



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectmen Special Meeting Minutes
UNAPPROVED
July 6, 2023 at 4:00pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Rudy Marconi, Sean Connelly, Bob Hebert, Maureen Kozlark

Absent: Barbara Manners

Charter Revision Draft Discussion

The Board of Selectmen reviewed and discussed the Summary of Accepted Proposals in order of Reference number. The Summary of Accepted Proposals is attached for reference.

- **Reference #1:** *Sec 3-3 Modify the term of appointment for the members of the Annual Town and Budget Meeting Committee from 2 years to 1 year.*
All Board members agreed to this change.
- **Reference #2:** *Sec 5-3 Update the name "Commission on the Aging" to "Commission on Aging". Modify the term of appointment for the Commission on Aging from 3 years to 2 years.*
All Board members agreed to these changes.
- **Reference #3:** *Sec 5-8 Increase the number of members of the ECDC from 7 to 9, and increase the term of appointment from 1 year to 2 years. – The Board has already implemented this change through an ordinance.*
All Board members agreed to this change.
- **Refence #4:** *Sec 5-14 Add 2 alternate members to the WPCA, and establish their term of appointment.*
Maureen Kozlark commented that the WPCA needs to back fill their members since many of them might be stepping down soon. Bob Hebert commented that there should be a finance person on the WPCA. All the Board members agreed to this change.
- **References #5:** *Sec 5-15 Reduce the number of regular members of the Youth Commission from 16 to 12. Add 2 alternate members and establish their term of appointment*
All the Board members agreed to this change.

- **Reference #6: Sec 3-2** *Add language to clarify that nonresident trustees holding title to property in Town, in their capacity as a trustee, are not be entitled to vote at Town Meetings or Referenda.*
All the Board members agreed to this change.
- **Reference #7:** *Sec 3-5 Increase the number of required voter signatures from 5% to 7% of the town electorate to trigger a petitioned Town Meeting requesting an additional budget appropriation of more than \$250,000.*
All Board members agreed to this change.
- **Reference #8:** *Sec 3-7 Update wording regarding the recording of Town Meetings from "tape" recorded to "electronically" recorded.*
Sean Connelly proposed that it would be easier to say recorded, rather than specify the type of recording, pointing out that there could be a new type of recording in 5 years. Rudy Marconi commented that the statute is specific to video recordings and that video/audio recordings must be kept for a certain number of years. It was pointed out that the Charter Revision Commission has done thorough research on all the change requests. All Board members agreed to this change.
- **Reference #9:** *Sec 4-5, Sec 4-7 Clarify the timing of when an elected or appointed office or board position is considered vacant for purposes of appointing a replacement.*
Bob Hebert commented that although this may be tough to monitor, it should be included for instances when it can be monitored. This is important for situations when electors move out of town. All Board members agreed to this change.
- **Reference #10:** *Sec 6-1, Sec 6-2 Clarify or establish certain operational requirements of boards and board members with respect to the annual election of officers, compliance with the town's policy guidelines for board operations, recording of town board meeting proceedings by video or audio, and electronic communications regarding board-related business.*
Rudy Marconi suggested adding "and FOIA" in the final paragraph of Section 6-2. All Board members agreed to add the suggestion and approved the change.
- **Reference #11:** *Sec 10-2 Add language requiring that requests for additional appropriations arising from a petitioned Town Meeting must also go to a referendum vote if over \$3,000,000 (the same threshold as for large requests coming from town departments).*
All Board members agreed to this change.
- **Reference #12:** *Article XI - Sec 5-9, Sec 12-4 Modify Article XI (Standards of Conduct) to update definitions, clarify the responsibilities of the Board of Ethics, and*

add/update provisions regarding nepotism, conflicts of interest, and other potential ethics situations.

The Board discussed the reasons behind this change and talked through different scenarios that could occur in regards to nepotism. Maureen Kozlark pointed out that it is common in the Police and Fire Departments for children to follow in their parent's footsteps. Sean Connelly asked for clarification on the definition of a family member. Rudy Marconi commented that during his time he has not seen any instances of nepotism. Maureen Kozlark mentioned that the policy that is already in place gives some wiggle room. All Board members agreed to remove this change from the Charter and keep the policy in place.

