

**Charter Commission
Special Meeting
February 6, 2019
7:00 PM
Town Hall**

MINUTES

- **Members Present:** Suzanne Gilleese, Karen Buffkin, Myles Davis, Mike Nintean, Gregg LaFontaine, and Pierre Belisle
- **Others Present:** Administrative Assistant Bernard Dennler

1.0 Call to Order

G. LaFontaine, chairman of the charter commission called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2.0 Discuss and act upon approval of minutes from January 16, 2019 Special Meeting

G. LaFontaine asked the charter commission members if they read the minutes. Everyone agreed that they read them.

M. Nintean MOVED for approval of the 1/16/19 special meeting minutes.

MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

B. Dennler stated that he sent a list of meetings scheduled for the commission. P. Belisle indicated he did not receive them. B. Dennler said he would email the list again.

S. Gilleese stated that she would be absent for the meeting scheduled on the third Wednesday of the month of April. G. LaFontaine noted that a secretary would be needed for that meeting.

G. LaFontaine asked if the committee can re-schedule any regular meeting. B. Dennler stated that the committee could but must give 30 days' notice

3.0 Discuss FOIA requirements and email

G. LaFontaine stated that the committee would discuss emails. B. Dennler handed out "notice of meetings" table. On the table were notice and agenda requirements and requirements for filing record of votes and minutes for regular and special meetings. B. Dennler stated that procedures on meetings most important. 24 hours' notice is needed before a meeting. For special meeting on a Monday, for example, notice for the meeting would have to go out on Friday. Filing requirements: for record of votes on motions—48 hours after votes; most commission minutes and records on motions go out within 48 hours.

B. Dennler suggested that committee members consider having a separate email just for the commission. B. Dennler made this suggestion, because if a FOIA request is submitted for communications on the charter, B. Dennler or someone else at the town hall will have to sift through a charter commission member's emails to pull

the relevant emails. K. Buffkin mentioned however that as an alternative, a committee member could just give B. Dennler or someone else at the town hall a copy of the emails responsive to the request. G. LaFontaine stated that the charter commission members can't deliberate via email and should just use email to request information.

M. Nintean stated that B. Dennler could use his Lebanon town email address. S. Gilleese gave B. Dennler another personal email address. B. Dennler asked that the charter committee members send him their personal emails to be used for the commission and if there is no change, to just send him an email stating, no change.

4.0 Identify and discuss reference materials including proposal by previous Charter Commission

B. Dennler provided charter commission members list of materials (drafts, job descriptions, PowerPoints, public hearing documents, reports and notes) that will be made available on Google drive.

The charter committee members agreed to that. B. Dennler also stated that the google drive could be used to access draft documents, that someone could log in and see changes being made. G. LaFontaine asked whether there are additional documents outside of this list.

K. Buffkin pointed out that 2010 Plan of Conservation and Charter Study Committee Recommendations (both on the list) are important to show why charter is being pursued. G. LaFontaine noted that Conservation committee has already queried about the charter. G. LaFontaine stated that he could get back to that committee by mid-March. B. Dennler stated that he could ask about past surveys and results. B. Dennler added that survey of 500 residents would be helpful, if just to have people thing about the charter. B. Dennler added though that the results would not come back until the charter commission was quite along with its work. G. LaFontaine thought that the results though could act as a confirmation for their work.

P. Belisle, B, K. Buffkin and S. Gilleese said they read the proposed charter.

S. Gilleese added that she had read the Portland, Connecticut charter and indicated she liked it because it was written in plainer English and not with as much legalese.

Gregg L asked how to get other town charters. S. Gilleese then provided G. LaFontaine and K. Buffkin a printout from the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Library Services, which provided links to each Connecticut town's website, the town's charter (if the town had one), ordinances, regulations. The phone number of the town clerks were also provided.

As for the proposed charter that failed, P. Belisle thought that the Board of Selectman proposed was different.

