

Charter Commission Regular Meeting

May 1, 2019 7:00 PM

Town Hall

**MINUTES**

- **Members Present:** Gregg LaFontaine, Karen Buffkin, Myles Davis, Mike Ninteau, Pierre Belisle, and Suzanne Gilleese
- **Others Present:** Administrative Assistant Bernard Dennler

1.0 Call to Order

The Chairman called the meeting to order around 7 pm.

2.0 Discuss and act upon approval of minutes from April 17 Regular Meeting

M. Ninteau MOVED to approve the minutes; S. Gilleese SECONDED; MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0

3.0 Communications

The Chairman noted that the Board of Selectmen asked to meet with the charter commission on June 19, 2019. The 6/19/19 is now the tentative date for the meeting, not the July date.

4.0 Continue Work on content and framework of document. Identify elements ready for legal review.

The members discussed Article 5 on ordinances in the last proposed charter and agreed that no changes were needed. Article 6.2, page 12, on minority representation was then discussed. The Chairman proposed to add a sentence to allow the board of selectman to have three members from the same party if the charter was to have a five member board of selectman. The section was otherwise considered to be consistent with state statute. S. Gilleese proposed to draft a definition of the term “elector” in more plain language. The Chairman then addressed Article 6.4 and no concerns were raised as to this section.

Article 7.1 was then reviewed and discussed. The chairman proposed editing some language in the last paragraph on page 13 in order for the paragraph to be consistent with minority representation requirements. Members agreed with the edits. As for Article 7.2, the chairman noted they had discussed a change previously made on information provided B. Dennler. B. Dennler mentioned that the town currently has only a two-week transition between Election Day and when town-elected officials are sworn in. The members agreed to change Article 7.2 to allow for terms of office to commence in January. The members then discussed Article 7.3.1. Several members voiced a preference for a three member board of selectmen, if a town administrator was to be appointed. One member voiced a preference for a five member board of

selectmen. Another member stated that the board should have three members and that if a town administrator were to be appointed, the position should be a contract position, in order to provide flexibility for the board. The members then agreed to have a three member board of selectmen, with the town administrator position to be discussed later. Terms of office for the board of selectmen were also addressed. Several members proposed a two year term of office for each selectmen and one member stated that four year terms may be better. The members then agreed to have a two year term of office for each selectmen. Articles 3.1 and 3.2 were then addressed as needing further changes to reflect these agreements. The members then considered Articles 7.3.2 through 7.3.8. B. Dennler stated there could be an issue with the use of “may” in the second sentence in Article 7.3.7, on Registrars of Voters. In response, the Chairman proposed to change the word “may” to “shall” and add the phrase “to be sworn in” to the second sentence. The members agreed to the change. Articles 7.3.2 through 7.3.6 and Article 7.3.8 were addressed and no changes were proposed as they reflected current practice. Article 7.4 was then reviewed and discussed and found acceptable.

Article 8.1 was then addressed and there was discussion on whether to allow municipal employees to serve on an appointive agency. Members then agreed to edit the last paragraph on page 15 to clarify that municipal employees may serve as a member or alternate of any appointive agency, unless otherwise disqualified from serving. The remaining paragraphs in Article 8.1, on vacancies and removals, on page 16 were considered and not changed, as they reflect current practice. Article 8.1.2. was addressed and the members agreed to clarify the word “student” to mean “high school student or undergraduate” and to clarify that the student’s term was not to exceed three years. Article 8.1.4 was proposed to be edited so that it references a more recent statute. The members then discussed Article 8.1.7, on the Commission on Children and Families, and agreed to eliminate Article 8.1.7 because that commission is no longer active. The ordinance creating the commission, however, would not be listed in Article 12 of the proposed charter, so that the ordinance would not be superseded by the charter. Discussion ended on page 19, Article 8.1.10. The Chairman noted that the wording on the town administrator position and budget were still under discussion.

#### 5.0 Discuss upcoming schedule dates

The Chairman proposed a special meeting for May 8, 2019, at 7 pm. The members agreed to this special meeting.

#### 6.0 Discuss preparation for public communications & next public hearing

The Chairman noted that at this upcoming special meeting the members needed to discuss how to present the proposed charter at the second public hearing. K. Buffkin stated that she drafted a rough outline and that she would email it to members by Tuesday night. The Chairman then asked that members review the remaining sections in the last proposed charter and jot down any proposed changes they had before the meeting. K. Buffkin also stated that she had an article on salaries for town administrators in the state and would scan it and provide it to the members electronically.

#### 7.0 Consider dates for additional special meetings to work on charter proposal document

See 5.0 above.

8.0 Adjourn.

M. Davis MOVED to adjourn; P. Belisle SECONDED; Motion carried 6:0:0. Meeting adjourned around 8:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Gilleese  
Secretary, Charter Commission

*Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for any corrections hereto.*