

## **CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION**

### **Special Meeting**

**Thursday, April 28, 2021 7:00 P.M.**

**Via Zoom teleconference**

Phone: 1-929-205-9066

Meeting ID: 882 6946 4425

The April 28, 2021 meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM.

#### 1. ROLL CALL

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Eleanor Georges

OTHERS PRESENT: Board Clerk Michael Stankov

#### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

#### 3. ACT ON MINUTES OF APRIL 15, 2021 SPECIAL MEETING

MOTION MADE by J. Aldrich, seconded by A. Teller, to move agenda items 11 through 14 up to discussion immediately after acting on the minutes of the March 4, 2021 minutes.

A. Teller noted that Page 5, Paragraph 2, line 3 should read “would still lead” but was currently written as “would steal lead”. G. Marion noted that in page 5 paragraph 3, the word “last” in line 2 should be “land”. It was noted that R. Hayes’ name appeared as being absent and also present and arriving at 7:21.

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

VOTING AGAINST: R. Hayes

ABSTENTIONS: None

#### 4. REVIEW AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON PROPOSED CHANGE TO SECTION 6.2 RE SETTING AGENDAS OF BOARD OF SELECTMEN.

A. Teller noted that instead of requiring a majority of the BoS to agree to the addition of an agenda item, it would be a positive change to alter the process to only require 3 of the 7 Selectmen to add an agenda item. This would ensure that a political minority would be able to have its concerns on the agenda. The members of the CRC supported this change unanimously.

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#### 5. DISCUSS AND CLARIFY COMMISSION'S POSITION ON ELIMINATION OF CAPA, SECTION 8.7 (B)

G. Marrion noted that the CRC had never officially taken a vote on what would happen to CAPA under the proposed changes to the charter, wherein CAPA's responsibilities would be rolled into that of the Finance Committee. The Board agreed and reaffirmed the idea that CAPA would be eliminated and its responsibilities would officially be rolled into those of the FC.

#### 6. REVIEW AND POSSIBLE VOTE PERTAINING TO BOARD OF SELECTMEN REJECTION OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO SECTION 9.9 RE USE OF PAPER BALLOTS AT TOWN MEETINGS

The commission discussed the BoS rejection of the recommendation that a paper ballot could be required for a vote if 3 individuals at a town meeting requested one. The BoS had several concerns about the logistics of this requirement, particularly in the current era of many meetings being or staying online, and what this might require of the town. After some brief discussion the commission agreed with the BoS and did not dispute the rejection of this particular change to the charter.

#### 7. REVIEW AND POSSIBLE VOTE PERTAINING TO BOARD OF SELECTMEN REQUEST TO CHANGE LANGUAGE OF SECTION 8.2 (A) RE SETTING TERM OF AUDITOR

The commission next discussed the rejection of their recommendation concerning the process of appointing an auditor. The BoS requested that they have the authority to set the length of term for the town auditor, while the recommendation of the CRC was that the term for an auditor not exceed four years without reappointment.

A. Teller noted that these two ideas did not seem mutually exclusive, and that the charter could provide a maximum of 4 years for a contract with an auditor but leave the actual term to be determined by the BoS. J. Aldrich noted that the charter could require the auditor to be renewed or dismissed within one year of a new First Selectman taking office, which would force regular performance evaluations and internal audits of the auditors bookkeeping. This would ease the burden of requiring bids for the auditor position every year (as is required in the charter) but would set a maximum term and require regular audits.

J. Brudz noted that since the BoS would now have two members on the FC, the role of selecting the auditor could be given to the FC, which would ensure that the BoS still had a say in the process but there would be additional input from the BoE and the non-affiliated members. Currently the BoF appoints selects the auditor and then leaves the approval of contracts to the BoS - If the FC were given the job of "recommending to the BoS an independent accountant to perform the job of auditor", the division of responsibility existent in the current charter between BoS and BoF would be preserved under the new model. J. Brudz noted that he would create a draft of the aforementioned language for discussion with the BoS.

## 8. REVIEW AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON PROPOSED DRAFT OF CHARTER

G. Marrion next began a chapter-by-chapter walkthrough of the charter to determine any last points of discussion or changes required before the meeting with the BoS.

In Chapter 1, J. Aldrich noted that he still did not like the feeling of the term “selectperson” and “Board of Select”, and there was general consensus that no individual member of the board was particularly enamored with either term. A. Teller and J. Brudz noted that many towns around New England were using the term “Select Board” as a gender neutral replacement for “Board of Selectman”. The commission again discussed another term for “Selectperson”, noting “Selector” and “Selectee” as possible alternatives to discuss with the BoS upon their joint meeting.

In Chapter 2, J. Toomey noted that 2.7 indicates that the names of any individual up for election in the town will be placed on “the voting machines”, but that voting machines are not necessarily used anymore and are just machines that read ballots. As such, the wording should say that said names will be placed on “the ballots” instead. A. Teller then noted that in section 2.5, there is a lack of clarity in sections b and c that could be clarified by restating that section c applies to all of the conditions that section b applies to.

J. Aldrich noted that the coinflip rules for settling ties in municipal elections, section 2.4, should not apply to the first selectman or to referendum questions.

Concerning Chapter 3, it was noted that the current language in 3.5C would need to reflect the fact that the composition of the BoS, and thus its members, would change every two years. It was also noted that the word “annually” should be removed from this section pertaining to the appointment of the chair of the FC, and it would be clarified that the FC would be deemed an elected commission in chapter 11.

No changes or recommendations were noted for Chapter 4.

J. Aldrich questioned whether the BoS should have the power to rescind some of the Town Administrator’s enumerated powers based on experience. J. Brudz noted that such a subdivision of powers did exist in Chapter 5, as any powers granted to the Town Administrator can be rescinded by ordinance. It was noted by A. Teller and J. Brudz that the reason an ordinance is needed to revoke powers from the Town Administrator is that doing so creates a visible paper trail that ensures clarity for the public and ease of understanding the actual powers of the TA.

No changes or recommendations were noted for Chapter 6 or 7.

Concerning chapter 8, it was noted that the CRC will be discussing the budget thresholds to trigger a referendum with the BoS due to their disagreement with the thresholds submitted by the CRC. It was also noted that as the responsibilities of the CAPA commission will be rolled into those of the FC, mentions of it in chapter 8 can be removed.

Concerning Chapter 9.3, the words “total annual budget” were replaced with “total expenditure amount”.

Concerning Chapter 10, no new topics were discussed, though it was noted that the BoS had disagreed with the CRC's decision to not permit the TA to serve on the Fire Commission, and that this disagreement would have to be discussed at the upcoming meeting.

No changes or recommendations were noted for Chapter 11, 12, or 13.

MOTION MADE by G. Marrion, seconded by J. Brudz, to accept the red line draft with the changes discussed tonight as the draft to be put forward to the BoS for discussion.

DISCUSSION: None

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

VOTING AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

9. Discuss joint meeting with Board of Selectmen

10. Discuss next steps

G. Marrion adjourned the meeting at 9:02 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Stankov". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Stankov, Charter Revision Commission Board Clerk

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