- **References #13-15:**

- *Sec 4-1, Sec 4-9, Sec 9-1, Sec 9-4, Sec 9-20 Change the office of Town Treasurer from an elected position to a position appointed by the First Selectman, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen and concurrence by the Board of Finance. Establish specific professional qualifications for appointment to the position.*
- *Sec 4-1, Sec 4-9, Sec 9-1, Sec 9-6, Sec 9-20 Change the office of Tax Collector from an elected position to a position appointed by the First Selectman, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen and concurrence by the Board of Finance. Establish specific professional qualifications for appointment to the position.*
- *Sec 4-1, Sec 4-3, Sec 4-9, Sec 9-1, Sec 9-5, Sec 9-20 Change the office of Town Clerk from an elected position to a position appointed by the First Selectman with the approval of the Board of Selectmen. Establish specific professional qualifications for appointment to the position.*

Bob Hebert suggested changing the language from appointed to hired. Maureen Kozlark commented that she thinks the CRC was trying to mirror the language from the other departments, but agreed that it should be changed to hired.

Rudy Marconi suggested also changing the language from "appointed by the First Selectman" to "appointed by the Board of Selectmen". All Board members agreed to change the Town Treasurer, Tax Collector and Town Clerk to hired positions and change the language from First Selectman to Board of Selectmen.

- **Reference #16:** *Sec 5-13 Clarify that the Pension Commission is responsible for the management of pension plan assets but not for the administration of the town's pension plans, which is a Human Resources Department function.*

All Board members agreed to this change.

- **Reference #17:** *Sec 5-16 Establish an appointed Information Technology Commission. Define the number of members, term of appointment, and scope of the Commission.*

Andrew Neblett, IT Director, read a letter at the Public Hearing with reasons why there should not be a commission. Bob Hebert commented the Mr. Neblett made some very good points in his letter. Sean Connelly commented that he has concerns

about the IT Department being a one-man shop and that a commission could provide a variety of perspectives. Bob Hebert pointed out that Mr. Neblett has all the backups in place. Maureen Kozlark suggested that as a Board, they create a committee rather than adding a commission in the charter. Rudy Marconi pointed out that the Native Plant Policy was originally presented as a Ordinance change, but the Town was advised by legal to create a policy first. In the end it was a smart decision because there were changes that needed to be made to the policy almost immediately after it was implemented. If the policy had been added as an Ordinance, a Public Hearing and Town Meeting would have to take place in order to make the changes that were needed. All Board members agreed to remove this change from the CRC recommendations and to have a later discussion about creating a committee instead.

- **Reference #18:** *Sec 7-2 (Various Sections) Update the titles "Board of Selectmen" to "Select Board" and "First Selectman" to "First Selectperson" to provide gender-neutral language for these roles.*

Bob Hebert commented that “man” stands for mankind and that when the charter was written, man was meant to include men and women. Mr. Hebert also commented that there are many big charter issues that they are dealing with and this is not one of them. Sean Connelly pointed out that at the time the charter was created, only men were in politics. Maureen Kozlark commented that this change brings the Town into the 21st century and suggested adding (wo) front of man. The Board discussed several different naming options including selectperson, selectboard, and selectpeople. All Board members agreed to change the language to say First Selectman/woman and Board of Selectmen/women.

- **Reference #19:** *Sec 10-1 (c) Remove the ability at the Annual Town and Budget Meeting to reduce the amount of the proposed budgets adopted by the Board of Finance.*

All Board members agreed to this change.

- **Reference #20:** *Sec 1-2 (Various Sections) Standardize references to boards, committees, commissions, and departments throughout the Charter to provide more consistent wording and improve clarity.*

Rudy Marconi pointed out that throughout the charter the language bounces back and forth between the terms Agency and Department. The recommendation is to clarify the definitions. The Board discussed the definition of a commission vs committee and decided it should be looked into further. **

- **Reference #21:** *Sec 4-3 Clarify the start date of the terms of office for the Town Clerk, Registrars, and Judge of Probate.*

All Board members agreed to this change.

- **Reference #22:** *Sec 4-7, Sec 4-17, Sec 5-14, Sec 9-20 Improve readability with minor changes to wording and punctuation.*
All Board members agreed to this change.
- **Reference #23:** *Sec 4-9, Sec 4-10, Sec 4-11, Sec 4-12, Sec 4-13, Sec 4-14, Sec 4-15, Sec 4-17, Sec 5-14 Provide consistency in the definition of alternating terms of office for various elected and appointed boards, with no change in the actual terms of office in place.*
All Board members agreed to this change.
- **Reference #24:** *Sec 4-10, Sec 5-4 Eliminate the redundancy in wording between Sec 4-11 and 5-4 with respect to the Architectural Advisory Committee.*
Rudy Marconi suggested changing the language from “opinions and advice” to “timely recommendations”. All Board members agreed to the suggested change.
- **Reference #25:** *Sec 4-12, Sec 6-4, Sec 7-2, Sec 9-14, Sec 9-15 Update references to various sections of the CT General Statutes.*
All Board members agreed to these changes.
- **Reference #26:** *Sec 4-14, Sec 4-15, Sec 10-1 Update the term "Chairman" or "Chairperson" to "Chair" to provide gender-neutral language for this title.*
All Board members agree to this change.
- **Reference #27:** *Sec 4-14, Sec 10-3 Clarify that the annual reports required of the Board of Finance are the annual town financial report and the annual audit report.*
All Board members agreed to this change.
- **Reference #28:** *Sec 5-7 Add language regarding the Commission for Accessibility to include references to various statutes pertaining to accessibility and rights of persons with disabilities.*
All Board members agreed to this change.
- **Reference #29:** *Sec 9-1, Sec 9-12 Update the title of "Director of Civil Preparedness" to "Director of Emergency Management".*
All Board members agreed to this change.
- **Reference #30:** *Sec 10-1, Sec 10-2 Amend wording to clarify processes concerning budget submissions and budget transfers within departments.*
Sean Connelly asked if there is a process for documentation of the budget transactions. Rudy Marconi confirmed there is. All Board members agreed to this change.

