

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 4, 2021 6:30 p.m.

Remote ZOOM Meeting

Webinar Link: via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89896302949>

Note: These are summary minutes; a tape recording of this meeting is on file in Wolcott Town Hall.

Chairman Dennis Cleary called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:56 p.m., with the Pledge of Allegiance and attendance was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dennis Cleary, Patricia Najarian (6:49), Angela Sanna, Ryan Pawlak, Robert Ficeto, Kenneth Wilson,

MEMBERS ABSENT: Nicole Smart

ALSO PRESENT: Attorney Brian Tynan

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES:

Robert Ficeto spoke on bidding and reported his findings with the State of CT Dept of Administrative Services. Any one of the 169 town can forward specs to DAS to bid out. When they receive a contract, they will establish a list of vendors that fill the criteria. Any one of the towns can negotiate with vendors on the list for pricing framework. They have opened the process so that the town can provide the bidding specs and they in lieu would act as the bidding agent for the city or town. These towns are also amending their Charters so that they can publish in the newspaper to save print cost. If we were to adopt that purchasing criteria, it would save the town an enormous amount of money. We would have a few options, one to use the old vendors as specification benchmarks, post on the Town website, and enlist the services of the State in tandem with that as they allow piggy backing. Any vendor on this site is open to negotiation downward depending on volume.

Attorney Tynan did explain that we currently have language in the Charter to use this procedure. Dennis explained that if a Municipality by ordinance sets a threshold for bidding, the most the Ordinance can exempt is \$25,000.00 in value. And everything above will need to go to bid. If it is done by Charter, it is up to the Municipality to set the thresholds. We are currently at \$10,000.00 and should be keeping pace with things. Looking into indexing and or keeping in line with CPI and adjusting our threshold. We have extended an invitation to Sue Hale to join our next meeting to voice her preference and answer questions.

K. Wilson spoke on Farmingbury Hills. He had asked for Commission members and will be putting together a questionnaire to obtain additional information of their opinion and duties now that it is privatized. He is looking to see if they are using State Statutes or Ordinances in their operations and responsibility.

Dennis explained that the Ordinance is outdated as to the terms of the lease, fees, plan of development etc. Section 411 of the Charter could be removed. More research to be conducted as we need to know what kind of role this Commission will have moving forward.

R. Ficeto believes that this part of the Charter is extinct and should be removed. That, having an advisory or oversight board/commission can sometimes be counter-productive. Perhaps a complaint board could be a possibility such as the Civilian Police Board.

Dennis has reached out to Chief Stephens to see if he had any recommendations to that section of the Charter as it relates to the Civilian Police Review Board Section 408a. This would be so we are consistent with State Statute as it has changed and will be changing again. Robert Ficeto would like to see it mandated to meet a specific amount of times a year for updates and to support the Police Department and Chief. Dennis Cleary stressed that this should be to assist the Police Department, not to govern.

R. Pawlak spoke on term limits and the legalities. He has found that it is not illegal to proposed term limits, he had found that minimal towns have term limits and will have more information for the next meeting.

Robert Ficeto stressed the difficulty in finding sufficient candidates to run for office in each district. He would like to propose, and put on the table the deletion of voting by district, and allowing the Town Council to run at large. Dennis Cleary agreed that he would put this on the list for consideration and discussion.

Dennis Cleary would like to propose that a decision on Term Limits be decided.

MOTION:

Upon **MOTION** made by Ryan Pawlak, seconded by Kenneth Wilson, it was unanimously voted to Remove Term Limits from the discussion items.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Ken Wilson revisited Section 410 and discussed how an appointed board member that could be removed for cause, and then reappointed by the same body to re-fill the same position. That it seems egregious that our Charter allows this to happen and the last line will either need to be removed or corrected. Possibly a section that would address the "Appointing Authority" for all boards and Commissions for removal and filling vacancies so there is a uniform procedure for all. Language will be drafted for additional discussion next meeting.

Patricia Najarian brought to the table a recommendation from Gloria Clair from The Commission for Individuals with Special Needs. Section 423. Gloria expressed the frustration with the lengthy title of the Commission and would like to shorten if her Commission can decide on a shortened name.

Dennis Cleary would like Pat to ask Gloria if she needs the 12 people on her commission and if she has any problem filling those seats. And, if they do have a name that they would like to use, to present it asap. This was discussed at the last Charter Revision.

Section 703a Attorney Tynan had inquired with OPM for additional information and the recommended budget format. He confirmed that moving the Town budget onto the town website instead of the newspaper was doable. Attorney Tynan will submit language to the clerk for the next meeting. A notice will still be published making the taxpayers aware of where to locate the budget online.

Ryan Pawlak suggested removing a recommendation brought forth by Kaitlyn Styles and Section 423. A proposal for an additional committee to assist marginalized groups. Ryan felt that if a number of people would like to get involved, a community group could be developed. This is currently not on our list at this time.

Robert Ficeto would like to make a recommendation that the Mayor be added as an ex officio to the Board of Education. This would be to improve the communications between the city side and the board side to work in harmony together in a timely fashion. This will be added for further discussion.

Section 416a Discussion ensued on the responsibility of the town attorney and why some boards such as Zoning and The Board of Education hire their own attorneys. This seems to be in direct conflict with this section. Clarification from additional discussion by Dennis Cleary and Attorney Tynan showed that there is no conflict. Robert Ficeto's recommendation was specifically directed at cost saving for the town.

Robert Ficeto also brought forth his concerns as it relates to the availability and protocol for appeals. That it's a difficult process that needs to be improved. Dennis Cleary feels that it's an administrative issue and we will refer to the Assessor to make more user friendly.

Section 306f and expansion of the definition of "compensation". The current definition is not clear and can be improved as it relates to "cost share".

MOTION:

Upon MOTION made by Robert Ficeto, seconded by Angela Sanna, it was unanimously voted to amend Section 306 (f) Said Council shall, determine the compensation, including salary and medical insurance cost sharing of the Mayor, the Registrars.....

Dennis Cleary brought to the table the current digital life we all are immersed in i.e. Zoom, conference call etc., and the standards the Boards and Commissions abide by for a quorum and voting procedures. He feels that this is very relevant and some definition should be put into the Charter to clarify and define this. Ryan Pawlak will research with the State of Connecticut and the Legislator to develop wording for this section for further discussion.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon **MOTION** by Robert Ficeto, seconded by Ryan Pawlak, it was unanimously voted to **ADJOURN** the Regular Meeting at 8:45 p.m.

APPROVED:

DeAnna Morelli
Clerk
Charter Revision Commission

Dennis Cleary
Chairman
Charter Revision Commission