

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Thursday, June 10, 2021 7:00 P.M.

Via Zoom teleconference

Phone: 1-929-205-6099

Meeting ID: 862 6504 3909

The June 10, 2021 joint meeting of the Charter Revision Commission and Board of Selectmen was called to order by G. Marrion at 7:04 PM.

1. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: CRC Chair Gwen Marrion, CRC Vice Chair Eleanor Georges Adam Teller, Jim Aldrich, R. Hayes, and John Toomey.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Richard Hayes and Jay Brudz

OTHERS PRESENT: Administrative Officer Jim Rupert

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

G. Marrion called for public comment, but there was none.

3. ACT ON MINUTES OF APRIL 28, 2021 SPECIAL MEETING AND MAY 19 2021 SPECIAL BOS-CRC MEETING

MOTION MADE by A. Teller, seconded by J. Toomey, to approve the minutes of the April 28, 2021 meeting.

DISCUSSION: E. Georges noted that the word “meetings” should be deleted from the top of page 2. A. Teller noted that the last paragraph, fourth line of page 2 should remove the word “selects”.

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

VOTING AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: E. Georges

MOTION MADE by A. Teller, seconded by E. Georges, to adopt the minutes of the May 19, 2021 special meeting between the BoS and the CRC.

DISCUSSION: E. Georges noted that the first paragraph of number 3 began “G. Marrion began the discussion with a discussion of the disagreements”, but that she would like it to read “G. Marrion began the discussion with concerns between the CRC and BoS when reviewing the charter.” On page 2, the first pull paragraph following “S. Pierog noted”,

third line says “as a result must be free of such conflicts that could conflict”, but this language is redundant – E. Georges suggested rephrasing this as “as a result, must be free of any pursuits that may conflict with their managerial role.” A. Teller had a question pertaining to page 3 paragraph 3 – here, the minutes are ambiguous as to whether or not capital expenditures and debt are counted as “total expenditures” for the purposes of such language in the charter. J. Aldrich noted that “total expenditures” for the town is counted for the fiscal year, and thus the only money spent on capital expenditure or debt service that would be included in “total expenditures” for a given year would be that money spent in that year, not the total value to be paid off over multiple years. To clarify this, the CRC resolved to insert the word annual between the words “mean” and “capital” on page 3 paragraph 3.

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

VOTING AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

4. REVIEW OF AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON FINAL DRAFT OF CHARTER

J. Aldrich noted that it would be very nice to have a final redline version of the charter that tracks the changes that were made between the existing charter and the proposed charter without any of the intermediate changes. G. Marrion noted that she would ask J. Brudz to make such a version when the final changes are approved by the commission.

J. Aldrich next noted that he was unable to find a language change to 5.2 (H) concerning the duties and powers vested in the position of town administrator. J. Aldrich noted that the default language in the charter should reflect the fact that the powers in 5.2(H) are by default supposed to be vested with the BoS, but can be delegated to the town Administrator. This is not currently reflected in the most recent redline draft, but should be, and these changes should be made in the final draft.

G. Marrion also noted that there will not be enough time to make further rounds of revisions on the final redline version of the charter before sending it to the BoS. It was agreed that approval of this final version of the charter would be subject to corrections for typographical and grammatical corrections.

MOTION MADE by A. Teller, seconded by J. Toomey, to approve the draft marked “Agreed 5/19/21” for presentation in the final report to the first selectmen, subject to corrections for spelling and typographical errors, formatting errors, grammatical errors, citations corrections and style, and containing the aforementioned correction to section 5.2(H), but with no substantive changes.

DISCUSSION: E. Georges noted that she would prefer to wait for R. Hayes to arrive at the meeting before voting on this, as the Commission had received news that R. Hayes was attempting to arrive at the meeting but was stuck in traffic.

R. Hayes arrived at 7:31. Discussion recommenced, with E. Georges pointing out that voting on this draft, where something had already been left out, was potentially unwise – what if there were other points that were previously discussed and voted on that were also inadvertently missing? It was agreed that this motion would have to specify that language in this final draft could be changed “to contain any corrections necessary to conform to a previous vote”.

