

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Thursday, January 14, 2021

Via teleconference

7:00 P.M.

Phone: 1-929-205-6099

Meeting ID: 846 3097 7084

The January 14, 2021 meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was called to order at 7:05 PM.

1. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Gwen Marrion, Vice Chair Eleanor Georges, Adam Teller, Richard Hayes, Jay Brudz, Jim Aldrich, and John Toomey.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Board Clerk Michael Stankov, Member of the Public Milton Hathaway

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

G. Marrion called for public comment, and M. Hathaway stated that he had several comments about agenda item 11. The commission moved item 11 to the beginning of the agenda by unanimous consent.

11. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON ADDING PROVISIONS TO CHARTER REGARDING SECURITY

A. Teller voiced the opinion that a section on security likely does not belong in the Bolton Charter because there is not a great deal that can be dictated by charter – Bolton does not have a police force but instead hosts resident state troopers. J. Brudz noted that ensuring oversight of the police is important, but that such an issue can best be overseen by the public safety committee that already exists rather than creating more language in the charter. J. Aldrich and J. Toomey largely agreed, with the latter noting that the BoS might consider elevating the committee to a commission if there was a need for more formalization of.

M. Hathaway thanked the commission for their comments and spoke about an ongoing string of car thefts and burglaries in Bolton that he felt had not been adequately addressed by the existing security infrastructure. G. Marrion asked M. Hathaway if there was anything in particular that he felt could be addressed by the charter, and M. Hathaway noted that he was primarily interested in ensuring that communication about the status of law enforcement in town was improved. E. Georges and J. Toomey noted that it would be potentially useful to contact the Town Administrator and the BoS about this issue.

3. ACT ON MINUTES OF DECEMBER 10, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

MOTION MADE by J. Brudz, seconded by A. Teller, to ratify the minutes of the December 10, 2020 regular meeting.

DISCUSSION: Several small grammatical mistakes and extraneous letters were corrected. The word “statutes” in page 2 paragraph 3 was changed to standards, and the word “change” was added to the end of second paragraph in section 10. J. Toomey noted that he was marked as abstaining on the first vote of the night when he was not yet at the meeting, while his name should simply not appear on the vote at all. Missing page numbers were added.

VOTING IN FAVOR: G. Marrion, J. Brudz, J. Aldrich, A. Teller, J. Toomey and E. Georges.

VOTING AGAINST: R. Hayes

ABSTENTIONS: None

4. ACT ON MINUTES OF DECEMBER 17, 2020 SPECIAL MEETING

MOTION MADE by J. Brudz, seconded by E. Georges, to ratify the minutes of the December 17, 2020 regular meeting.

DISCUSSION: Several small grammatical mistakes and extraneous letters were corrected. The word “adjected” on page 1 was changed to be “adjusted.” Missing page numbers were added.

VOTING IN FAVOR: G. Marrion, J. Brudz, J. Aldrich, A. Teller, J. Toomey, and E. Georges.

VOTING AGAINST: R. Hayes

ABSTENTIONS: None

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON REVISING SECTIONS 8.6 (C)(3), 8.6(C)(5) AND 9.3(2) RE THRESHOLDS FOR APPROVAL OF SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AND TRANSFERS OF APPROPRIATIONS.

J. Aldrich spoke regarding the potential benefit of changing fixed number values in these sections of the charter to be percentages of the town budget, which would allow for these values to naturally fluctuate and compensate for inflation and other budgetary changes. J. Brudz and A. Teller both noted that the commission had already adjusted absolute numbers to be percentages of the budget in other sections of the charter and would be amenable to other such changes here.

MOTION MADE by A. Teller, seconded by J. Aldrich, to change the numerical values present in Sections 8.6 (C)(3), 8.6(C)(5) and 9.3(2) pertaining to special and/or supplemental appropriations transfers of appropriations to be 0.2% of the most recent approved budget.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTING IN FAVOR: G. Marrion, J. Brudz, J. Aldrich, A. Teller, J. Toomey, E. Georges, and R. Hayes

VOTING AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

6. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON REVISING SECTION 8.7 (C)(3) RE THRESHOLD FOR PROJECT APPROPRIATIONS THAT MAY BE INCLUDED IN RESERVE FUND FOR CAPITAL AND NONRECURRING EXPENDITURES

Discussion continued from a previous meeting concerning the Board of Education's request to have computers be purchasable under the guidelines for capital and nonrecurring expenditures. J. Aldrich and R. Hayes spoke against altering the standards that currently exist for section 8.7 (C)(3), and it was noted that there had been no requests from the public to alter this section of the charter. J. Aldrich suggested that the only change that would likely be needed for this section would be to change the absolute dollar values in the section to be a percentage, similar to the previous sections that had been changed in the same way.

