

**TOWN OF CROMWELL
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 8th, 2016
7:00 PM TOWN HALL ROOM 224/225
MINUTES**

RECEIVED FOR FILING
6-14 2016 at 8:32M.
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
CROMWELL, CONN.


TOWN CLERK

Present: Paul Beaulieu, Michael Cannata, Karen Spotts, Shirley Banic, Anthony Amenta, and Michael Camilleri

Absent: Marie Roberto

Also Present: Mayor and Town Council Liaison Enzo Faienza, Edward Weners, Town Manager Anthony Salvatore

A. Call To Order

Chairman Michael Camilleri called the meeting to order at 5:30.

B. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Meeting May 4th, 2016

Mayor Enzo Faienza stated that it should be listed that he is the Town Council Liaison and that it should be changed on the meeting minutes for May 4th.

Paul Beaulieu made a **motion** to approve the minutes as amended from the meeting on May 4th, 2016. Michael Camilleri **seconded** the motion. Anthony Amenta abstained. *All others were in favor; the motion passed.*

C. Public Comments

1. Review Charter Revision recommendations and proposed revisions

Joan Ahlquist, 213 Rook Road, spoke in favor of changing the Town Clerk and Tax Assessor being changed to appointed positions. She also submitted a letter to the Charter Revision Commission. Mrs. Ahlquist briefly explained the duties of the office of the Town Clerk. There are a wide variety of duties that they perform that involve significant levels of attention to detail. While someone can certainly learn to perform these jobs, she believes that having that continuity and experience that comes with an appointed position is preferable.

Anthony Amenta spoke about how lucky the town has been that we have had great people in the office in the past and that there have not been any significant issues.

At Paul Beaulieu's request, Town Manager Anthony Salvatore responded that if the commission changes these positions to appointed positions that they would create job descriptions.

Anthony Salvatore, 4 Ledge Road, the Town Manager, would suggest limiting the number of budget referendums to one. For example, if the budget does not pass on the first referendum, the budget would return to the Board of Finance to make changes and then be able to pass the budget without going to another referendum.

John Flanders, 57 Washington Road, spoke in support of maintaining the Board of Finance. After having worked with the Board of Finance in the past, he believes it is important to have a commission whose sole responsibility is financial and their charge is to protect the tax payers. He stated that those specific set of eyes are essential.

Julius Neto, 12 Cannata Drive, member of the Board of Finance and Cromwell's Fire Commissioner and some fire person, spoke in favor of maintaining the Board of Finance. He stated that in his perspective there is value in having this apolitical board. Mr. explained that this body provided a good source of checks and balances for our town government. Agreeing with Mr. Flanders, he recommends that second set of eyes whose sole purpose is the budget.

Michael Camilleri asked Mr. Neto about how politics in other boards have adversely affected them. Mr. Neto and Mr. Flanders responded that there has only been one vote in the Board of Finance history that was seen as political. Mr. Flanders stated that the board does not attract political respondents. He believes also that it would take away from his and others power as voters by getting rid of the Board of Finance.

Town Manager Salvatore recommended reviewing other town set ups who no longer have a Board of Finance for suggestions on how to make those changes if necessary.

D. Old Business

1. Review Charter Revision recommendations

a. Timing and Length of Terms for Mayor and Town Council Members (For reference, please see Charter Section 2.02)

Anthony Amenta mentioned the possibility of someone switching political parties mid term and how that would affect minority representation. Mayor Faienza responded that the person would remain, on the record, the political party that they were elected under and then during the next election it would affect the number of people each party could put forth.

For the proposed language change in 2.02c, Anthony Salvatore brought an issue with the math and recommended that the language should be changed to hold elections for 3 members.

For the proposed language change in 2.03, there were no comments or questions at this time.

b. Changes to the sizes of various Boards and Commissions (For reference, please see Charter Sections 4.17, 5.02, 5.10, and 5.11)

Karen Spotts volunteered to speak with the department heads regarding the board sizes and would return to the commission with their recommendations.

Michael Cannata stated that Shawna Baron recommended that she would propose to change the board to having a 5 member board with a 3 member quorum. Anthony Amenta spoke in favor of maintaining the Board of Assessment Appeals numbers at 3 members with 2 alternates.

Enzo Faienza, 20 Horserun Hill Road, explained that he believed that it would be just as difficult to find 5 people and 2 alternates as it has been to find 3 people. Under 5.02, he suggested clarifying the language regarding the staggered terms.

For the proposed language change in 5.10, there were no comments or questions at this time.

c. Consideration of changing Town Clerk and Tax Collector from elected to appointed positions (For reference, please see Charter Sections 5.02, 5.04, and 5.05.)