M. Nintean stated that he believed there were good reasons why the proposed charter did not pass. He said that there were a number of non-starters about it; in fact, four major issues that Republicans were concerned with (1) proposed charter severely weakened the board of finance; (2) hiring an administrator, the cost for that, and the effect of that on the first selectman; (3) how minor ordinance were enacted vis a vis major ordinances; (4) switching some elected positions to appointed positions, staggering important. Also, it was a concern to go to four to five members for a board, because it gets harder to fill those positions. G. LaFontaine stated that once we get past hearing, this can be discussed more.

B. Dennler discussed the 9/16/14 memo handed out. B. Dennler said that the two charter commissions were really only one; that the initial commission had to re-form to get the proposed charter out (proposed draft

charter was not published at appropriate time) and had another public hearing as a matter of formality. B. Dennler said that the “second” charter commission did not make any significant changes that he was aware of. G. LaFontaine stated that the 9/16/14 memo was helpful.

G. LaFontaine then asked if the charter commission needed Chapter 13 of the Connecticut Statutes. K. Buffkin indicated that commission would need to know the statutes in Chapter 13. G. LaFontaine asked if the charter has to abide by state statutes. S. Gilleese provided G. LaFontaine and K. Buffkin a copy of CGS § 7-193 which provides parameters for town charters. G. LaFontaine requested list of state statutes referred to; K. Buffkin stated that she could provide that.

S. Gilleese asked if there was anything about compensation in the proposed charter. K. Buffkin said there was no mention of compensation in proposed charter. G. LaFontaine stated there wasn’t but there was a separate document indicating compensation. He added that the proposed manager would have been paid out of the first selectman’s salary.

G. LaFontaine stated that he would like to reach out to the prior chairman of the charter commission for reference materials. He asked permission to do that from the members of the charter commission.

B. Dennler said that any member of the charter commission can email him later (before the next hearing) about reference materials and he would locate the materials. B. Dennler stated—don’t start drafting until after the hearing.

5.0 Discuss and act upon date and location of first public hearing

G. LaFontaine stated that he would like to frame the questions for the public hearing, i.e. to discuss whether to have a charter or not. G. LaFontaine stated the charter committee members need to think about the information for the public hearing. K. Buffkin stated that perhaps the charter commission needs to provide a mission statement. M. Nintean stated that may need to say that changes to the past proposed charter could be added. Gregg. L. stated that charter doesn’t have to change anything. G. LaFontaine stated that he would like to know if the proposed charter was missing something. K. Buffkin asked whether the hearing would be limited to those questions. G. LaFontaine stated no.

S. Gilleese also suggested that the introduction for the meeting could include the notion that the charter is to explain town government.

K. Buffkin queries whether last Thursday in February is for the meeting. B. Dennler states that last Thursday in February is February 28th. The date February 28th is discussed. Miles D. states that he has February 26th as the date for the meeting. M. Nintean confirms that. B. Dennler states that he will confirm that the Fire Safety Complex is available that day. B. Dennler confirms it is available.

K. Buffkin says she can draft a framework for the hearing G. LaFontaine agrees.

G. LaFontaine explained that members of the Charter Commission not allowed to dialogue with those attending. Instead, members of the Charter Commission are facilitators and note takers; G. LaFontaine –will state what info we are soliciting; K. Buffkin asked if commission members can give out handouts. G. LaFontaine said he liked the idea. He then said that may be better to state orally what information the charter commission is looking for. G. LaFontaine agrees to Karen B’s suggestion to have hand out, to use it for a verbal introduction.

P. Belisle MOVED to have the public meeting regarding the charter on February 26th, 7 pm at the Fire Safety

Complex. M. Nintean SECONDED.
MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

6.0 Adjourn

G. LaFontaine MOVED to adjourn; P. Belisle SECONDED.

MOTION CARRIED 6:0:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Gilleese
Secretary, Charter Commission

Please see minutes of subsequent meetings for any corrections hereto.