

**TOWN OF CROMWELL
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY JULY 13th, 2016
6:00 PM TOWN HALL ROOM 222
MINUTES**

RECEIVED FOR FILING
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TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
CROMWELL, CONN.

Jean Aulic
TOWN CLERK

Present: Paul Beaulieu, Michael Cannata, Karen Spotts, Shirley Banic, Anthony Amenta, Marie Roberto (present by teleconference), and Michael Camilleri

Also Present: Joseph Corlis, Edward Wenners, Town Manager Anthony Salvatore, and Mayor and Town Council Liaison Enzo Faienza

A. Call To Order

Chairman Michael Camilleri called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

B. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Michael Camilleri asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Anthony Amenta made a **motion** to approve the agenda. Paul Beaulieu **seconded** the motion. *All were in favor; the motion passed.*

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Meeting June 8th, 2016

Karen Spotts made a **motion** to approve the minutes for the meeting on June 26th, 2016. Anthony Amenta **seconded** the motion. Michael Camilleri abstained. *All others were in favor; the motion passed.*

Shirley Banic joined the meeting at this time.

D. Public Comments

There were no public comments at this time.

E. Old Business

1. Review Charter Revision Recommendations

a. Review of purposes and continuing need for Town Commissions (including opportunities for consolidation and/or splits and number of members/alternates) - all in Section 4.17 of the Charter:

1. Recreation and Youth Services Commission
2. Library Commission

3. Conservation Commission
4. Economic Development Commission
5. Senior Services Commission

Chairman Camilleri directed attention to Section 4.17a where the relevant language can be found. He explained that the current discussion involves splitting the Recreation and Youth Services Commission in the Charter as it is in the Town List of Boards and Commissions and then possibly splitting it once more so that the resulting commissions are: the Parks Commission, the Recreation Commission, and the Youth Services Commission. Paul Beaulieu stated that there is a significant amount of language regarding this commission in the administrative ordinances as well. The point was again raised that the charter does not have to specifically outline all of these commissions individually, but could instead give the power to the Town Council to create ad hoc or permanent boards and commissions as needed. Town Manager Salvatore stated that it is possible to only have the commissions regulated by statutes included in the charter. The commissions under statutory regulations are: the Inland Wetlands Commission, Water Pollution Control Authority, and Conservation Commission. The Recreation and Youth Services Commission is under the authority of grant regulations. Chairman Camilleri asked the commission to consider only outlining in the Charter the boards required by state statutes while relegating the authority to the Town Council to appoint ad hoc commissions as needed (See 2.01 for the current language). Mayor Faienza stated that he would speak to the Town Attorney to ask if the boards and commissions that are required by state statute are required to be spelled out in the charter and then report back to the Charter Revision Commission.

A discussion ensued about the role and importance of advisory boards, finding that the advisory boards have been very helpful in the past.

In response to Town Manager Salvatore's question, Chairman Camilleri stated that unless the Town Attorney requires more information to be included in the charter regarding the commissions, the Charter Revision Commission would leave the language in Section 2.01 that allowed flexibility for the Town Council.

Karen Spotts asked what would then happen to the current commissions, including the Parks and Recreation Commission. Chairman Camilleri stated that his immediate response would be that they would continue being commissions if or until the Town Council decided to disband them. Chairman Camilleri asked the Mayor and Town Manager to confirm with the Town Attorney that the language in Section 2.01 is sufficiently broad.

There is a consensus on this issue pending a response from the Town Attorney. The commission will create proposed language changes after hearing from the Town Attorney.

b. Revisions requiring joint meeting/workshops of Board of Finance and Town Council and discussion of approval of Budget by Town Council and/or Board of Finance (for reference please see Charter Article VIII)

Chairman Camilleri reviewed the working idea that there would be a concurrent workshop after the budget is created by the department heads and the Town Manager that would be attended by the Board of Finance and the Town Council. At that time, it is not suggested that there would be a vote at that meeting. Mayor Faienza raised a concern that this would make the process longer because then it would require a second and separate meeting for both the Board of Finance and the Town Council for them to do a line item vote on the budget. Marie Roberto asked for clarification regarding the budget process. After Town Manager's review of the budget process, Marie Roberto stated that she agrees that the proposed idea seems duplicitous. Paul Beaulieu reminded the commission why they had come up with this idea originally, to cut the duplicitous department meetings. Chairman Camilleri stated that he feels the main issue right now is deciding which body will have the final say on the budget, once that is determined, it will be easier to determine the rest of the budget process. Anthony Amenta stated that he feels that the final say should lie with the Mayor, Town Manager, and Town Council because they are the bodies that are already held accountable. Karen Spotts agreed with Chairman Camilleri and Anthony Amenta that the Town Council should have the final say and once that is determined then the commission can figure out when the meetings will be held and in what order.

The proposed budget process is as follows: the department heads and Town Manager create a proposed budget, joint meeting of the Board of Finance and Town Council for review of department presentations, the Board of Finance creates a list of recommendations, then the budget goes to the Town Council with the Board of Finance recommendations to finalize the budget, finally the budget goes to referendum if the referendum requirement is maintained.

