

**CHARTER COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES SEPTEMBER 25, 2014**

Chairman Matthew Berger called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. All the members were present: Chairman Matthew Berger, Vice- Chairman Stephen Bessette, Connie Frishman, Ashley Gillece, John Gomes, Amy Hambly, Susan Jones, Jerry Murphy, Gail Shea, Alice Soscia, and Bob Statchen.

1. Approval of Minutes:

- a. 8/28/2014: Mr. Statchen moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. Ms. Frishman asked that under general comments the minutes reflect she stated the entire charter is open for discussion. Ms. Shea requested that under CTCMA, a new paragraph should begin with Mr. Bessette's comments. Mr. Statchen moved to approve the minutes as amended, with both commissioners' comments above. Mr. Murphy seconded. All in favor 11-0.
- b. 9/17/2014: Mr. Bessette moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Shea seconded the motion. The following commissioners asked for changes in the minutes: Ms. Jones, Ms. Hambly, Ms. Frishman, & Ms. Shea. Those changes have been made to the minutes for the public hearing on 9/17/14 and have been sent to the chairman and the Town Clerk's office. The chairman will distribute to the commission. Ms. Hambly moved to approve the amended minutes. Ms. Gillece seconded. All in favor 11-0.

2. Communications: Ms. Shea distributed a letter sent by Attorney N. Kepple to First Selectman E. Haberek dated 05/13/09. Also Town Clerk & Tax Collector submitted handouts for the commission as part of their presentation from the public hearing.

3. Old Business: None

4. New Business:

- a. Set meeting dates for this Nov. & Dec.: The meetings will be WED. 11/19/14 and WED. 12/17/14. These will be regular meetings on an amended schedule.
- b. Set regular meeting schedule for 2015: Regular meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday of every month for January through October, 7pm at the Police station.
- c. Set additional meetings?: It was proposed not to set any additional meetings at this point.

5. Discussion of need for, and possible election of, a CRC secretary: Mr. Berger stated he thinks it is necessary to have a CRC secretary. Mr. Bessette agreed. They complimented Ms. Hambly on doing a great job so far in assisting this commission administratively. Mr. Bessette moved to appoint Amy Hambly as secretary. Mr. Statchen seconded the motion. All in favor 11-0. Ms. Hambly will handle communications to the commissioners electronically.

6. Proposal to add as future agenda item "Comments from the Public": There was general discussion on this idea amongst the commissioners. The following is a brief synopsis from each commissioner:

*Mr. Bessette: Shared pros & cons to this idea and need to be cautious.

*Ms. Gillece: Maybe limit comments from the public to agenda items only.

*Ms. Frishman: Allow comments from the public at any meetings but keep them on topic.

*Mr. Gomes: Supports public comments at end of meetings on what has been discussed.

*Mr. Bessette: Shared the need to have comments before a motion /vote takes place.

*Ms. Soscia: Suggested to share with the public at beginning of meeting what focus of that meeting is about, & allow public comments. Suggested idea of having a comments box at meeting for those who are uncomfortable speaking in public.

*Ms. Shea: Supports public comments at beginning of meetings, but maybe put a time limit on public comments section of meeting agenda.

*Ms. Jones: Supports having public comments at beginning & end of meetings.

*Ms. Hambly: Supports having public comments at beginning & end of meetings but people should be invited to communicate via emails/letters also.

*Mr. Statchen: He complimented the positive dialogue that took place between the public & the commission on 9/17 public hearing, especially when Ms. Frishman asked questions to clarify from the citizens.

*Mr. Murphy: He agrees with the need for public comment. He said the commission can "play it by ear and change if needed, as the group goes forward".

Ms. Shea moved to include public comments at the beginning & end of the meetings. Ms. Soscia seconded. All in favor 11-0.

7. Discussion of hearing of 9/17/14 including distribution of written comments received regarding Charter Revision:

There was a discussion amongst the group on what was said at the hearing. The common points shared were:

-Many want changes to the Board of Finance.

-Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Assessor positions need to be reviewed with discussion of length of term and making part of the town admin staff.

-Primary focus should be on the Board of Finance.

-Term limits of Board of Finance.

-Unaffiliated party- town wide revision issue.

-Expand Board of Selectmen.

-Comments on having two separate budgets for town (Town & Board of Ed) with two different line items, for voting on each.

-23 people came out to speak at public hearing & petition of 1500 names spoke clearly to specifics for this commission's focus.

-common theme of democratizing many areas of our town government.

8. How to proceed: Ms. Soscia stated the focus should be on the Board of Finance & address any future concerns as time allows. Mr. Gomes suggested handling the small items that don't take much time initially then focus on the Board of Finance, since that will take a longer period of time. Mr. Statchen agreed that the focus should be on the Board of Finance since that was the reason for this commission. Mr. Bessette suggested commissioners read the charter & have a poll of commissioners for their top priority issues. Several other commissioners strongly stated that the INITIAL effort by this commission should be the Board of Finance. A poll was taken among the commission on their priorities for this commission:

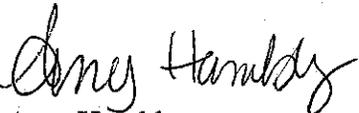
*Mr. Murphy: BOF(term/term limits), 3 town positions(hereby known as Town clerk, Tax Collector, Assessor), size of Board of Selectmen.

- *Mr. Berger: BOF, size of Board of Selectmen, 3 town positions, public comments
- *Mr. Bessette: BOF, 3 town positions, minor housekeeping issues in charter
- *Ms. Gillece: BOF, unaffiliated representation, 3 town positions (term)
- *Ms. Frishman: BOF, size of Board of Selectmen, 3 town positions
- *Mr. Gomes: 3 town positions, BOF, splitting of budget into two sections for voting
- *Ms. Soscia: BOF, size of Board of Selectmen, 3 town positions, public comments
- *Ms. Shea: BOF, 3 town positions, size of Board of Selectmen, charter housekeeping issues, ethics commission.
- *Ms. Jones: BOF, 3 town positions, size & term limits of Board of Selectmen, public comments.
- *Ms. Hambly: BOF, 3 town positions.
- *Mr. Statchen: BOF, anything else that's not controversial to BOF issue can be handle once our initial task is completed.

Therefore, the commission agreed the Board of Finance will be the initial agenda item. As time allows, the other items will be addressed.

Ms. Shea shared a pocket sized Freedom of Information Act pamphlet for each commissioner.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10pm


Amy Hambly
Secretary