

Town of Ridgefield  
Charter Revision Commission Special Meeting  
Monday, June 18, 2018 – 7:30 p.m.  
Town Hall Large Conference Room  
400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut  
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

\*These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.

**Members Present:**

E. Burns, W. Davidson, J. Egan, E. Geisinger, C. Hancock, J. Seem, J. Shapiro, L. Steinman, P. Walsh

**Agenda**

1. Consider and discuss material public comment submitted in advance of or during Public Hearing.
2. Consider, discuss, and possible vote on any further edits to Draft Report.
3. Vote on submitting proposed Charter Revision Commission Draft Report.
4. Adjournment.

The meeting was called to order by CRC Chair Jon Seem at 7:30 p.m.

1. Consider and Discuss Material Public Comment Submitted in Advance of or During Public Hearing.

The CRC discussed and considered public comment under the following agenda item.

2. Consider, Discuss, and Possible Vote on any Further Edits to Draft Report.

Ms. Burns noted her email exchange with Darcy Winther of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection regarding text to require each member of the Inland Wetlands Board (IWB) to take the State's training. Ms. Burns explained that the law only requires one member of the IWB to have that training, but she pointed out that, according to Ms. Winther, some municipalities require more than one, and Ms. Winther knows of no challenge to that requirement.

There followed a discussion among the members of the CRC of whether to add or restore language mandating training for all IWB members to the proposed Charter text in Section 4-16, with that restored language no longer permitting training to qualify for this mandate other than the State's prescribed training. Discussion

included the length of the training, the importance of training, and the comments made by the public during CRC meetings about the importance of training.

Mr. Steinman explained several other proposed changes to the text of proposed Section 4-16. One was text proposed by Mr. Shapiro adding affirmative language noting that the members of the Planning and Zoning Commission continue to act as the IWB until a date in November 2019, which he proposed be added as a fourth paragraph of Section 4-16. Other changes consisted of shortening the text concerning the authority of the IWB so as not to attempt, within the Charter, to state the details of the authority of such a board that is spelled out in the statute, since the statute can change from time to time. There seemed to be a consensus on all these items, subject to further discussion of adding text concerning mandatory training.

The CRC members then discussed adding the language to provide for mandatory training for all IWB members as a fifth paragraph of Section 4-16. The CRC members discussed voting first on adding that fifth paragraph and then voting on all the proposed text for Section 4-16 together.

**Mr. Hancock moved and Mr. Steinman seconded a motion to revise the proposed text of Section 4-16 of the draft of the Charter to incorporate as its fifth paragraph language requiring that all members of the Inland Wetlands Board have the State's training. Motion carried 7-2.**

**Mr. Steinman moved and Ms. Burns seconded a motion to accept all the proposed changes to Section 4-16 of the draft of the Charter. Motion carried 9-0.**

The CRC then discussed Section 10-1(c) of the Charter, including the proposed revised text. Mr. Davidson confirmed the observation of Ed Tyrrell at that evening's Public Hearing that, as drafted, the 2%-of-voters threshold does not apply to votes to delete capital items under \$100,000. Mr. Davidson said that it had not been his intention to make the new 2% threshold inapplicable to votes to delete such capital items. Several other members of the CRC agreed.

**Mr. Shapiro moved and Mr. Davidson seconded a motion to require in Section 10-1(c) of the Charter that 2% or more of the registered town electors be present at the annual town and budget meeting in order to empower that meeting to vote to delete capital items under \$100,000. Motion carried 8-1.**

The CRC discussed the suggestion made at that evening's Public Hearing by Ed Tyrrell that the CRC reconsider the broad prohibition in the proposed text of Section

11-3(d) against a town official or employee representing private interests before the town. Ms. Geisinger raised the possibility of introducing a waiver mechanism into Article XI. Mr. Steinman said that he is not opposed to having a waiver provision that empowers the Board of Ethics to grant a waiver. Mr. Steinman suggested that he, Mr. Walsh, and Mr. Egan together work on new text for the CRC to consider that would empower, with some prescribed standard, the Board of Ethics to grant waivers of provisions of Article XI of the Charter. Mr. Steinman, Mr. Walsh, and Mr. Egan agreed to work together on drafting text concerning that waiver issue. Mr. Steinman undertook to send the proposed text to members of the CRC.

