

Charter Commission  
Regular Meeting  
July 3, 2019 7:00 PM

TOWN HALL

MINUTES

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

1.0 Call to Order

The Chairman called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 pm.

2.0 Discuss and act upon approval of minutes of the June 27, 2019 special meeting.

The Chairman noted that copies of the 6/27/19 minutes were not available. The Chairman decided to postpone acting on the minutes of the 6/27/19 meeting, until the next meeting.

3.0 Communications

See 4.0.

4.0 Discuss and act on final draft of Charter

The Chairman led discussion on the latest version of the charter, edited by K. Buffkin, and circulated to the members. This latest version incorporated changes the members agreed to at the June 27, 2019 special meeting. The Chairman proposed additional changes to this latest version. With respect to Section 1.4 (3), the Chairman proposed adding the phrase “or referendum” after the phrase “Town Meeting”. The members agreed to this change. Modifications were then made to Section 2.4(13) to replace the phrase “is at least” for “which does not exceed”. Section 2.5 (1) was changed by replacing the phrase “more than five percent (5%)” with “exceeds \$1 million”. Section 3.4 was modified by eliminating all words after “vote” in the last sentence of the first paragraph.

A question was posed as to whether the charter was to provide an extended lame duck period for terms of office. This appears in Sections 7.2, 11 of the draft charter. The Chairman indicated that the members had agreed to eliminate the proposed extended lame duck period. There was further discussion on Article 7. Section 7.3.1 was modified to indicate a 4 year term for all Selectmen and that there is to be a First Selectman and four additional selectmen. There was discussion on staggering the terms of the Selectmen. Members indicated that after the First Selectman and two selectmen are elected this November for two year terms, there would be a special election in May, 2020 for an additional 2 Selectmen, to expand the Board of Selectmen to a five member board. This special election is provided in Article 11 of the draft charter. Those two elected in 2020 would serve until 2023 and thereby provide for staggered terms. Article 8 was then discussed. The word “full” was eliminated when it appeared before “majority” in Section 8.1 and Section 8.2. There was discussion on having the removal section on appointees in Section 8.1 mirror that of a similar section on employees, so that the removals section on appointees would provide a choice of a public or private forum for the hearing in front of the Board of Selectmen. This proposed language was inserted, and legal counsel will review the proposed new language. Section 9.5 was then discussed. The term “Board of

Selectmen” was replaced with “Board of Finance” in the third and fourth lines in the first paragraph of Section 9.5. Article 11 was addressed. The Chairman proposed eliminating Section 11.2.1. The members agreed to eliminate this subsection. Section 11.2.2 was modified to eliminate the word “Town Treasurer”. Section 11.2.3 was modified to provide that the terms of those elected at the May, 2020 special election would expire on November 21, 2023. In Section 11.3, the second sentence in the second paragraph was modified to replace “2022” with “2023” and the word “second” was inserted before the term “biennial election”. Section 11.3 was further modified to indicated that the registrars of voters would be elected in 2023 and at every third biennial town election thereafter.

The members then agreed to submit this latest version of the draft charter to legal for review. The Chairman proposed a special meeting for July 11, 2019, 7 pm. The Chairman indicated that by then, legal counsel would have reviewed this latest version and given their opinions. The members agreed to this special meeting.

#### 5.0 Discuss and Act on Final Report to accompany Charter proposal

The members then reviewed the latest version of the draft report. It was agreed to eliminate all charts and references to “town administrator” in the report. There was discussion on addressing ordinances that would be superseded by the charter. The Chairman indicated that at the next meeting the members could discuss whether to include this in the report. Further modifications were made to the draft report, including substituting the phrase “Board of Finance” with “Board of Selectmen” in Section 4 under “Formation and approval of the annual budget”. References to “town treasurer” were also removed from Section 4 under the subsection on hiring, rather than electing, professional, non-policy-making officials. Modifications were then made to Section 4 under the subsection on filling vacancies. The members agreed to keep the subsection in Section 4 on “checks and balances”. Paragraph (3) of the subsection titled “General features and transition” was also modified, by substituting ‘publication’ for the word “passage”. Paragraph (4) in “General Features and transition” was then discussed; the references to 2015 in this paragraph 4 was changed to 2019, and references to 2016 and 2019, were changed to 2020 and 2023 respectively. Subparagraph (c) of this paragraph 4 was eliminated and the reference to “treasurer” in subparagraph (d) was eliminated. Further modifications were made to this paragraph (4).

The members then addressed the section titled “Ideas for Future Consideration”.

The Chairman indicated that he would email the members the latest version of the draft charter, with track changes, and as a clean copy.

The Chairman also indicated that the commission’s last meeting is July 17, 2019 and that on July 18, 2019 the charter and report would be submitted and the commission would terminate.

#### 6.0 Adjourn

K. Buffkin MOVED to adjourn meeting; P. Belisle SECONDED; Motion carried 6:0:0.

Meeting adjourned around 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Gilleese  
Secretary, Charter Commission

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