For the proposed language change in 4.03 and 4.07, there were no comments or questions at this time.

For the proposed language change in 5.04, 5.05, and 5.06 there were no comments or questions at this time.

For the proposed language change in 5.07, there were no comments or questions at this time.

E. New Business

1. Review Charter Revision recommendations

a. Board of Finance and Budget Referendums (For reference, please see Charter Sections 5.02 and 5.08 and Article VIII).

Karen Spotts spoke in favor of maintaining the Board of Finance based on many of the public comments. She is in favor of having that second set of specialized and non-political eyes. She suggested that there may be other areas in the budget process that can be streamlined for efficiency.

Anthony Amenta suggested doing more research into how other towns complete the budget process without a Board of Finance. While he is in favor of that second set of eyes, there is some value in reviewing how other towns perform these duties. Either way, the goal is to improve the process and make it as efficient and beneficial as possible.

Shirley Banic agreed with doing more research but stated that she was in favor of maintaining the Board of Finance due to their single issue purpose.

Michael Cannata, following Mr. Neto's metaphor, stated that he is in favor of keeping the specialists. He stated that he is in favor maintaining the Board of Finance but would agree to do more research to find ways to streamline the process.

Paul Beaulieu suggested reviewing the long term record of the Board of Finance. He listed a number of their positive accomplishments that have directly benefitted the town. He stated that there is no question in his mind in regards to maintaining the Board of Finance. Although it takes a significant amount of time, we owe that to the tax payers to be as methodical as possible.

Michael Camilleri stated he agrees with Mr. Amenta and that he is in favor of performing more research about the need for a Board of Finance and finding ways to streamline the financial processes.

Mayor Enzo Faienza reiterated the Town Council's role in the budget process and suggested increasing the Council's ability to affect the mill rate.

Karen Spotts agreed and stated that there should be a continued conversation among the Town Council and the Board of Finance throughout the process.

Four of the six members, excluding Mr. Amenta and Mr. Camilleri, are currently in favor of maintaining the Board of Finance. Going forward they plan to review the budget processes in other towns with Board of Finances in order to find ways to streamline the financial processes and make it them more efficient.

2. Set discussion topics for next meeting.

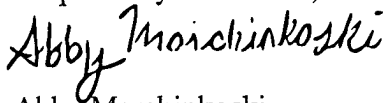
Michael Camilleri suggested putting the following topics on the next agenda: Changes to the Sizes of Boards and Commissions, Board of Finance and Budget Referendums

The next meeting will be scheduled for Monday June 27th at 7 pm.

F. Adjournment

Paul Beaulieu made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting. Anthony Amenta **seconded** the motion. *All were in favor; the motion passed.* The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Abby Marchinkoski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Abby Marchinkoski
Recording Clerk

Submitted by Stanley and Elizabeth Jasiocki:

Mr. Camilleri,

We are writing to you regarding the Charter Revision. We DO NOT think the Board of Finance should be removed.

We need that Board to keep better control of how our TAX money is being spent. We have people working at Town Hall that do not seem to care about the TAXPAYERS and how are TAX MONEY is being spent.

Please keep the Board of Finance.

Thank you,

Stanley and Elizabeth Jasiocki

Submitted by Joan Ahlquist:

Submitted by Joan Ahlquist

May 13, 2016

To Charter Revision Commission

Thank you in advance for reading my letter regarding the potential proposal to change the process by which the position of Town Clerk is selected.

The Town Clerk is an elected position in the Municipal ballot every 2 years. At this time the only qualifications to run for election are that the individual be a registered voter. This current practice leaves open the possibility of someone being elected who lacks the training, experience and certification to effectively function in the capacity the position requires. The certification takes 3 years.

Of the 169 cities and towns in Connecticut, 41 employ the Town Clerks as municipal employees. 127 are elected. (1 unknown at this time) The majority of the elected are registered unaffiliated with a major party or are in an unopposed situation.

Cromwell has been fortunate that in the last 100 years, I am only the 8th Town Clerk. The last three covered 71 years.

I agree that the position should be transitioned to a Town management employee status. This would pretty much guarantee that the Town Clerk possesses the professional qualifications to effectively carry out the functions that the position requires.

The Town Clerk's position is evolving into much more every year. The State of Connecticut is considering that we also handle drivers licensing and other duties. We have two new web-based computer systems that are mandatory. Training is minimal at best. We are governed by over 500 state statutes.

Also:

I was asked to bring to you a suggestion to change the name of "Human Services" to "Social Services" as residents are confused with the name and it sounds like "Human Resources".

Also:

It is my opinion that when board or commission member's term expires, the procedure should remain. One factor may be that the member may have changed parties and the minority representation would be in jeopardy.

Joan Ahlquist
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