

May 27, 2015

The Stonington Board of Selectmen held a special joint meeting with the Charter Revision Commission on this date at the Stonington Police Department at 7:00 p.m. Present were First Selectman George Crouse, Selectmen Rob Simmons and Selectman Michael Spellman. Also present were members of the public and press.

STONINGTON TOWN  
CYNTHIA LADWIG  
15 JUN -4 AM 11:53

**(1) Call to Order**

Mr. Crouse called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**(2) Approval of the Minutes**

- A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to approve the April 22, 2015 Board of Selectmen special meeting minutes.
- A motion was made by Mr. Spellman, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to approve the May 1, 2015 Stonington Resource Recovery Authority special meeting minutes.
- A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to approve the May 4, 2015 Stonington Resource Recovery Authority special meeting minutes as amended.
- A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to approve the May 13, 2015 Board of Selectmen special meeting minutes.

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**(3) Correspondence**

- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Blunt White, Chairman of the Economic Development Commission, dated May 22, 2015, regarding pending new hires for the Director of Planning and the Director of Economic Development positions.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from the Planning and Zoning Department regarding a Special Use Permit and Groundwater Protection Permit applications to permit use as a non-profit-equine-assisted activities and therapy facility for property located at 340 New London Turnpike, Stonington.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Van Riley, Superintendent of Schools dated May 15, 2015 regarding the school budget update.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Mary Ferguson expressing her interest in serving on the Commission on Aging.

**(4) Appointments**

**Commission on Aging**

- A motion was made by Mr. Spellman, seconded by Mr. Crouse and voted unanimously to appoint Marilyn Riley to the Commission on Aging.
- A motion was made by Mr. Spellman, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to appoint Barbara Currier to the Commission on Aging.

**(5) New Business**

**Letter of Agreement Regarding the Establishment of a Multi-Jurisdictional Shelter**

- Mr. George Brennan, Emergency Management Director, stated that to clarify that this doesn't mean that we are closing our shelter if means when the main incident is calming down the Red Cross needs to put more people together.
- Mr. Crouse stated that basically we are on the second tier of sheltering now.
- Mr. Simmons stated that it was his understanding that during the blizzard last year that the primary shelter for Stonington citizens in particular senior citizens who might need to

be evacuated was Fitch High School. He stated that there was some concern that senior citizens may not want to go over there. Mr. Simmons stated that they prefer to use Stonington High. He stated that this agreement places Stonington High on the list of shelters so those citizens would have an opportunity to shelter here.

- Mr. Brennan stated that no one is denied shelter. He stated that even if we have to move them we would move them ourselves so no one will have to drive there. He stated that the Red Cross is so short of people they just don't have enough people to open all of the shelters. Mr. Brennan stated that the plan will work.
- Mr. Crouse stated that Stonington will open if the demand is there.

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to approve the First Selectman to sign the Letter of Agreement.

**Request for Use of Highway Department Truck for Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center Food Drive**

A motion was made by Mr. Spellman, seconded by Mr. Crouse and voted unanimously to allow the use of a Highway Department truck on June 20, 2015 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to transport food from the food drive to the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center.

**Discussion-2014 PILOT Payment from Stonington Housing Authority**

Elaine Schmidt, Executive Director of the Stonington Housing Authority, requested that the annual PILOT payment from the Housing Authority to the town be reduced from 10% to 6%. A motion was made by Mr. Crouse and seconded by Mr. Simmons to reduce the payment from 10% to 6%. Discussion: Mr. Simmons stated that going from 10% to 6% is reasonable. He stated that there is nothing that prevents the Housing Authority from coming back at a future date. Mr. Simmons stated that a 4% cut is pretty substantial. The vote was 3-0 in favor of reducing the payment.

**Request for Use of the Stonington Town Dock for the Blessing of the Fleet**

Mr. Crouse presented an Application from Father Dennis Perkins of St. Mary Church requesting the use of the Stonington Town Dock for the Blessing of the Fleet on Sunday, July 26, 2015. A motion was made by Mr. Crouse, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to approve the request.

**Request for Use of the 4<sup>th</sup> District Voting Hall Parking Lot for the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Wooden Boat Show**

Mr. Crouse presented an Application from Andrew Breece requesting the use of the 4<sup>th</sup> District Voting Hall parking lot for overflow parking from the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Wooden Boat Show. A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to approve the request.

**Request for Building Permit Fee Waiver for Town Hall Door Replacement**

Mr. Crouse presented a request from the Building Department to waive the building permit application fee in the amount of \$162.00 for the replacement of the town hall front door. A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Crouse and voted unanimously to waive the fee.

**Review List of Applicants for the West Broad Street School Building Task Force**

A motion was made by Mr. Spellman, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to appoint Lance Hamilton, Ashley Gillece, John Bolduc, Bill Sternberg, Paul Sartor, Kevin Burns, Dan Oliverio and John Matthews to the Task Force. A motion was made by Mr.

Crouse and seconded by Mr. Simmons to appoint Michael Spellman to the Task Force. Mr. Spellman abstained.

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to adjourn the Board of Selectmen's meeting at 7:20 p.m.

**Discussion Between the Board of Selectmen and the Charter Review Commission**

The joint Board of Selectmen and Charter Revision Commission meeting convened at 7:21 p.m.