****The Board discussed in more detail the difference between committees and commissions. Rudy Marconi commented that his interpretation is that a committee is established by the Board of Selectmen to provide recommendations, while a commission is a level up from a committee and included in the charter. Bob Hebert asked if a commission has more authority than a committee.**

A committee can be disbanded by the Board of Selectmen based on needs; however, a commission must go through the charter revisions process in order to be disbanded. All Board members agreed that there needs to be clear definitions of a board, commission and committee.

Maureen Kozlark moved to adjourn the Board of Selectmen special meeting at 5:27pm. Sean Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.

Summary of Accepted Proposals
2023 Charter Revision Commission
Draft Report to BOS -- May 20, 2023

Board Composition					
Reference #	Affected Charter Sections. **	Proposal Description	Submitted by	Commission Vote	Tracker Reference
1	Sec 3-3	Modify the term of appointment for the members of the Annual Town and Budget Meeting Committee from 2 years to 1 year.	Lynne Noyes	7 - 0	A-15
2	Sec 5-3	Update the name "Commission on the Aging" to "Commission on Aging". Modify the term of appointment for the Commission on Aging from 3 years to 2 years.	Commission on Aging, Debra Franceschini	7 - 0 8 - 0	A-32 D-1 D-2
3	Sec 5-8	Increase the number of members of the ECDC from 7 to 9, and increase the term of appointment from 1 year to 2 years.	Economic and Community Development Commission	8 - 0	E-1
4	Sec 5-14	Add 2 alternate members to the WPCA, and establish their term of appointment	Water Pollution Control Agency	8 - 0 9 - 0	K-1 K-3
5	Sec 5-15	Reduce the number of regular members of the Youth Commission from 16 to 12. Add 2 alternate members and establish their term of appointment	Michael Lordi, Youth Commission	8 - 0	N-1

Reference #		Affected Charter Sections. **	Proposal Description		Submitted by	Commission Vote	Tracker Reference
6		Sec 3-2	Add language to clarify that nonresident trustees holding title to property in Town, in their capacity as a trustee, are not be entitled to vote at Town Meetings or Referenda.		Wendy Gannon Lionetti	8 - 0	J-1
7		Sec 3-5	Increase the number of required voter signatures from 5% to 7% of the town electorate to trigger a petitioned Town Meeting requesting an additional budget appropriation of more than \$250,000.		Board of Selectmen	9 - 0	L-1c
8		Sec 3-7	Update wording regarding the recording of Town Meetings from "tape" recorded to "electronically" recorded		Wendy Gannon Lionetti	6 - 0	J-2
9		Sec 4-5 Sec 4-7	Clarify the timing of when an elected or appointed office or board position is considered vacant for purposes of appointing a replacement		Wendy Gannon Lionetti	9 - 0	J-5 J-6
10		Sec 6-1 Sec 6-2	Clarify or establish certain operational requirements of boards and board members with respect to the annual election of officers, compliance with the town's policy guidelines for board operations, recording of town board meeting proceedings by video or audio, and electronic communications regarding board-related business		Wendy Gannon Lionetti, Mike Rettger, Lori Mazzola	6 - 0	A-53 A-54 A-58 J-8
11		Sec 10-2	Add language requiring that requests for additional appropriations arising from a petitioned Town Meeting must also go to a referendum vote if over \$3,000,000 (the same threshold as for large requests coming from town departments).		Board of Finance	7 - 0	B-5
12		Article XI Sec 5-9 Sec 12-4	Modify Article XI (Standards of Conduct) to update definitions, clarify the responsibilities of the Board of Ethics, and add/update provisions regarding nepotism, conflicts of interest, and other potential ethics situations.		Lester Steinman Ellen Burns	8 - 0	A-4 A-47