AMENDMENT MADE by E. Georges, accepted by A. Teller and J. Toomey, to add the language “to contain any corrections necessary to conform to a previous vote” to the initial motion.

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

VOTING AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: R. Hayes

5. REVIEW OF AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON FINAL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

A. Teller noted that the term “total budget” was changed to “total expenditure”, and all of those terms should be changed in this final report.

MOTION MADE by A. Teller, to approve the draft final report to the Board of Selectmen dated June 10th, 2021 subject to any corrections for typographical or formatting errors.

DISCUSSION: None

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

VOTING AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

6. DISCUSS PROPOSED BALLOT QUESTIONS

G. Marrion began by noting that the Secretary of the State of CT had clarified that all ballot questions must begin with the word “Shall” and must end with a question mark, but there was no other universal guidance.

The commission spent some time discussing how much content was appropriate to put into each ballot question, and whether or not voters should be relied on mostly to read the report of the CRC or if the questions should have nested explanations of the changes.

R. Hayes asked about the exact process that would occur after voting on changes to the charter – would the various changes need to be implemented by the CRC, or the BoS, or the Town Clerk? A. Teller stated that his assumption was that the Town Clerk, at the direction of the BoS, would be responsible for seeing the successful integration of the approved changes to the charter.

On the topic of the organization of the questions, it was noted that some changes to the charter that were reliant on other changes would need to be grouped together and would either all pass or fail together. These larger “omnibus” questions would have their constituent pieces separated by the word “and,” in the normal style of questions such as these when they have been asked in other communities.

J. Aldrich recommended having a summary document at the polling place that would explain the reasoning behind the changes proposed in the charter. A. Teller was uncertain if handing out documents pertaining to the vote at a place of polling is permissible, as it could be seen as unduly influencing voters. It was generally agreed that the questions should have content in them to explain the proposed changes, but that it should also be explained where the full changes can be found – additional documents may be posted online or available elsewhere, but likely not at the place of voting.

A. Teller noted that with 8 days left in the charge of the CRC, there is simply not enough time to agree on the exact language of the questions that will go on the ballot. In his opinion, it would be best to write the groupings of the questions and determine the amount of information that the voters will receive within the questions, but leave the writing of the actual questions to the BoS or an agent designated by them. The commission discussed whether or not it would be possible for an outside individual to write the questions without the familiarity with the charter that the CRC has, what the qualifications of this person should be, and if the CRC could be involved in the process of writing the questions outside of their mandate. It was also noted that attempting to write the questions before the Secretary of State accepts the revisions to the charter could cause issues in of itself.

Taking all of these previous points into consideration, the CRC spent the remainder of the evening organizing the proposed changes into 6 questions about changes to the charter for which the final language could be written at a later date. These questions are:

- 1) Structural Governance – The new structure, role, term limits and composition of the Finance Commission and Board of Selectmen;
- 2) Budget Referenda – Whether a budget that fails at referendum may be revised upwards instead of always needing to be revised downwards;
- 3) Town Administrator and Selectmen Powers of Funding – Changing the title and clarifying the responsibilities of the current Administrative Officer and modifying the thresholds for borrowing and special appropriations to referendum;
- 4) Changes to Boards and Commissions – Merging IWC and PNZ, making alternates and members to these and ZBA appointed instead of elected.

- 5) All other technical and general changes to the charter;
- 6) Making language of the charter gender neutral

MOTION MADE by E. Georges, seconded by R. Hayes, to adopt this grouping of ballot questions and send these to the BoS.

DISCUSSION: None

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

VOTING AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

7. DISCUSS NEXT STEPS IN CHARTER REVISION PROCESS

By statute, as soon as the BoS accepts or rejects the report of the CRC, the charge of the CRC will be completed, and there will be no further steps. Whether or not this will be the final meeting of the Bolton CRC will be determined at a later date.

G. Marrion adjourned the meeting at 9:08 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Stankov, Charter Revision Commission Board Clerk

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