A discussion ensued regarding the problems with setting the mill rate including what outside factors are taken into account, for example, health insurance premiums. Further discussion occurred regarding the process of setting the mill rate and how long after the budget is approved that the town is required to set it. Based on the proposed budget process, Chairman Camilleri asked which body should be in charge of setting the mill rate? Mayor Faienza stated that he believes that the Town Council should set the mill rate because they are very involved in the budget process and they are the ones held accountable. Town Manager Salvatore concurs that the legislative body of Cromwell, the Town Council, should be in charge of setting the mill rate.

Julius Neto, 12 Cannata Drive, following the proposed budget process, stated that if the Town Council has the power to add or subtract from the budget after it has gone through the Board of Finance that it would be the Town Council's job then to set the mill rate. The Board of Finance should not be a part of setting the mill rate because it is no longer a Board of Finance budget. Paul Beaulieu and Anthony Amenta discussed the Town Council's influence on the budget and Mr. Amenta concluded that the complaints go to the top, therefore, more authority should be vested with them.

Chairman Camilleri recommended tabling this discussion since there is a Town Council meeting starting soon. All members were in favor of tabling this discussion for a future meeting. Michael Cannata stated that the other town charters that were reviewed had very diverse processes especially in regards to which body sets the mill rate. Paul Beaulieu asked about the function of the Board of Finance if they do not have the responsibility of setting the mill rate. Chairman Camilleri responded that they serve as financial advisors and make recommendations based on their own expertise.

Chairman Camilleri asked for a motion to table this discussion. Paul Beaulieu made a **motion** to table this discussion. Anthony Amenta **seconded** the motion. *All were in favor; the motion passed.*

Prior to his departure, Town Manager Salvatore stated that he supported his recommendation for the name change in Item 2 under New Business.

c. Review of referendum process (Section 8.05 of Charter) to include possible revisions to:

- (1) establish a threshold number of voters to limit successive referenda if budget(s) fail to be approved**
- (2) establish annual budget referendum will be voted on as 3 individual budgets**

Michael Cannata reviewed the referendum processes of the other towns previously discussed. When talking about electors, Paul Beaulieu began, there are some towns that allow taxpayers to vote even if they are not electors under certain requirements. A discussion then ensued regarding how that process works. Chairman Camilleri stated that there was still the question of whether to get rid of the referendum process as other towns have done. Joseph Corlis stated that very few people have voted in recent budget referendums. Michael Cannata expressed that there has been low turnout because of a lack of publicity and because the budgets have not included significant changes. Michael Cannata stated that he is not in favor of getting rid of the referendum because it is important that the voters have their right to voice their concerns.

Chairman Camilleri asked for commission members' positions on whether to create a threshold for referendums. The members agreed that there should not be a threshold for the referendums. So far there has not been an issue with having a significant number of referendums to get the budget to pass, therefore no change is necessary. Mr. Neto gave an impassioned speech in support of maintaining the referendums because voting is an important right of the American people that should be protected. Chairman Camilleri thanked him for sharing his story and agreed with his sentiments. Anthony Amenta and Paul Beaulieu shared those sentiments. There is a consensus that no threshold should be created for the referendum process.

In response to the second item, there is a favorable consensus about including language in the charter that reflects the current practice of voting on three separate budgets during the referendum. The commission will create proposed language and discuss it at another meeting.

d. Other proposed revisions in working draft of Charter

No other revisions discussed at this time.

F. New Business

1. Review of independent auditor appointment process (Section 2.09 of Charter) to include possible revisions to: implement the recommendation of the Finance Director making the Board of Finance responsible for appointing the auditor.

Julius Neto expressed that if the Board of Finance becomes an advisory board, then they should not be the body to appoint the independent auditor. Paul Beaulieu stated that the inclusion of the appointment of the independent auditor occurred prior to the creation of the Finance Director. In response to Chairman Camilleri's question, Paul Beaulieu stated that regardless of whether the Board of Finance becomes an advisory board they should be the body to appoint the independent auditor. Chairman Camilleri suggested tabling this discussion until other parts of the budget process had been settled on.

Karen Spotts made a **motion** to table this issue until the next meeting. Shirley Banic **seconded** the motion. Paul Beaulieu abstained. *All others were in favor; the motion passed.*

2. Implement the recommendation of the Town Manager to change the name of the Director of Civil Preparedness to Emergency Management Director (Section 4.08 of Charter)

Michael Cannata made a **motion** to approve the name change of the Director of Civil Preparedness to Emergency Management Director. Shirley Banic **seconded** the motion. *All were in favor; the motion passed.*

3. Discuss game plan for review and revisions to remaining Charter provisions

Chairman Camilleri stated that the main issues to work on are the currently tabled items and the Water Pollution Control Authority. Paul Beaulieu stated that there should be a meeting to discuss a list of the other issues and recommendations. Karen Spotts offered to review the submitted recommendations and create a list. Karen Spotts suggested having the managers of the Water Pollution Control Authority do a presentation of their current status and what they recommend going forward at the next meeting. Chairman Camilleri stated that he would pass that information along.

4. Set discussion topics for next meeting.

At the next meeting, the commission agreed to discuss the Water Pollution Control Authority, the commissions and Town Council, the Board of Finance and Town Council budget process, appointment of independent auditor, recommendation of Finance Director to change the approval process for the special revenue funds (Section 8.03) and Karen Spotts' list of other recommendations.

The August meetings are scheduled for August 3rd and August 17th at 6:00 pm.

G. 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 7:49 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Abby Marchinkoski
Recording Clerk