Burn Road

- Supports bifurcation

- Voters should be able to distinguish what they want on town and school budget.

R. Lubin – 2 Andover Court

- BOE and Town Budgets should be separated

- Asked for a speaker to come to the senior center – to explain revisions

- The various board and commissions would be better if more people could attend. Many seniors don't drive at night and would come if there could be transportation/carpooling.

R. Jaffe – 21 White Pine Drive – 2nd time

- Advisory Questions are available now – no need for bifurcation.

- Alternates – voting, should they if not elected.

- Current voting authority of the First Selectman; a full member of the BOF except a vote unless there's a tie.

J. Friedrich – 10 Cherokee Drive – 2nd time

- Clarification of his earlier remarks RE: 2 of his recommendations: there should be no tie vote on personnel issues – election of officers, committees, nor should there be on the final budget going to referendum.