

**CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION 2020
PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 15, 2020
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kate Donahue called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT

All Commission members were in attendance, including Kate Donahue, Tom Tesoro, Susan Gilson, Nancy Gardiner, J.C. Cinelli, and Martin McCann. In addition to the Commission members were First Selectman Vicki Tesoro, Town Attorney Dan Schopick, and Chief Administrative Officer and Commission Clerk Cindy Katske.

INTRODUCTION

The Chair gave a brief overview of the charter revision process. Public comments may be emailed to the Commission's clerk at ckatske@trumbull-ct.gov or may be given verbally during the public comment section of each meeting. The Commission meets Wednesdays at 7:00 via Zoom and details about those meetings can be found on the town website. The Chair introduced the Commission members.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Chair invited anyone with public comments to raise their hand to be called on, and when called on to state their name, address, and then to give their comments.

First Selectman Vicki Tesoro addressed the Commission with a number of suggested changes. She indicated that she will likely provide more input at a future date. Her comments are attached.

Joanne Orenstein noted that she is a member of the Town Council and wanted to be listed in. She asked whether there was any discussion about changing terms for the Board of Education members. The Chair stated that the First Selectman had spoken about that in her comments.

There being no further public comment, the Chair noted that the Commission will be meeting every Wednesday and will accept public comment at the beginning of each meeting.

Moved by Tom Tesoro, seconded by J.C. Cinelli, to adjourn at 7:17 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Katske, Clerk

Charter Revision Commission

APRIL 15, 2020

Dear Chairman Donahue, Vice Chairman Gardiner and Members of the Charter Revision Commission:

I want to thank you for volunteering your time, your experience and your energy in service to your community. The work of this Commission will have a major impact on our community for years to come. You will be doing your work under what may be the most stressful conditions facing our nation, our state and our community in decades. It is important work, it is necessary work and it is work, once completed, that will reflect who we are as a community.

It is my hope that once your work is completed our citizens will see that you have made our government more balanced, our processes more transparent and our governing document, our charter, a reflection of our highest aspirations.

Thank you again for your service and thank you for this opportunity to offer my recommendations for your consideration.

Board of Education: I recommend returning the Board of Education to a six-member board with no party holding more than three seats. Such a change will eliminate politics from our Board of Education, encourage compromise, and be an example of the kind of balance that serves our community instead of partisan politics.

I further recommend that our Board of Education be returned to a staggered four-year term. This will simplify our ballots, retain much needed experience as members change and encourage civic-minded citizens to run for office without the constant campaigning the current two year term demands.

Board of Finance: Clarify the existing language with respect to alternates on this Board by requiring that there be one Republican, one Democrat and one unaffiliated voter appointed by a majority of the Town Council. Further, to be appointed, the person must have been a member of the respective party or an unaffiliated voter for at least one calendar year. This promotes fairness and balance.

Term Limits: If allowed by state statute, add language to our charter limiting the tenure of any appointed official or elected official to two terms for four and five year seats or four terms for two year seats. Our town benefits from the infusion of new ideas and new energy.

New Commissions: Add both the Senior Citizen Commission and the Youth Commission to our charter. Members of these commissions will be appointed by the First Selectman. Seniors and our youth are vibrant contributors to our town and the commissions that serve their needs should be recognized in our charter. (We do have a Senior Citizen Commission; it is not now included in the town charter.)

Town Service: Provide language that gives the appointing authority the power to remove any member of an appointed commission/board for failing to attend at least 50% of the meetings in a fiscal year. Health shall be an exception to this provision.

Referendum on Projects Exceeding 15 Million Dollars: Provide a process for referendum on this subject.

Ethics Commission: Revise the Ethics Commission's processes and procedures, if necessary, after reviewing state statute and Trumbull's Code of Ethics.

Town Council Configuration: Require a return to seven equally balanced districts, the lines of which are to be drawn by the Town Council with a 2/3 majority.

I reserve the right to bring forward other recommendations during your deliberations.

Again, thank you.

Vicki Tesoro
First Selectman