MOTION MADE by J. Aldrich, seconded by J. Brudz, to change the numerical value of \$10,000 present in Sections 8.7 (C)(3), pertaining to threshold for project appropriations that may be included in Reserve Fund for Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures to be 0.05 % of the most recent approved budget.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTING IN FAVOR: G. Marrion, J. Brudz, J. Aldrich, A. Teller, J. Toomey, and R. Hayes.

VOTING AGAINST: E. Georges

ABSTENTIONS: None

7. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON AMENDING SECTION 8.5 (E) TO CHANGE TIMING OF ISSUANCE OF TAX BILLS FROM ANNUALLY TO SEMI-ANNUALLY.

The commission was in consensus that no action was required pertaining to Section 8.5 (E), as doing so would only add to the burden of an already struggling town staff and is not strictly necessary for the overwhelming majority of taxpayers.

8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON AMENDING SECTION 7.4 (D) TO PERMIT TEMPORARY PUBLIC BUILDING COMMISSION TO REMAIN IN EFFECT UNTIL COMPLETION OF THE BUILDING PROJECT

A. Teller spoke to problems that have existed in the part regarding early disbanding of building commissions, and the fallout that has occurred when problems occur late in the construction process but the building commission had been disbanded. R. Hayes spoke in favor of establishing a permanent building commission, while A. Teller noted that a permanent

committee could have no work for long periods of time and that project based committees might be superior for a community of this size.

MOTION MADE by J. Aldrich, seconded by J. Brudz, to modify the language in section 8.5 (E) such that the temporary project building commission remain in effect until the completion of the building project as determined by the BoS.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTING IN FAVOR: G. Marrion, J. Brudz, J. Aldrich, A. Teller, J. Toomey, R. Hayes, and E. Georges.

VOTING AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

9. Clarification of Commission's August 20, 2020 decision regarding number of members of proposed Finance Committee

While reading through the meeting minutes from previous meetings, G. Marrion realized that there had never been a formal vote on the matter of the composition of the Finance Commission.

MOTION MADE by J. Aldrich, seconded by R. Hayes, to set the composition of the Finance Commission as 3 members of the Board of Selectmen, 2 members of the Board of Education, and two at large members with one each appointed by the BoE and the BoS.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTING IN FAVOR: G. Marrion, J. Brudz, J. Aldrich, A. Teller, J. Toomey, R. Hayes, and E. Georges.

VOTING AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

10. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON MAKING ALL CHARTER LANGUAGE GENDER-NEUTRAL

MOTION MADE by J. Brudz, seconded by A. Teller, to make all language gender neutral to the point reasonably practicable.

DISCUSSION: There was some discussion about exactly what terminology would need to be changed to make all language gender neutral, such as whether or not the word "they" could be used as an appropriate substitution for "he," if a simple line at the beginning of the document could clarify that "he" is not meant literally, and how other such changes might be implemented.

VOTING IN FAVOR: G. Marrion, J. Brudz, J. Aldrich, A. Teller, and J. Toomey.

VOTING AGAINST: R. Hayes and E. Georges

ABSTENTIONS: None

12. DISCUSS NEXT STEPS IN CHARTER REVISION PROCESS AND SET PUBLIC HEARING DATE

The commission resolved to begin the review of its Draft Report to the BoS and determine the exact date of the public hearing depending on how long the review of the document takes. It was noted that this public hearing would have to be conducted virtually due to continued Covid precautions, and commissioners discussed the procedures and difficulties of conducting a public hearing in such a format. After discussion about the amount of time that might be needed to revise the draft report to the BoS after hearing public comment, the commission chose to delay setting the date for the public hearing until the January 21, 2021 special meeting.

13. BEGIN REVIEW OF DRAFT REPORT TO BOARD OF SELECTMEN

The Commission began its review of the Draft Report on a page-by-page basis, reviewing several of the topics that they had resolved over the course of the charter revision process. The first major topic that was discussed was the manner in which ties would be resolved for municipal elections, with the coin toss being made the default for all elections other than those of the first selectman, which would be resolved by a special election.

Following this, discussion centered on how best to present justifications for some of the changes that the CRC has chosen to present in the draft report. Namely, the commission is recommending that the term for members of the BoS be lengthened from 2 years to 4, that the size of the BoS be increased from 5 individuals to 7, and that the Board of Finance be altered to be a Finance Commission composed of seven members of the BoS and BoE, among several other changes that could be considered major or controversial. Because of the size and gravity of these changes, the commission focused on clarifying language and providing explanations for why these suggestions would be good for Bolton's governance.

G. Marrion adjourned the meeting at 8:56.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Stankov, Charter Revision Commission Board Clerk

Please see future minutes for revisions and corrections to these minutes.