

MINUTES
Charter Revision Commission
April 15, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Suzanne Burr Monaco called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m. at the Town Hall, Nichols Room, Trumbull, Connecticut. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT

Suzanne Burr Monaco, Chairman
Dan Portanoa, Vice Chairman
Adam Maiocco, Secretary
Ken Martin
Daniel Shamas
Carl Massaro, Town Council
Barbara Schellenberg, Attorney

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the April 8, 2014 meeting were reviewed. Moved by Ken Martin, seconded by Dan Shamas and unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the April 8 meeting.

The meeting and location schedule was reviewed by the Commission.

The Chairman began the discussion of potential items the Commission might consider for revision. "Definitions" is an area that needs to be reviewed, ie., "business days" vs "calendar days", etc.

B. Schellenberg presented a list provided from a meeting with Carl Massaro and the First Selectman, with suggestions as follows:

1. To cross reference municipal codes with charter and including an index. Lynn Arnow can help with this.
2. With respect to dates, consider the issue of how days are counted. For example, when the Charter requires an action to be taken "within" a certain number of days, when does day 1 begin? S. Burr Monaco said that traditionally when stamped in at the Town Clerk's Office, the first day has begun.
3. Chapter II, 5b (pg 7) question of changing the notice for the Town website for meeting agendas and supplemental documents from 48 to 24 hours, as is presently done at the Town Clerk's office. The reason would be to provide consistency. The Commission agrees that the times should be consistent, but at 48 hours, not 24. There was also discussion regarding excluding certain "supplemental materials" from executive session. Consider adding such language as "non-confidential" or "non-privileged" or "which are exempt through FOI". The Commission is considering "non-privileged" as the preferred language.
4. Section 7 (p.9) – modify emergency appointments to be effective on publication.
5. Chapter III – modify term for First Selectman, Town Clerk and Town Chairman from 2 to 4 years. D. Portanova is in favor, staggering the term so at the election in 2015, the term would not take effect until 2017. Discussion of effect on their salaries since salary increase goes into effect upon election. One possible reason for keeping the 2 year term is to keep voter turnout interested. There might be a perception that voters do not turn out when there is no "lead person" being elected. Commission is in favor of looking at the 4 year term.

6. Chapter IV – Budget – seeking clarification of language re adopting the budget to the majority of votes present. Council, by 2/3 vote can reduce any budget item. To increase, Council is capped by First Selectman's number. Change that to adopting by a majority vote of the members present.
7. Chapter III, Section 3A and 3C- Presently, in case of temporary absence, FS to appoint Treasurer first, Council Chairman, second. Recommend Council Chairman as first choice as it would be at no cost to the Town. There is an important distinction between temporary absence and vacating. Once seat is vacant, need to go to State for special election. Special Election takes significant time. Presently, at 6 months from end of term, Treasurer would fill vacancy. Suggestion is Council Chairman. B. Schellenberg will research statutes.
8. Chapter VII, Possible combination of Inland-Wetlands with Conservation commissions (see Fairfield charter)
9. Section 15 Possible elimination of the Civil Service Board as a result of the hiring a Director of Labor Relations as he does contracts, testing, etc. Question if we would be eliminating the checks and balances.
10. Revision of the Pension Board section. D Portanova requested that a representative from the Pension board appear at an upcoming meeting to present pension info. A. Maiocco requested this be done as soon as possible. It was requested that someone from the Pension Board attend the 4/29 meeting.
11. Section 17. D(ii) .Regarding the Ethics Commission Section D(ii) remove the language "at his/her option, in public or in private" – "in private" would not be considered a hearing.
12. Sec 19. Removal of several commissions, ie Arts Commission as it is no longer functioning.
13. Consider restructuring the Charter to change commissions and boards to departments, as is done in Stratford. The purpose being to make things more uniform. The Commission is concerned this could be a huge undertaking.
14. S Burr Monaco will obtain the Stratford and Fairfield charters.
15. Board of Finance does not feel like elected officials are being compensated as other towns. Would like salary structure to be provided in the Town Charter. Those positions are: First Selectman, Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, Chief of Staff, Director of Labor Relations, Director of Finance, Director of Economic Development. This does not seem feasible to Commission.

Carl Massaro presented a summary from Margaret Mastroni relative to the requests of the Town Council:

1. Proposing that the language presently in Chapter II, Legislative Branch Section 5 Meetings (b) be moved to Chapter VII Boards and Commissions, Section 24 Public Meetings and Records (b). Commission discussed possibility of moving the section or leaving it as is and referencing the same in Chapter VII.
2. Alphabetizing the commissions listed in Chapter 7
3. The "confidential", privileged information has been discussed above.
4. The issue of the wording for "days" – this will be addressed in definitions. Calendar days was suggested.

5. Chapter II, Section 7 Emergency Legislation and Appointments. Council seeks modification that all appointments, upon 2/3 vote of the body present, should be automatic upon posting, getting rid of the 15 day waiting period. Although Appointments are referenced in the title, the Council seeks a paragraph indicating that emergency appointments be effective upon publication as well.

Lastly, discussion of specific dates in the present Charter that may no longer be applicable, ie. Sec. 7 (p.94) or portion of Sec. 3 (p.48) re Board of Ed. Some dates in the Charter are point of reference, some will be able to be removed.

Commission will present list of recommendations to the Council. The Council will decide what to act on, and how they should be voted on.

K Martin discussed possible overlap between various officers and commissions, ie., zoning officer, who also handles blight. Also Parks and Rec, which is under Public Works. May or may not be a Charter issue.

D Portanova suggested that Commission reviews the issues presented tonight and narrow them down during the next meeting. We will also obtain issues from the Public Hearing.

Discussion of Public Hearing, to be held in Long Hill Room. Any member of the public can attend. Depending on the number of public present, they can speak. If there are a lot of people in attendance, give them 2 minutes to tell us what they are looking to change. We can give them a card when they come, to give to the Commission for reference. We will check to see if the Council Chambers are available.

The meeting was adjourned by motion of Dan S, seconded by by S Burr Monaco and unanimous consent at 9PM

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Milewski