

TOWN OF CROMWELL  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2010  
7:00 P.M. TOWN HALL ROOM 224/5

MINUTES

Present: First Selectman J. Flanders, Deputy First Selectman R. Newton,  
A. Varricchio, A. Halibozek, A. Waters, A. Spotts

Absent: P. Ahlquist

Also Present: Several members of the Charter Revision Commission, public and press.

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

First Selectman Flanders called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**B. CITIZENS COMMENTS**

1. R. Duffy, Oxford Lane -Spoke in favor of a Town Manager form of government, people speaking in the audience during public meetings and felt that questions that are asked during citizen comments should be answered at the next meeting. Mr. Duffy also suggested that public comments should be held at the beginning and end of the meeting.

**C. FINANCIAL**

1. Tax Refunds

a. Deborah J. Krashan-Brennan -\$3,000.00

Motion made by A. Waters seconded by A. Spotts and *unanimously carried* to approve the tax refund.

**D. OLD BUSINESS**

1. Discussion and action for Board of Selectmen recommendations for Charter Revision.

A. Halibozek

Item #1

Motion made by A. Halibozek seconded by R. Newton and *unanimously carried* to make a recommendation to the Charter Revision Commission to revise the form of government, consider following the Town of Glastonbury's form, have a Town Council and a Town Manager.

R. Newton - Felt as though the Charter Revision's hands shouldn't be tied with a charge of just tweaking the charter. The Town Manager/Town Council form of government should be reviewed this time and every time the Charter is reviewed to see if we are on the right track or if a change is needed.

A. Spotts -Stated that he agrees with Mr. Newton. We are not a small town anymore and it's time in 2010 that we begin to look at a professional running the Town of Cromwell.

A. Varricchio - Doesn't have a problem with the Charter Revision Commission looking at anything. Mr. Varricchio asked to go on the record that he is opposed to a Town Manager. Mr. Varricchio talked about the Town of East Hampton and the City of Hartford's difficulties of getting rid of their town managers. Mr. Varricchio does not approve of giving any one person that much power.

A. Waters - Agreed with Mr. Varricchio and stated that changes are not always the best. Mr. Waters went on the record stating that yes; we need some changes but not a complete overhaul. Certain things need to be tweaked but the present form of government seems to be working.

A. Halibozek asked the Charter Revision Commission to look at what was reviewed and proposed at the previous Charter Revision Commission and look at what the possible reasons were for this proposal being rejected. Ms. Halibozek felt that if specific qualifications that a town manager would need, what the expectations are and rules around that position are built into the Charter we would not end up in the situation that East Hampton is in.

A. Spotts -Language within the changes could be address appropriately that would provide for a strong town council with the town manager reporting to the town council.

R. Newton -90 + towns in Connecticut have a town manager form of government. The problems that are in the news are just as much the fault of the Town Council because they let that happen.

J. Flanders - Mr. Flanders never thought that the Charter Revision would not review the possibility of a Town Manager form of government.

A. Varricchio stated that he is not opposed to the Commission reviewing the matter but he is opposed to the Manager form of government. Mr. Waters agreed with Mr. Varricchio and stated that the people should decide.

First Selectman Flanders suggested that when they are done that he be allowed to bundle the suggestions and present them to the Charter Revision Commission.

Item #2. C501:

**Motion** made by A. Halibozek seconded by R. Newton and *unanimously carried* to add Selectwomen or Councilwoman (if we propose changing to a Town Council)

Item #3. C603a, was removed by Ms. Halibozek because of the discussion at the previous meeting.

Item #4 C1101,

**Motion** made by A. Halibozek seconded by A. Spotts and *carried* to change from 'may' to 'shall' -we do need a merit system for town employees, there should be no option.

A. Varricchio stated that most of the employees are union employees and follow a contract. He doesn't know how you can circumvent the union contracts and have a merit system.

R. Newton stated that the merit system is nothing new; it's been talked about for many years. Mr. Newton stated that the impact would have to be negotiated; a merit system could be installed but the union would have input. Merit systems are a lot on the part of supervisors. If they are done wrong they are a travesty and could become a real problem. Mr. Newton is in favor of it because merit is something that people should be compensated for.

J. Flanders having gone through two and one half labor negotiations felt reluctant to impose a requirement on future labor negotiators. Mr. Flanders, for the record, feels that may is an appropriate term.

A. Halibozek felt that if the Charter Revision Commission doesn't decide to go with this there needs to be some mechanism in place. There are a lot of accountability issues right now and Ms. Halibozek believes that there needs to be something in place to address them. People need to be held accountable for what they should be doing and shouldn't be doing.

A. Varricchio stated that there is no question that employees should be held accountable. But this is a basic issue and not a Charter issue. All Department Heads should make sure that everyone is doing their jobs.

Aye: A. Spotts, A. Waters, R. Newton, A. Halibozek

Nay: A. Varricchio, J. Flanders

*Motion carries*

*A brief recess was called for at 7:32 p.m.*

*The meeting was called back to order at 7:39 p.m.*

Item #5.