There was some discussion of the impracticality of finalizing the Draft Report at the present meeting in light of consideration of the waiver provision in Article XI. Mr. Seem undertook to inquire as to whether the members of the CRC could act by email without a meeting.

The CRC members then discussed adding text to the end of the new Section 9-19 in order to make clear when the terms of the currently elected Town Treasurer and Tax Collector end. Mr. Seem suggested using the additional sentence for Section 9-19 proposed by Mr. Egan, but without the initial suggested language "In addition".

**Mr. Walsh moved and Mr. Steinman seconded a motion to add a new sentence to the end of proposed Section 9-19 of the Charter reading "The appointments of the Town Treasurer and the Tax Collector shall be effective at the end of the current terms of the duly elected current Town Treasurer and Tax Collector." Motion carried 9-0.**

Mr. Shapiro distributed to the CRC a one-pager showing, for each of the six Charter revision recommendations covered in Section 3 of the Draft Report, the dates of the meetings or public hearing at which there was substantive discussion or a vote and the pages within the minutes of the substantive discussions and votes. Mr. Seem proposed that it be added to the Draft Report as an appendix.

**Mr. Steinman moved and Ms. Geisinger seconded a motion to add to the Draft Report as Appendix A the one-page document showing, for each of the six Charter revision recommendations covered in Section 3 of the Draft Report, the dates of the meetings or public hearing at which there was substantive discussion or a vote and the pages within the minutes of the substantive discussions and votes. Motion carried 9-0.**

There followed a discussion of small edits for stylistic, clarity, or grammatical reasons. The CRC went through Section 3 making such edits.

**Mr. Shapiro moved and Mr. Hancock seconded a motion to accept the edits to Section 3 of the Draft Report. Motion carried 9-0.**

There followed a discussion of small edits for stylistic, clarity, or grammatical reasons in Section 4 of the Draft Report, which is the portion of the Draft Report that captures the text of the sections of the Charter where there are recommended changes, and that shows as a redline the recommended changes in the text of the Charter. Discussion of the CRC members included the idea of drawing a distinction between editing proposed Charter language that the CRC was proposing to add, on the one hand, and editing existing language of the Charter that is shown in Section 4 of the Draft Report but as to which the CRC has not recommended any changes, on the other hand.

**Ms. Burns moved and Mr. Hancock seconded a motion to accept the proposed edits to text of the Charter in Section 4 of the Draft Report, but only those proposed edits within new text proposed by the Charter Revision Commission. Motion carried 9-0.**

### 3. Vote on Submitting Proposed Charter Revision Commission Draft Report.

The CRC discussed finalizing the Draft Report on June 25, 2018, rather than on June 18, 2018, because two items remained to be drafted and fully considered by the CRC. One is the text for further revision of the text of Section 10-1(c) of the Charter in order to apply the 2%-of-voters threshold to empowering the annual town and budget meeting to delete capital items under \$100,000, as to which the change has been approved by the CRC but text has not been drafted. The other is the consideration of empowering the Board of Ethics to grant waivers under certain circumstances to the standards of conduct provisions of Article XI of the Charter, which requires a more substantial drafting exercise. As previously decided at the meeting, it was left that Mr. Steinman, Mr. Walsh, and Mr. Egan will work together on drafting text concerning that waiver issue.

The CRC also discussed the mechanics of revising the current version of the Draft Report so that it is ready to submit to a vote at the June 25, 2018 Regular Meeting of the CRC. Mr. Seem undertook some drafting responsibility and the responsibility to coordinate with other members of the CRC who took on some responsibility. Mr. Shapiro suggested that the new Appendix A be referred to in the Table of Contents and in the Introduction to the Draft Report. Mr. Hancock suggested that it be

renamed "Cross References to Minutes" and there was general concurrence with this re-naming. Mr. Seem undertook to send to the CRC members, prior to June 25, 2018, a clean version of a new draft of the Draft Report.

Mr. Seem also noted that Charter revision is on the agenda for the Board of Selectmen meeting on June 20, 2018. Mr. Seem said that he would not be able to attend. Mr. Hancock said that he would be attending that meeting. Mr. Seem noted that one or more other CRC members would attend.

4. Adjournment.

**Mr. Hancock moved and Ms. Geisinger seconded the motion to adjourn at 9:01 p.m. Motion carried 9-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Joe Shapiro, Recording Secretary