



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectmen Special Meeting
UNAPPROVED
July 27, 2023 at 6:30pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Rudy Marconi, Bob Hebert, Maureen Kozlark **Absent:** Barbara Manners, Sean Connelly

Also in Attendance: Member of the Charter Revision Commission & Attorney Jason Buchsbaum

The Board of Selectmen attended a joint meeting with the Charter Revision Commission to discuss the Board's comments and suggestions to the proposed charter revisions submitted by the CRC. The following items were discussed.

- *Reference 9 – proposed language regarding notification of vacant positions:*
There was a discussion about changing the wording to clarify that 30 days starts when the Board of Selectmen or affected board is notified.
It was agreed to add a sentence at the beginning of each of the first two paragraphs concerning notification by the Town Clerk. There was also a suggestion to use the word "prompt" instead of "timely".
It was agreed that the language in paragraph 1 of Section 4-7 will read "within 30 days of the later of: (a) the effective date of the resignation or (b) the date the board receives written notice from the Town Clerk of the vacancy". A corresponding change should also be made to the second paragraph of section 4-7, referring "affected board".
- *Reference 10 – clarification on whether to include FOIA reference as discussed by the BOS:*
It was agreed to add "and of the Freedom of Information Act" at the end of the sentence in the first paragraph of Section 6-2.
- *Reference 11- clarification on proposed language by Counsel regarding Section 10-2b:*
The language in paragraph 7 of Section 10-2 was updated to read "The Special Town Meeting may approve individual requests made by verified petition up to the amount of \$3,000,000. If the amount of the request is equal to or greater than \$3,000,000, the

request shall be submitted to referendum.”

- *Reference 12- discussion on proposed language regarding nepotism and probable cause:*
 - It was agreed to accept Mr. Buchsbaum's suggestion to keep the words “probable cause” in the charter.
 - Rudy Marconi gave a brief background on why the Board of Selectmen rejected the proposal to add a nepotism rule to the charter. It was agreed to keep the nepotism rule out of the charter and keep the policy that already exists in place.
 - Mr. Buchsbaum suggested keeping the original language regarding confidential information in section 11-2b and adding to the end “and also” together with portions of the wording from the commission's initial proposed language that says “any information which is restricted from disclosure to the public under any provision of the General Statutes or federal law, or information exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.”
- *Reference 13-15- clarification regarding proposed change from appointed to hired:*

The Board of Selectmen suggested changing the word “appointed” to “hired”. The reason for the change is to make it clear to anyone reading the charter that no one person has the authority to appoint a position. Mr. Buchsbaum commented the word hired should also be included in Sections 9-2, 9-3 and 9-20.

 - The language in Section 9-2 will read “Except as otherwise set forth in this Charter, mandated by State law, or provided by contract, administrative officers and department heads shall be appointed and/or hired, as applicable, in the manner as provided and shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority. Appointees of the First Selectperson shall be appointed and may be removed in accordance with provisions of Section 8-4 of this Charter.”
 - In Section 9-3, “an appointive” should be changed to “an appointed or hired” in the first sentence, and “Persons appointed” should be changed to “Persons appointed or hired” in the second sentence.
 - The language in the proposed new second paragraph of section 9-20 should be changed to read “hired position” rather than “appointed position”.
- *Reference 17- discussion regarding IT Town Committee vs IT Town Commission:*

Derek Schirm and Tom Lansen reviewed their reasons for suggesting an IT Town Commission. Rudy Marconi and Bob Hebert talked about why the Board would prefer to create a committee before entertaining the idea of a commission in the charter. All agreed to remove the proposed IT Commission and have the Board move forward with a committee.

- *Reference 18- discussion regarding gender neutral name changes for BOS:*
The goal behind the proposed change by the CRC was to create a gender-neutral name. The suggestion from the Board to change the name to "Board of Selectmen/women" and "First Selectman/woman" does not accomplish the goal. The Board of Selectmen will discuss the name change again now that they know what the CRC was trying to achieve.
- *Reference 19- discussion of language proposed by Counsel in Section 10-1(c):*
Mr. Buchsbaum suggested adding the word "only" following the word "discussion" in the first paragraph of section 10-1c and adding the sentence "Except as provided elsewhere in the charter, the Town and Budget Meeting shall have no authority to make changes to the annual capital and operating budgets of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education". Mr. Buchsbaum clarified the reason for the proposed language. After discussion, Mr. Buchsbaum agreed that adding the word "only" is definitely required, but that the additional proposed language was helpful but not critical to achieving the change proposed by the CRC. The Board agreed to with the suggestion from the CRC to add just the word "only" and leave out the additional language proposed by Mr. Buchsbaum.
- *Reference 20- clarification of proposed language re: Boards, Committees & Commissions:*
Mike Rettger clarified to the Board the reason for the proposed language, which is to make the charter more reader friendly. The Board agreed with the recommendation.

Bob Hebert moved to adjourn the July 27, 2023 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting at 8:33pm. Maureen Kozlark seconded the motion. Motion carries 3-0.