

## Charter Commission Special Meeting

May 8, 2019 7:00 PM

### Town Hall

### Minutes

- **Members Present:** Gregg LaFontaine, Karen Buffkin, Myles Davis, Mike Nintean, Pierre Belisle, and Suzanne Gilleese

#### 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 May 1 Regular Meeting

The Chairman indicated he would postpone the vote on the 5/1/19 meeting minutes until the next regular meeting.

#### 3.0 Communications

None noted.

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

The members continued review and discussion on the last proposed charter. Article 8.1.10 was considered. The members agreed to strike the term "town administrator" from the section. There were no comments on Article 8.1.11. As for Article 8.1.12, a member queried whether it reflected current practice. the Chairman noted that it did. No changes were proposed. Article 8.1.13 was then addressed. A member noted that there was no reason to change it. K. Buffkin suggested clarifying the term "official" when used in the proposed charter so as to identify whether the "official" is an elected or appointed.

No changes were noted for Article 8.2. Article 8.2.1 was then addressed. The Chairman noted three ways to approach the issue regarding a town administrator position: (1) not to include any such position in the charter; (2) to provide a process by which a town administrator could be hired or (3) to have a town administrator position in the charter. One member proposed that a town administrator position need not be put into the charter, since there is nothing to prohibit the hiring of one. The Chairman indicated that the charter should provide the process if a town administrator would be hired. Another member agreed with the Chairman's position.

The members reviewed the suggested changes to Article 8.2.1 drafted by the Chairman. S. Gilleese discussed her proposed edits to these suggested changes. The members agreed to include in the Charter a process by which a town administrator could be hired. There was further discussion on the procedure for hiring and discharging a town administrator. The members agreed to the Chairman's proposal to first require an affirmative vote by the Board of Selectmen, along with an affirmative vote at a town meeting, in order to hire a town administrator. The members agreed that this affirmative vote by the Board of Selectmen would have to be unanimous. Once hired the town administrator would carry out the policies of the Board of Selectmen and carry out some duties of the First Selectmen, as delegated to him/her. There was further discussion on the process for discharging any such town administrator, the salary and term. The members further agreed that the Board of Selectmen would have to unanimously agree to any discharge of the town administrator. The members further agreed that any such town administrator would serve at the pleasure of the board of selectmen and his or her salary would be entirely or partly paid from the salary of the First Selectmen and the stipends of the selectmen. The members also agreed to eliminate the phrase ""in accordance with Article 8 of this Charter"" from subsection 16 (page 16) of Article 3.3 concerning the town administrator position, and move this subsection 16 to the modified Article 8.2.1.

The members then discussed Articles 8.2.2 through 8.2.6 on whether the positions referenced in these sections should be appointed or elected. One member voiced a concern that the Town Treasurer position should remain an elected position to provide checks and balances. The members agreed that the Town Treasurer (Article 8.2.5) should remain an elected position. The members further agreed to propose that the tax assessor (Article 8.2.2), the Tax Collector (Article 8.2.3), the town clerk (Article 8.2.4), and Finance Director (Article 8.2.6) be appointed positions. The members indicated that they would revisit this proposal after hearing from those attending the next public hearing.

The members then agreed to eliminate Article 8.2.7 (animal control services) since this service is contracted out. M. Nintean pointed out that there is only one building office and that Section 8.2.8 should be corrected to reflect that. The term "fire marshall" in Article 8.2.15 would be corrected to "fire marshal". Article 8.2.17 (sanitarian) was agreed to be taken out because it appeared the Town did not have one. No changes were proposed for the remaining sections on page 22. Articles 8.2.22 through Article 8.3 were addressed and no changes were made.

The members then reviewed the changes proposed by the Chairman for Article 9. The Chairman noted that these changes were proposed in order for Article 9 to reflect current practice. Two members proposed that the term "mean" should be replaced by the word "identify" in Article 9.0. No changes were proposed for Article 9.1. K. Buffkin suggested eliminating certain dates from the Chairman's revised Article 9.3 and members agreed. There was further discussion on whether to permit the Board of Finance to have town departments, agencies attend certain board of finance meetings, as provided in the Chairman's revised Article 9.3 and whether the Board of Selectmen could require certain estimates, as provided in the Chairman's revised Article 9.4. The members agreed that these sections should remain, but that the phrase "except those whose heads or members are elected" be removed from the revised Article 9.4. The members ended discussion on the revised Article 9.4.

#### 5.0 Discuss upcoming schedule dates

The Chairman also noted the following upcoming dates: June 7, 2019: proposed charter to be submitted to the town clerk; June 17, 2019: Board of Selectmen hold a public hearing on the proposed charter; June 19, 2019: Charter Commission meets with Board of Selectmen to discuss any changes to the proposed charter the Board may recommend; July 17, 2019: final charter to be submitted.

S. Gilleese asked when the proposed charter could be submitted to the town's legal counsel for review. The Chairman indicated that the town's legal counsel could review portions of the proposed charter at any time.

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

The Chairman commented that for the next meeting, the members needed to agree on how the proposed charter would be presented at the next public hearing. K. Buffkin indicated that she had started drafting the summary for the next public hearing. Other members proposed that the summary should stress: that the charter will memorialize how well the Town is run now; that is a local document that resides here; allows the town not to be subject to changes made to state statutes; the charter would also explain how the town is run and would be accessible to the residents.

The Chairman noted that members can email each other documents and share drafts but that any discussion between members on the documents or drafts needs to be at the charter commission meetings.

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

The Chairman proposed a special meeting for May 23, 2019, at 7 pm. The members agreed to this special meeting.

#### 8.0 Adjourn

M. Davis MOVED to adjourn; P. Belisle SECONDED; Motion carried 6:0:0.

Meeting adjourned around 9:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Gilleese  
Secretary, Charter Commission

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