

Charter Commission

SPECIAL MEETING

January 16, 2019

7:00 PM

Town Hall

MINUTES

Members Present: Suzanne Gilleese, Karen Buffkin, Myles Davis, Mike Ninteau, Gregg LaFontaine, and Pierre Belisle

Others Present: First Selectman B. Petrie, Selectmen Glen Coutu and John Bendoraitis, Administrative Assistant Bernard Dennler

1.0 Call to Order

First Selectman B. Petrie called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2.0 Introduction of Charter Commission members

Members of the commission introduced themselves and discussed their experience. S. Gilleese said she has been practicing law for 19 years and plans to retire in Lebanon. K. Buffkin said she moved to Lebanon several years ago and has been practicing law for 25 years. M. Davis said he is a lifelong resident of the town. M. Ninteau said he moved to Lebanon in 2002 and has served on the Zoning Board of Appeals, as an alternate on the Board of Finance, and currently works for the Town of Mansfield. G. LaFontaine said he has lived in Lebanon since he was six months old and has served on the Board of Education, Board of Finance, and the WPCA. P. Belisle said he moved to Lebanon 35 years ago and previously served on the Board of Finance.

3.0 Charge of Committee

B. Petrie introduced the charge of the commission to draft a Town Charter proposal to be voted on in November 2019. G. LaFontaine asked if the Selectmen had particular consensus goals they wanted the commission to pursue. The Selectmen stated they did not want to steer the commission. J. Bendoraitis said he will provide his personal opinions as a citizen at a public hearing. B. Dennler stated that the only requirement of their official charge as moved by the Board of Selectmen is to submit a draft proposal by June 7, 2019.

S. Gilleese requested information on the previous Town Charter proposal which failed in 2015. B. Petrie said all materials related to the previous Charter Commission and its proposal can be made available to the current commission. B. Petrie asked B. Dennler to print and distribute copies of the failed draft. B. Dennler distributed the copies and said he could make the proposal available as a Word document if they choose to work from the draft or work with parts of it. J. Bendoraitis said all minutes and agendas from the previous commission can also be viewed on the town website.

4.0 Timeline for project

The Selectmen presented a timeline for the Charter Commission to work from that had been assembled with counsel from Waller, Smith, and Palmer. The timeline includes dates by which the commission must hold public hearings and provide proposals and responses to the Board of Selectmen. The first public hearing must be held before the commission can begin drafting its own proposal. The commission members suggested February 26, 2019 but did not act to finalize this date.

J. Bendoraitis said the timeline does allow for "alternate paths" that could bring the proposal to the voters via a referendum if the commission chose to follow a different approach. However, he noted there is a difficult-to-reach turnout threshold if they chose to pursue a separate referendum instead of placing it on

the November 2019 ballot. On a separate referendum, a majority of voters could vote in favor of the Charter and still fail to pass it if turnout was insufficient.

5.0 Discuss and act upon setting a meeting schedule

The commission members discussed their availability.

K. Buffkin MOVED that the commission hold its meetings on the first and third Wednesday of each month from now until the November 2019 election. M. Davis SECONDED.

MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0

6.0 Discuss and act upon election of officers

The commission members discussed their availabilities and interest in the positions of Chair and Secretary. The Board of Selectmen described the responsibilities of each position.

P. Belisle MOVED to make Gregg LaFontaine Chair of the Charter Commission. M. Nintean SECONDED.

MOTION CARRIED 5:0:1 with G. LaFontaine abstaining

The members discussed the role of Secretary. B. Dennler said he could provide assistance to the individual who takes on the role with the process for recording and filing minutes. K. Buffkin said she did not want to take on the role of Secretary given her workload outside of the commission but said she is willing to assist with the drafting of the charter. B. Dennler said that S. Gilleese appeared to be taking good notes and suggested they consider her for the position of Secretary. She said she would be willing to serve.

P. Belisle MOVED to make Suzanne Gilleese the Secretary of the Charter Commission. M. Nintean SECONDED.

MOTION CARRIED 5:0:1 with S. Gilleese abstaining

7.0 Adjourn

B. Petrie said that because this was a special meeting, they were required to adhere closely to the warned agenda. Therefore, she said there were no further items they could discuss.

P. Belisle MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 PM. S. Gilleese SECONDED.

MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0

Respectfully submitted,



Bernard W. Dennler III
Administrative Assistant

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for any corrections hereto.