DRAFT

May 13, 2015

The Stonington Board of Selectmen held a special meeting on this date at the Stonington Police Department at 6:00 p.m. Present were First Selectman George Crouse and Selectman Michael Spellman. Also present were members of the public and press.

**(1) Call to Order**

Mr. Crouse called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**(2) Approval of the Minutes**

- A motion was made by Mr. Spellman and seconded by Mr. Crouse to approve the April 17, 2015 Board of Selectmen special meeting minutes.
- The April 22, 2015 Board of Selectmen special meeting minutes were tabled until the next meeting.
- A motion was made Mr. Spellman and seconded by Mr. Crouse to approve the April 29, 2015 Board of Selectmen special meeting minutes.
- A motion was made by Mr. Spellman and seconded by Mr. Crouse to approve the May 6, 2015 Board of Selectmen special meeting minutes.

**(3) Comments from the Public**

- Ms. June Strunk read her prepared stated which is attached to these minutes as Exhibit A.
- Attorney Nick Kepple asked the Selectmen to write a letter of community support for his client, Horses Healing Humans, Inc. which is a requirement from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Program to obtain a loan to acquire the property located at 240 New London Turnpike where they operate their equine therapy programs. A motion was made by Mr. Spellman and seconded by Mr. Crouse to put this matter on an agenda at an upcoming special Board of Selectmen meeting.

**(4) Correspondence**

- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Marc Ginsberg expressing his concern that the amount in the budget for the Stonington Free Library was changed from $140,000.000 to $137,500.00.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Lee Paradis, Executive Director of Horses Healing Humans, Inc. requesting permit fee waivers.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Marilyn Riley expressing her interest in serving on the Commission on Aging.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Barbara Currier expressing her interest in serving on the Commission on Aging.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Lance Hamilton expressing his interest in serving on the West Broad Street School Building Committee.

**(5) Appointments/Resignation**

**Finance Director**

A motion was made by Mr. Crouse and seconded by Mr. Spellman to appoint James Sullivan as the Finance Director.

**Commission on Aging**

A motion was made by Mr. Spellman and seconded by Mr. Crouse to appoint Andrea Carey to the Commission on Aging.

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STONINGTON, CT.
15 MAY 20 PM 3:27
CYNTHIA LADWIG
TOWN CLERK

The Selectmen acknowledged the resignation of Robert Elmer from the Commission on Aging.

**Stonington Harbor Management Commission**

A motion was made by Mr. Crouse and seconded by Mr. Spellman to appoint Bruce Anderson to the Stonington Harbor Management Commission.

**Permanent Committee to Study the Needs and Use of Town Public Buildings**

A motion was made by Mr. Crouse and seconded by Mr. Spellman to appoint Alisa Morrison to the Permanent Committee to Study the Needs and Use of Town Public Buildings.

**(6) New Business**

**Authorized Signatures Change Form**

A motion was made by Mr. Spellman and seconded by Mr. Crouse to authorize George Crouse and Vincent Pacileo to enter into an agreement with the Connecticut State Department of Education and to sign the claim for reimbursement.

**Authorization of Finance Director to Process Return of Funds to the Connecticut Department of Transportation**

A motion was made by Mr. Spellman and seconded by Mr. Crouse to authorize Finance Director Jim Sullivan to process return of funds in the amount of $14,273.98 to the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

**West Broad Street School Building Permit Application Fee Waiver**

A motion was made by Mr. Spellman and seconded by Mr. Crouse to waive the building permit application fee in the amount of $242.00 for the asbestos abatement and drywall installation at the West Broad Street School.

**Acceptance of Charter Revision Commission's Report on Amendments to the Charter**

- Town Attorney Tom Londregan spoke with regard to the timeline of the Charter Revision steps. He stated that we are at number 6 of the outline which states that the Board of Selectmen may, if it desires, recommend changes to the report no later than 15 days after its public hearing. He stated that now is the time to make recommendations to accept or reject. Attorney Londregan stated that they had 3 recommendations. He stated that there were two that are technical. He stated that they are suggesting that the Charter Revision Commission amend Section 6-5(C) of the proposed revised charter to reference the Board of Finance rather than the Board of Education. Attorney Londregan stated there is another technical one which is to move that the Board of Selectmen recommend to the Charter Revision Commission that it amend Section 8-2(B) (Department of Assessment) of the proposed revised Charter so that the last sentence of the first paragraph reads: "The Department shall have the following duties in addition to any powers set forth under Section 10-4 of this Charter." He stated the third one is more involved. Attorney Londregan stated that it has to do with the timing. He stated that if the charter revision passes, the Charter Revision Commission is proposing staggered terms and shorter terms. Attorney Londregan stated that it is their opinion that if the charter revision passes, the effect should begin at the next election not this election. He stated that if at 8:00 p.m. on election night the polls close, we know that there are 2 members of the Board of Finance who are elected and they will be elected under the current law which gives them a 6 year term. He stated then if 20, 30, 40 minutes later you total all of the votes of the charter revision and you find out it passes you say sorry you thought you had a 6 year term at 8:00 p.m. and now at 8:45 p.m. you have a 4 year term. Attorney Londregan stated that

they looked at an opinion from 1987 which talked about you can shorten an office and even abolish an office but you can't abolish the officer that's in there. Attorney Londregan stated that they are aware that the Charter Revision Commission didn't look at other municipalities that had charter revisions and their effective dates but they found in those situations they were adding to the terms rather than taking them.