- Mr. Matt Berger, Chairman of the Charter Revision Commission stated that for those of you who have not been following the Charter Revision process, the Charter Review Commission met and made some recommendations and changes to the charter. He stated that we then submit those to the Board of Selectmen and statutorily they were obligated to either accept them, reject them or send them back to us with some suggested changes which is what they did. He stated that there are three items Section 10-3(B) reads as follows "To establish the staggered terms for the Board of Finance and increase the membership of the Board of Finance to seven members, the following process shall be followed. For the 2017 town election, three positions will be filled pursuant to the election procedures contained in this Charter, except that one of said positions shall be for a term of two years for the 2017 election only." He stated that B is the Board of Selectmen recommend to the Charter Review Commission that it amend Section 6-5(C) of the proposed revised Charter to reference the Board of Finance rather than the Board of Education. He stated that is a clear typo. Mr. Berger that C is 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 the last paragraph reads: "The Department shall have the following duties in addition to any powers set forth under Section 10-4 of this Charter." Mr. Berger stated that what we do tonight is discuss those changes. He stated that they actually have a regular meeting tomorrow night. Mr. Berger stated that ideally we will be able to decide what to do at our regular meeting. Mr. Berger stated that tonight the point is to go over what the changes are and why the Board of Selectmen has requested them of us and see if there is some concession. He stated that B and C are almost typographical. He stated that A is the only one that actually makes a substantive change to our recommendations. He stated that 2A the Board of Selectmen has proposed a different implementation procedure. Mr. Berger stated that he thinks the biggest reason they were called and the biggest changes that they made were to change the Board of Finance from a 6 to a 4 year term and a 6 member to a 7 member board. He stated that they have proposed an implementation procedure that would have taken effect immediately upon voting.
- Mr. Simmons stated that he read through the logic of the 4 versus the 6 years and as he understands the logic based on Mr. Londregan's presentation if the votes are counted and people are elected to certain positions on election night and then subsequently the votes for the charter question are counted 20, 30 or 40 minutes later and it passes somebody who might think that they were elected to a 6 year term might now be elected for a 4 year term. He would say to Mr. Londregan what if the registrar of voters count the question first and then count the office holders. It seems to him that it doesn't really matter one way or another if the charter passes it's a 4 year term.

- Mr. Berger stated that the election is not like a deed recording where you time stamp them. Mr. Berger stated that the provision they sent to the Selectmen was unanimous. He stated that he did find that the concerns raised by Mr. Londregan and Ted Bromley from the Secretary of the State to be worrisome enough that he'd be willing to delay it if that is still what the Selectmen are requesting.
- Mr. Crouse stated that they sent it on with Mr. Londregan's questions. He stated that he would send on whatever the Charter Revision Commission sends back to the Board of Selectmen on to the voters.
- Mr. Robert Statchen stated that he is substantively on board with Mr. Simmons. He stated that he is not as concerned with the litigation risk. He stated that he asked Attorney Jeff Londregan if he could provide any documentation in support of it. He stated that the only document that he stated he was relying on was the March 5, 1987 letter that's not on letterhead but apparently was signed by the Secretary of State at that time but this had to do with an ordinance changing a Planning and Zoning Commission versus a Charter Review Commission changing it. It happened in a town that was not a home rule town. It was a statutory town. What they did was they removed all 9 members. It seems like a different situation. Mr. Statchen stated that the individual who runs is going to know that the charter is also on the ballot. He stated that no one should be surprised.
- Mr. Crouse stated that personally in the end it will not matter to him because whatever the CRC decides in their meeting tomorrow he will push it forward.
- Mr. Stephen Bessette stated that they were not actually charged with changing the dynamics of the Board of Finance in terms of the structure or the terms. He stated that they were asked to address the composition. He doesn't feel that they were told to make it a 7 board member. Mr. Bessette stated that they were asked to look at the Board of Finance and look at how it was structurally constructed.
- Ms. Amy Hambly stated that she didn't see the parallel with the letter that was referenced. She stated that they could do away with the Board of Finance. Ms. Hambly stated that they have that power. She stated that she couldn't understand how the power is not there to reduce it from 6 to 4 again knowing when they go for the appointment for the vote they know what they're going into. Ms. Hambly stated that everyone knows what they are getting themselves into.
- Ms. Ashley Gillece stated that she simply asked Mr. Londregan and he said no that the State's attorney had not said that he wasn't in favor of it. She stated for them to hold up the process now and possibly hold up the implementation for two more years after people asked us not to that they would almost not be doing their job.
- Ms. Sue Jones stated that when the names are submitted on the ballot why can't there be fine print right at the bottom that says a 6 year term or maybe a 4 year term.
- Mr. Berger stated that you can't have a conditional election. He stated you have to straight yes or no. Mr. Berger stated that we should err on the side of caution. He stated that the more ambiguity you have the voters may vote it down.

**(6) Comments from the Public**

Mr. Stephen Bessette stated that he lives very close to the 4<sup>th</sup> District Voting Hall and the parking lot needs serious attention and it's of concern.

**(7) Comments from the Selectmen**

- Mr. Simmons stated that earlier they received a letter from Blunt White, Chairman of the Economic Development Commission offering assistance. He stated that Mr. White also says that the EDC is ready to assist in the strategic thinking of these positions. Mr. Simmons stated that he wanted to state for the record that the EDC has been very helpful over the past several months and reshaping the POCD, the Plan of Conservation and Development, to come up with recommendations for the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Mr. Crouse stated that he has asked that a member of the EDC sit on the hiring committee.
- Mr. Simmons stated that we have an opportunity in June to solicit to do interviews and to really get ready to fill this important position.
- Mr. Crouse stated that someone from the Planning and Zoning Commission, EDC, Board of Selectmen and another Planning Director probably from COG and maybe a person from the Conservation Commission and Inland Wetlands will be on the hiring committee.

**(8) Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Kristine Bell  
Recording Secretary