**Motion** made by A. Halibozek seconded by R. Newton to review and revise Chapter 19 and section C309, C1004-C1006 to eliminate the Board of Finance and let the Town Manager manage the Budget with approval by the Board of Selectmen or Town Council.

R. Newton clarified that the intent to eliminate the Board of Finance is contingent on changing to a town manager form of government. Mr. Newton feels that if we don't decide to change our form of government a Board of Finance serves a necessary function.

A. Waters feels that this going past the point tweaking. Mr. Waters thoughts are tweaking not a complete overhaul.

A. Spotts followed up that if it goes to a Town Manager/ Council form of government, where the Board of Finance is eliminated, the budget should still go to referendum.

A. Varricchio feels that the Board of Finance goes beyond the referendum and offers another layer before we can spend any money. Mr. Varricchio likes another check before money that isn't approved in the budget can be spent. J. Flanders agreed with Mr. Varricchio. Having served on both of the money related boards in town; Mr. Flanders feels that the Board of Finance serves an important function. To have items considered strictly on their money basis is important. In as much as it adds time to the process that role remains vital whether the people who are making the policy decisions are called a Town Council or Board of Selectmen he would prefer to see that entity stay in place.

Aye: A. Spotts, R. Newton, A. Halibozek

Nay: A. Waters, J. Flanders, A. Varricchio

Motion failed.

J. Flanders

#1. C 205 and C301

**Motion** made by A. Spotts seconded by R. Newton and carried to add the charge to the Charter Revision Commission to; 1. To consider longer terms for all elected officers and 2. Consider having those terms staggered in an appropriate fashion.

R. Newton supports staggered terms but has reservations with the First Selectman having a longer term. Mr. Newton is not opposed to the Tax Collector and Town Clerk having a four-year term.

Ms. Halibozek agreed with Mr. Newton. Ms. Halibozek stated that the Board of Selectmen is an older group and if the term is extended and something happens during that term you would need to have a mechanism to replace that person.

Aye: A. Halibozek, J. Flanders, R. Newton, A. Waters, A. Spotts

Abstained: A. Varricchio (would like the Charter Revision Commission to look into this but is not in favor of increasing the terms.)

*Motion carries*

#2.

**Motion** made by J. Flanders seconded by R. Newton and *unanimously carried* to request that the Charter Revision Commission review and revise C501 and C701 to remove the power of the Board of Selectmen to set the First Selectman's compensation.

**Motion** made by A. Halibozek seconded by A. Spotts and *unanimously carried* that contingent on a change to a Town Manager/Counsel form of government that the compensation for the Town Council be defined through the charter in terms of how those salaries would be defined.

#3.

**Motion** made by J. Flanders seconded by A. Spotts and *unanimously carried* to request that the Charter Revision Commission review and revise C508 and C509 that the voting right should be extended to all individuals entitled to vote in the regular Town Meeting on the Budget.

#4. C703

**Motion** made by J. Flanders seconded by R. Newton and *unanimously carried* to request that the Charter Revision Commission review and revise C703 to consider mechanisms to remove the First Selectman from office.

#5. C801

**Motion** made by J. Flanders seconded by R. Newton and *unanimously carried* to request that the Charter Revision Commission review and revise C801 and determine if a Jury Committee is necessary.

#6. C803

A short discussion followed.

**Motion** made by J. Flanders seconded by R. Newton to request that the Charter Revision Commission review and revise C803 to allow the vacancies on board and commissions to be filled by an unaffiliated voter, or in the case of a vacancy formerly filled by an unaffiliated voter then by a member of any party or an unaffiliated voter subject to minority representation statutes.

Aye: J. Flanders, A. Halibozek

Nay: A. Varricchio, R. Newton, A. Waters, A. Spotts

*Motion failed*

#7. C909

**Motion** made by J. Flanders to request that the Charter Revision Commission review and revise C909 to have the Town Attorney appointed by the First Selectman and approved by the Board of Selectmen.

*No second received*

#8. C1010

**Motion** made by J. Flanders seconded by A. Varricchio and *unanimously carried* to request that the Charter Revision Commission review and revise C1010 to consider the possibility of incurring other forms of debt such as bank loans.

#9.

**Motion** made by J. Flanders seconded by A. Varricchio *unanimously carried* to request that the Charter Revision Commission review if the Town Treasurer is a valid position or should the duties be incorporated within the Finance Department.

2. Authorize First Selectman to sign contract for EDC Consultant -tabled.

**Motion** made by A. Halibozek seconded by J. Flanders to remove from the table. R. Newton stated that he would like to have the entire board present to vote on this matter.

A. Spotts requested that both applicants attend the October meeting.

Aye: J. Flanders, A. Varricchio, A. Halibozek

Nay: A. Spotts, A. Waters, R. Newton

Motion failed to remove from the table.

**E. ADJOURNEMENT**

**Motion** made by R. Newton seconded by A. Halibozek and *unanimously carried* to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Re Matus  
Secretary

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John M. Flanders  
First Selectman