- Mr. Crouse asked if they sent it back with these recommendations does the Board of Selectmen and the Charter Revision Commission have a joint meeting.
- Attorney Londregan stated that you have to confer. He stated that the charter revision may accept your recommendations or they may reject them. That will be the final document.
- Mr. Crouse asked when we send it back we have no further say on the charter?
- Attorney Londregan stated the charter revision make a decision on your recommendations and send it back to you then you at that point either accept or reject the charter.
- Ms. Ashley Gillece stated that she wanted to clarify two things. She stated that obviously they have not been able to talk about this as a commission outside of a meeting due to federal laws about different parties. Ms. Gillece stated that Weston did the same thing in their charter and they did not extend terms, they reduced terms under 6.4 of their charter to 4 years. She stated that also Middlebury has done the same thing under section 10.10B in their charter. Ms. Gillece stated that from the documents that were coming back and forth between Attorney Londregan and the State's attorney she did not believe that the attorney actually took the formal side that he was against being able to do this as far as changing terms when it went into play. She stated that the people who are running for the Board of Finance this time would be aware that if the charter passed they were running for 4 year terms. Ms. Gillece stated that it's not like they have no notice of that prior so if they chose to run they were choosing to run knowing it might have been a 4 year and not a 6 year term.
- Mr. Crouse stated that Mr. Londregan is just trying to clear up a problem that could arise if someone felt slighted because they didn't have a full 6 year term.
- Ms. Amy Hambly stated that the 1987 letter that you spoke of that talks about completely abolishing a committee and that's not what we were trying to do. She stated that she's not sure how this compares to what we're asking.
- Mr. Londregan stated that the point of 1987 is as follows "that the legislative body may have the power to shorten terms and they have the power to abolish an office if it is legitimately for purposes of reorganization."
- Ms. Hambly stated that their objective is to reorganize it not to abolish anyone specific. She stated that it is a reorganization to parallel and mirror the Board of Education.
- Attorney Londregan stated it is still an officer whose term is going to be reduced.
- Ms. Gillece stated that this did occur when they transitioned to the Board of Ed. She stated that we had a Board of Ed member who was actually present on the charter revision now whose office was shortened and that was a precedent by this Town when we transitioned to the Board of Ed.
- Mr. Crouse stated that if we send this back to you and you can send it back to us. He stated that he is sure that they will correct the grammar in one of them and address that

other point. Mr. Crouse stated that they send it back and all 3 of us have already basically said we are willing to pass it on. He stated that it is up to your commission to hopefully rewrite some of the English that has to be and correct a few things and we can make a decision in a joint meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Crouse that the three recommendations from Attorney Londregan go back to the Charter Revision Commission to review and discuss at a joint meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Spellman.

**(7) Comments from the Public**

- Mr. Dan Oliverio stated that for the last 5 years the Highway Department has put on a food drive for the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center for the weekend backpack program that they have. He stated that in the past it was okay to use the truck on the weekend to put the groceries in and bring them to the Neighborhood Center when they were done.
- Mr. Crouse stated that now the policy under risk management is the Board of Selectmen should know about what is happening with the vehicles.
- Mr. Oliverio stated that it would be used on a Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- Mr. Crouse stated that personally he doesn't have a problem with that. He stated that they will vote on it at the next meeting.
- Ms. Ashley Gillece stated that she was a little disheartened by this decision just because as the Selectmen heard several members of the public wanted this to go into effect as soon as possible. She stated that they want there to be accountability. Ms. Gillece stated that she wanted to clarify on the record that she feels like they are partially not listening to what they wanted by having it go in as soon as possible. She further stated that was the town's decision by the public that night.
- Mr. Crouse stated that the town attorney poses issues that the Town of Stonington may have problems with in the future. He stated that we have to digest and make decisions on his recommendations.
- Ms. Gillece asked if they could request further clarification from the State's election before that meeting.
- Attorney Londregan stated that once the charter is in its final form it is usually sent to the Secretary of State because they have a division to see if there are any issues regarding home rule and state law.

**(8) Comments from the Selectmen**

None

**(9) Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Bell
Recording Secretary

EXHIBIT A

Dr. June D. Strunk
239 North Anguilla Road
Pawcatuck, CT 06379
May 11, 2015

First Selectman's Office
152 Elm Street
Stonington, CT 06378

Dear Board of Selectman,

I am writing you to express my request regarding the recent recommendation submitted to you by the Charter Review Commission (CRC).

I am requesting that you send the proposed revisions back to Charter Review Commission with instructions to open the entire Charter for review. Changing our Charter is too important to be rushed. All recommendations should be considered and the voters should be allowed to choose among all the proposed changes.

The current recommendations only address changes to the BOF and how the BOF is elected. Put the recommendation to a vote. But then what happens to the rest of the charter? There are numerous revisions that I have requested to be considered.

If term limits are to be proposed for the Board of Education and the Board of Finance, I think term limits should be considered for all commissions governed by the Charter. I asked our First Selectman to do what was needed so that term limits were looked at in 2007. Seven years later, the Charter Review Commission was started. It took 7 years, but the Charter Review was started.

I think the term for Selectman should be 4 years, not 2.

I think having the budget bifurcated into a vote for the Town's budget and a vote for the Education budget is a sound proposal. Having a bifurcated budget allows for transparency and clarity. The voters should be allowed to vote on each part of the budget. It is their tax dollars after all.

I think the vote for the Charter Review should be a standalone vote at a special election. The Charter is how we govern our town. The vote is too important to not stand alone. Every penny spent on the special election is well spent. Every change to the Charter should be a separate question, clearly stated as to what the change is. The voters should be allowed to vote on each change separately.

The recommendations just listed were submitted to the CRC. The recommendations were ignored and there was no discussion.

Please consider requesting that these recommendations are added to the Charter Review.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. June D. Strunk

I support June's comments

Sandy Grimes