Procedural

Reference #		Affected Charter Sections. **	Proposal Description	Submitted by	Commission Vote	Tracker Reference
13		Sec 4-1 Sec 4-9 Sec 9-1 Sec 9-4 Sec 9-20	Change the office of Town Treasurer from an elected position to a position appointed by the First Selectman, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen and concurrence by the Board of Finance. Establish specific professional qualifications for appointment to the position.	Keryn and Nick Cernone, Board of Selectman	8 - 0	A-2 L-2
14		Sec 4-1 Sec 4-9 Sec 9-1 Sec 9-6 Sec 9-20	Change the office of Tax Collector from an elected position to a position appointed by the First Selectman, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen and concurrence by the Board of Finance. Establish specific professional qualifications for appointment to the position.	Keryn and Nick Cernone, Board of Selectman	8 - 0	A-3 L-2
15		Sec 4-1 Sec 4-3 Sec 4-9 Sec 9-1 Sec 9-5 Sec 9-20	Change the office of Town Clerk from an elected position to a position appointed by the First Selectman with the approval of the Board of Selectmen. Establish specific professional qualifications for appointment to the position.	Board of Selectman	7 - 1	L-2
16		Sec 5-13	Clarify that the Pension Commission is responsible for the management of pension plan assets but not for the administration of the town's pension plans, which is a Human Resources Department function	Pension Commission	6 - 0	M-1
17		Sec 5-16	Establish an appointed Information Technology Commission. Define the number of members, term of appointment, and scope of the Commission	Derick Schirm, Tom Lansen	8 - 0	G-2
18		Sec 7-2 Various Sections	Update the titles "Board of Selectmen" to "Select Board" and "First Selectman" to "First Selectperson" to provide gender-neutral language for these roles.	Colleen Broderick	5 - 2	A-7
19		Sec 10-1 (c)	Remove the ability at the Annual Town and Budget Meeting to reduce the amount of the proposed budgets adopted by the Board of Finance	Board of Selectman	6 - 2	L-3

Governance

Reference #		Affected Charter Sections. **	Proposal Description	Submitted by	Commission Vote	Tracker Reference
20	Sec 1-2 Various Sections	Standardize references to boards, committees, commissions, and departments throughout the Charter to provide more consistent wording and improve clarity	Lynne Noyes, Rudy Marconi (as resident), Mike Rettger	7 - 0	I-3	
21	Sec 4-3	Clarify the start date of the terms of office for the Town Clerk, Registrars, and Judge of Probate	Wendy Gannon Lionetti	9 - 0	J-3	
22	Sec 4-7 Sec 4-17 Sec 5-14 Sec 9-20	Improve readability with minor changes to wording and punctuation	Mike Rettger	6 - 0	I-8 I-10 I-12 I-17	
23	Sec 4-9 Sec 4-10 Sec 4-11 Sec 4-12 Sec 4-13 Sec 4-14 Sec 4-15 Sec 4-17 Sec 5-14	Provide consistency in the definition of alternating terms of office for various elected and appointed boards, with no change in the actual terms of office in place.	Mike Rettger	6 - 0	I-5 I-6 K-4	
24	Sec 4-10 Sec 5-4	Eliminate the redundancy in wording between Sec 4-11 and 5-4 with respect to the Architectural Advisory Committee	Mike Rettger	6 - 0	I-9	
25	Sec 4-12 Sec 6-4 Sec 7-2 Sec 9-14 Sec 9-15	Update references to various sections of the CT General Statutes	Mike Rettger	8 - 0	I-2 I-19 I-20 I-21 I-22 I-23	
26	Sec 4-14 Sec 4-15 Sec 10-1	Update the term "Chairman" or "Chairperson" to "Chair" to provide gender-neutral language for this title	Michael Lordi	9 - 0	A-50	
27	Sec 4-14 Sec 10-3	Clarify that the annual reports required of the Board of Finance are the annual town financial report and the annual audit report	Board of Finance	7 - 0	B-1 B-2 B-3 B-7	
28	Sec 5-7	Add language regarding the Commission for Accessibility to include references to various statutes pertaining to accessibility and rights of persons with disabilities	Commission on Accessibility	8 - 0	C-1	
29	Sec 9-1 Sec 9-12	Update the title of "Director of Civil Preparedness" to "Director of Emergency Management"	Board of Selectmen	8 - 0	I-1	
30	Sec 10-1 Sec 10-2	Amend wording to clarify processes concerning budget submissions and budget transfers within departments	Board of Finance	7 - 0	B-4 B-6	

Technical

