

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

PRELIMINARY, UNAPPROVED

SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, August 5, 2009

THESE MINUTES ARE INTENDED TO BE A SUMMARY OF THE MEETING AND NOT A VERBATIM RECORDING.

Present: Andrew Berger, Sharon Hyde, John McNicholas, Andrew Kelemen, Ed Tyrrell, Lisa Carroll, Charles Primerano

Not present: Tiffany Lenz

Special Meeting

AGENDA:

1. Review minutes from previous meetings
2. Distribute Sections of State Law Re: Charter Revision and workflow by each member on issues of interest.
3. Discussion on Document management by CRC and manner for formulating Master Charter Revision Document
4. Public comment
5. Set Regular Meeting Schedule
6. Adjournment

John McNicholas called the public hearing to order at 8:00 p.m.

Item 1. Ed Tyrrell had prepared minutes of meeting. Those minutes were reviewed.

Ms. Hyde suggested one change to the minutes. It was her understanding that email communications "could" rather than "would" be presented to the commission at a meeting and entered into the record.

This amendment to the minutes was unanimously approved. Minutes were accepted as amended.

Item 2. Mr. Tyrell noted that the charge did not indicate any specific areas.

John McNicholas observed that the included timeline was more helpful than the charge.

Ed Tyrrell noted that the timeline is based on the statute. The timeline needs to be followed so that all of the required activities of the commission are completed in time for the approval of the revised charter to appear on the November 2010 ballot. He noted that there is some flexibility but November 2010 is the goal.

John McNicholas suggested that in order to meet the timelines, the committee should divide the workload according to areas of interest. He suggested that the commission members refer to the state web site at www.cga.ct.gov/2009 and specifically Municipalities volume 2, Chapter 99 - Sec 7.187 - 7.201 - Municipal Charters and Special Acts.

Lisa Carroll recalled that First Selectman Rudy Marconi had stated in the prior meeting that he was reaching out to all town agencies to review sections of the charter that were applicable to them and suggest any changes they felt were worth considering.

John McNicholas asked if the committee should send a letter to each agency.

Ed Tyrrell noted that the chairman of the previous commission had approached the chairman of each elected board (e.g., board of education, board of finance) rather than, for example, the highway department.

John McNicholas agreed that he would contact the boards and work out times that are mutually agreeable. The scheduling would be weighted towards the boards with the most impact first. The invitations will be by letter, rather than email or phone.

Andrew Berger and Sharon Hyde volunteered to focus on areas of the charter related to finance.

Charles Primerano stated that he is interested in elections and referendums more in terms of the procedural issues.

Lisa Carroll added that she would also like to work on elections and referendums.

John McNicholas stated that he was going to read through the whole charter before selecting a specific area. Ed Tyrrell suggested that all the members each read through the whole charter, then as a group review the charter page by page.

John McNicholas volunteered to review the topic of a potential public safety commission based on his law enforcement background.

Andrew Keleman deferred any selection for area of interest because this was the first meeting he had attended. Andrew noted that he manages a large outsourcing portfolio for a major corporation and does a lot of work in contracts, governance, relationships, and how people interact. He is interested in applying what he has learned in the private sector to the public sector.

Item 3. John McNicholas raised the issue of document management.

Charles Primerano responded that in a collaborative documentation project such as this, it is helpful to follow some established principles and agree upon them ahead of time.

Charles Primerano agreed be the document librarian and prepare a primer of documentation standards to be followed related to versioning, common platform, and editing, and document management.

Ed Tyrrell noted that boards are most interested in responding to proposed changes to the charter rather than offering changes.

There was discussion as to whether prepared questions for each area of interest be submitted with future agendas. It was agreed that this was not necessary and that as long as each member read the relevant sections of the charter and statutes the commission would be prepared.

Lisa Carroll asked if correspondence could be submitted to the commission in lieu of an appearance. Agreed that this might discourage actual appearances.

Ed Tyrrell cautioned that representatives should be heard far enough in advance so there would be enough time to sufficiently consider their recommendations and if warranted, compose related changes to the charter.

Sharon Hyde suggested that one of the commission's objectives should be that the language in the charter be consistent and clear. She gave, as an example, the confusion between a town meeting and referendum.

Sharon Hyde asked Ed Tyrrell what sections of the charter, in his opinion, are in the most need of attention. He responded that sections 10.3 and 10.4 needed revision. He provided the example in 10.4 related the capital reserve fund. Other examples were discussed.

John McNicholas proposed that future meetings include a reading of minutes, comments from groups we invite, reading of the charter.

Ed Tyrrell suggested that the charter be reviewed in order in its entirety. He pointed out that not all sections will need to be revised, but it is important to identify those sections and note them so an affirmative decision has been made on every section of the charter. He also noted that some required changes may only be for clarity or form and not substantive.

John McNicholas suggested that the CRC ask each representative who comes before for the board to identify any changes they believe should have been made during the last revision but were not.

John McNicholas confirmed that he was going to follow up with First Selectman Rudy Marconi on the status of charter review by town department heads.

Tentatively agreed to invite representatives from Board of Finance, Police Commission and Registrar of Voters to the September CRC meeting and tentatively agreed on inviting representatives from Board of Education and the Board of

Selectman to the October CRC meeting. The Housing Authority was considered for the November CRC meeting.

Ed Tyrrell noted that term lengths were reviewed during the last charter revision but that any changes must be carefully considered because of the impact on election cycles, experience, and representation.

Item 4. There was no public comment.

Item 5. John McNicholas stated that he will be securing a larger meeting room for upcoming meetings.

Item 6. There being no further business, Charles Primerano motioned and Ed Tyrrell seconded a motion to adjourn. Vote unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Charles Primerano
Recording Secretary