

**Charter Commission
Regular Meeting
February 20, 2019
7:00 PM
Town Hall**

MINUTES

Members Present: Myles Davis, Mike Nintean, Gregg LaFontaine, Pierre Belisle, and Suzanne Gilleese

1.0 Call to Order

Chairman G. LaFontaine called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 PM.

There was discussion regarding notice of the 2/26/19 public hearing. The Chairman noted that B. Dennler had the notice go to every agency of the town.

2.0 Correspondence

There was discussion regarding the 2/4/19 letter from the Lebanon Planning and Zoning Commission, particularly the sample survey question regarding the proposed charter for an upcoming survey. Several members of the Charter Commission stated that they did not like the language of the sample question in the letter. It was agreed that new survey questions should be drafted and that they should be drafted after the 2/26/19 public hearing. The Chairman proposed that the questions should be drafted at the commission's 3/6/19 meeting. It was noted that the commission will not get a response from the survey until late May, 2019 and the commission is tasked to submit a draft charter on June 7, 2019.

3.0 Discuss and act upon approval of minutes from February 6, 2019 Special Meeting

M. Davis MOVED to approve the minutes from the 2/6/17 special meeting. M. Nintean SECONDED. The Motion carried 5:0:0.

4.0 Discuss and review preparations for first public hearings; consider mission statement, outline, or framework to share at public hearing

The Chairman read a draft opening statement that he may use at the hearing to explain the purpose of the hearing and invite discussion. There was a suggestion that topics regarding local government could be addressed in the statement, with the First Selectman addressing how the local government is run now. Members of the commission however voiced their concerns that the public hearing should be brief, not be specific and not suggest answers. It was also suggested that what was most important

was that the new proposed charter would clarify local government and would be put in plain English.

More feedback was requested and given as to the content of the opening statement. Members thought the opening statement could inform those present that nothing needed to change, but with a charter, changes to town government could be done later. Another member thought that the Chairman's draft opening statement was excellent. Another thought that the first two paragraphs of the 9/16/14 memo really defined the purpose for the charter and another thought it could be expanded to state that the charter would describe how ordinances are enacted, and set terms of office.

There was a discussion regarding who would be attending, that there would be those in attendance that there will be folks in favor of a charter and others that will be surprised that a new charter is being proposed so soon after the last proposed charter, which was soundly defeated.

It was agreed that the Chairman would moderate the public hearing. M. Nintean queried about the time limit each attendee could have to speak, ask questions. The Chairman suggested a three to five minute limit but that it would depend on the number of attendees. It was agreed that two hours should be allocated for the hearing.

5.0 Identify questions and areas of concern, discuss reference materials, and schedules to assemble proposal

Four members had accessed the Google Drive made available by B. Dennler. The Chairman said he would ask to see if the meeting minutes could be put into that drive.

The Chairman also noted that the committee must submit the proposed charter by June 7th and so the committee has a lot of work, but could not start until after the public hearing. It was agreed that the last proposed charter would be a starting point, and beginning with the next meeting, the committee would go over the last proposed charter section by section. As to each section, the committee would discuss whether to leave it the same, just change the language to make it easier to understand, or delete it. The charter's table of contents was discussed and it was proposed that subsections should be added under each section to make it more user friendly. The Chairman noted that a draft charter would be available to be viewed by the public by the end of August. Members of the commission provided opinions on town charters they had reviewed, particularly the charters for the Town of Portland and Town of Mansfield.

The committee's second meeting in April was discussed. Two of the committee's members will be absent at that meeting. There was discussion about the number of members needed in attendance to have a quorum. It was decided to leave the second meeting in April in place and call one or more special meetings, if needed.

It was agreed that members of the commission would arrive by 6:30 pm for the 2/26/19 public hearing. The Chairman mentioned that the members were not to have side discussions or engage in dialogue with members of the public speaking at the hearing.

6.0 Adjourn

P. Belisle MOVED to adjourn; M. Davis SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Gilleese
Secretary, Charter Commission

Please see minutes of subsequent meetings for any corrections hereto.