

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION 2020
MINUTES
JUNE 3, 2020

A meeting of the Charter Revision Commission 2020 was held on Wednesday, June 3, 2020 remotely via Zoom teleconference. The meeting was called to order by Chair Kate Donahue at 7:03 p.m.

Members Present: In attendance were Commissioners Kate Donahue, Tom Tesoro, Susan Gilson, Nancy Gardiner, J.C. Cinelli, and Martin McCann. In addition to the Commission members were Town Attorney Dan Schopick and Chief Administrative Officer and Commission Clerk Cindy Katske.

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment: Jean Rabinow, representing the League of Women Voters, had provided written input that she summarized for the Commission. They would like to have seven voting districts with three delegates each. One of the League's members and former Registrar of Voters, Laurel Anderson, made some very specific suggestions for changes she would like to see to clarify election procedures. Those suggestions are in the written input. Speaking for herself, and not for the League of Women Voters, Ms. Rabinow would like to see the Board of Education returned to a six-member board, evenly split.

Prior Minutes: Moved by Nancy Gardiner, seconded by J.C. Cinelli to approve the minutes of the May 27, 2020 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Request for Extension: The Chair reported that the Town Council approved the Commission's request for an extension to submit a draft report to June 29, 2020. The Town Council Legislation and Administration Committee will take up the Commission's recommendations on Monday, July 6, and the full Council will take up the matter on Thursday, July 9. As many Commission members as possible should be on those calls. The Commission's public hearing is on June 24, and the goal is to submit the draft report to the Council by the end of business on June 29.

Charter Review: The Commission reviewed the following topics.

1. Commissions on Aging and Youth: Cindy Katske sent the draft language on the Commission on Aging to Michele Jakob, the Senior Center Director, and Marcy Kelly, the Chair of the Senior Citizens Commission, and they both thought it was great. Ms. Katske also sent the draft language on the Commission on Youth to Dmitri Paris, the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, and he also thought it was fine. Ms. Katske looked at the structure of these Commissions and thought that perhaps the language about Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary may be unnecessary and may be deleted if the Commission decides to do so.

2. Chapter VIII, Section 9, regarding referendum on projects over \$15 million. The Commission reviewed language proposed by Town Attorney Dan Schopick. Proposed changes include indexing the \$15 million amount, what is included in the amount, voting procedure, form of the question, and required number of voter turnout. Discussion ensued regarding indexing, timing of the referendum, and holding a public hearing before the referendum. Nancy Gardiner will draft some language on indexing and send to Attorney Schopick. Attorney Schopick will work on the timing issues.

3. Term limits: The Commission discussed information provided by J.C. Cinelli from the National League of Cities stating that very few municipalities have term limits. No action was taken.

4. Chapter VII, Section 3, Board of Education: The Commission voted on concepts but has not approved specific language. Attorney Schopick will draft language for the next meeting.

Draft Report: The Commission reviewed the following provisions of the draft report.

1. Chapter I, Section 4B, regarding definition of days. No change needed.

2. Chapter II, Section 1, regarding a minor change in wording. No change needed.

3. Chapter II, Section 2, first paragraph, regarding composition and election of Town Council: The Commission discussed whether the language regarding seven districts with three members from each district follows the recommendations of the Redistricting Committee, which is currently still working on its recommendations. The Commission will seek additional input from the chair of the Redistricting Committee at the next meeting. Nancy Gardiner will draft language regarding the reasoning for recommending this change to insert in the draft report.

[Susan Gilson left the meeting at 8:15 p.m.]

4. Chapter II, Section 5A, regarding posting notice of Town Council meetings. No change needed.

5. Chapter II, Section 5B, regarding posting of documents on the town website. No change needed other than changing “website” to one word.

6. Chapter II, Section 6, regarding adoption of legislation. No change needed.

7. Chapter II, Section 7, regarding emergency legislation. Moved by Nancy Gardiner, seconded by Tom Tesoro to delete “and Appointments” from the section title. The motion carried unanimously. No other changes needed.

8. Chapter II, Section 8, regarding publication of adopted legislation. No change needed.

9. Chapter II, Section 1, regarding the term of the First Selectman. Tom Tesoro will draft language explaining the reason for this change for the next meeting.
10. Chapter III, Section 3, regarding absence or disability of the First Selectman. Tom Tesoro will draft language for the next meeting.
11. Chapter III, Section 6D, regarding the term of the Treasurer. Tom Tesoro will draft language for the next meeting.
12. Chapter III, Section 6G, regarding purchasing. Martin McCann will draft language for the next meeting.
13. Chapter III, Section 7, regarding the term of the Town Clerk. Tom Tesoro will draft language for the next meeting.
14. Chapter III, Section 15, regarding bonds. Attorney Schopick will draft language for the next meeting.
15. Chapter IV, Sections 2A and 3A, regarding adoption of the annual budget. No change needed.
16. Chapter VII, Section 1A, regarding Board of Finance alternates. Tom Tesoro will draft language for the next meeting.
17. Chapter VII, Section 3, regarding the Board of Education. Attorney Schopick will draft language for the next meeting.
18. Chapter VII, Section 8A, regarding the Police Commission. Cindy Katske will draft language for the next meeting.
19. Chapter VII, Section 11E, regarding Parks and Recreation Commission acceptance of gifts. No change needed.
20. Chapter VII, Section 17, regarding the Ethics Commission. Martin McCann will draft language for the next meeting.
21. Chapter VII, Section 23, regarding removal of board and commission members. Cindy Katske will draft language for the next meeting.
22. Chapter VII, Section 24, regarding posting requirements for boards and commissions. Cindy Katske will draft language for the next meeting.
23. Chapter VII, Section 7B(i), regarding posting notice of adoption of emergency legislation. No change needed.

24. Chapter VIII, Section 7H, regarding posting of notice of referendum language. No change needed.

25. Chapter VIII, Section 8B(i), regarding posting notice of annual budget adoption. No change needed.

Cindy Katske brought up a typo in the Charter in Chapter V, Section 2E. A cross-reference not renumbered from the last Charter revision needs to be changed from (d) to (iv). According to Attorney Schopick, this typo can be fixed without the Commission voting on it. Another change in Chapter IV, Section 2(D), which refers to the 2019 budget year, can also be changed without a vote. No action was taken.

Cindy Katske also brought up the issue of wherever “days” are referenced in the Charter, and whether each instance should be examined to determine whether business days or calendar days are more appropriate. Kate Donahue and Cindy Katske will identify the instances that should be looked at for the next meeting.

Attorney Schopick stated that the Commission should look at the Police Commission language again, and Cindy Katske will provide it for the next meeting.

The remaining meeting schedule was discussed. The draft report should be completed and posted on Monday, June 22, 2020.

Moved by J.C. Cinelli, seconded by Tom Tesoro to adjourn at 8:36 p.m. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Katske, Clerk