

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

August 8, 2005

7:30 p.m.

I. Call Meeting To Order

Mr. LeBoriosis called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. at the East Windsor Town Hall, 11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, CT.

II. Attendance

In attendance: Richard LeBoriosis, Chairman, Noreen Farmer, Kathy Bilodeau, Ralph Saunders, Cliff Nelson, Ed Filipone, Ralph Saunders
Unable to attend: John Parada, Joe Roberts, Peter Nevers

III. Added Agenda Items – None.

IV. Public Participation

D. James Barton, 158 South Water Street

Mr. Barton inquired if the Commission had a working document and/or a synopsis of what has been done to date. Mr. LeBoriosis outlined that nothing has been redrafted to date. The Commission to date has gathered information from the public and town agencies and has now arrived at the decision making portion of their charge.

Marie DeSousa, 10 Rice Road

Ms. DeSousa outlined that at the forum reference was made to an International City Manager Association. Ms. DeSousa had tried to access the web site but was prevented from doing so as it is limited to member-only access. She inquired if anyone on the Commission was a member, or planned on becoming a member, so information can be obtained from this web site. It was discussed that organization is for professionals in that field to utilize. Ms. DeSousa queried if we are going to work with anyone from that organization who can help field questions? It was outlined that the CCM services will not change if the Town adopts a different form of government. To wit, Ms. DeSousa question the advantage or gain to the Town in changing to a

Town Manager if the help the Town needs can be gained from CCM. It was mentioned that the organization volunteered to help interview candidates. Ms. DeSousa questioned if we should look ahead before making a decision and spend the Town's money on an organization for the Town Manager when the Town does not have the information on that organization.

V. **Written Communications**

- E-mail forwarded by Gilbert Hayes to all members regarding questions of a resident → Mr. Nelson forwarded the Commission's schedule to the resident.

VI. **Previous Minutes**

Chairman LeBorious moved that the minutes of May 9, 2005, May 26, 2005 and June 13, 2005, be adopted as submitted.

ALL MEMBERS IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED

VII. **Continued Review Of Charter And Discussion Of Potential Revision(s)**

Mr. Leborious stated the Commission has had several months to gather input, listen and learn and it is now time to make a preliminary decision on what direction to take. He suggested taking the questions from the forum and answer them as a way of forming a direction to take. He polled the Commission members for their thoughts.

Mr. Nelson felt input had been received from various boards, commissions and department heads that changing the dates for the budget would be easier in complying with state laws. The type of government opinions were 50/50 for keeping it like it is and changing to a town manager. The Town Manager form has been investigated thoroughly.

Ms. Bilodeau noted a lot of input had been received on splitting the budget and she queried if it was in the best interest of the town. Also the town is growing, a moratorium on building is proposed and it was felt to be foolish not to take a serious look at a Professional Administrator form of government. She felt an educated resourceful person could help the Town and Board of Selectmen move forward. The Town Meeting and public hearing are important factors to the residents which need to be considered when pulling this idea together. The Commission needs to look at the time line for the budget as well.

Ms. Farmer felt the Commission needed to try the Town Manager concept, but educating the public was key and hopefully with the recent budget referendum situation, the public will see the

value of a Town Manager. It may not pass, but the public should have the option to contemplate the change. While this idea may not pass, it is important to make the other requested, necessary Charter Revision changes if this concept does not go forward. Whatever is changed in conjunction with the Town Manager or without it, the Commission needs to dive into the document to make the necessary changes.

Mr. Saunders was for the concept of a Professional Administrator as the town is large enough and it would be in the best interest of the Town. He is in favor of it and recalled that in towns that were 50/50 split about the idea, once they went to a Town Manager they would not go back to the former form of government.

Mr. Filipone noted that a split budget for government/education is a good idea, it can keep the government working as it needs to rather than complete budget focus on one line item. The 50/50 split for a Town Manager is a good split and he felt the Town needs to go in that direction as the Town is like a corporation and it needs a leader, one who can do the job on a daily basis without interruption. How it is presented will result in how it is voted on.

General discussion on the Town Meeting role was discussed. With a Town Manager system, the Manager can draft the budget, present it to the Boards of Selectmen and Finance for review and it goes to Town Meeting. It is interesting because residents have expressed interest in maintaining the Town Meeting, yet at budget time at the Town Meeting residents want a referendum. Some have indicated the budget should be changed to a referendum. The Town Meeting can be used for an information session, then on to referendum. Also if a referendum is the way to go, the idea of caps needs to be put in place and the parameters for what happens if a budget does not pass, what does the budget figure reflect, a percentage? If a percentage, a percentage of what and how will the commission determine this? It was also noted if the Town knew it had to go to referendum and the maximum number of potential referendums, the Town could budget monies for referendums. The idea was presented that the referendum can go twice, if failed the charges goes to the Board of Finance to determine a final budget and mill rate. The Board of Finance is accountable as they are elected positions.

The time frame the Commission has was discussed, as well as the possibility the Town Manager concept and it is voted down. The Town has done its charge by statute if that is the case, in that the Town is required to review and revise the Charter. The Commission can suggest to the Board of Selectmen that numerous questions be posed so the Revisions are not one whole piece, pass/fail, but individual questions.

The split budget question was revisited in great depth and the pros and cons for this concepts, as well as concerns with splitting education and government. Separating the budget might open up issues creating a Board of Education versus General Government, when all arenas and ages need

services. The misconceptions and frustrations with the education side of the budget and what residents determine education, reading, writing, arithmetic or music, soccer, etc was discussed, as well as the fact that there is a lot of mistrust on the education side, as it is not a line by line budget scenario. The education side also has contractual obligations with its teachers and if no budget is in place, problems arise with non-tenured teachers who need a contract in place. As to the autonomous education budget, that is a State issue, which allows the education side to allocate monies budgeted where they see fit. Mr. Leborious stated that the Board of Finance presents budget is a result of collective wisdom from the community and a balance of elements. It is not unreasonable to keep the budget as one package. The Town Manager will not necessarily have a bigger role in the education side of the budget.

The local form of government questions were reviewed. The Town Meeting in place was the collective wish for those who spoke. The Town Meeting can be for budget process and annual meeting, while the relatively minor questions can go before the Board of Selectmen, who can opt to hold a public hearing to gain input on those items which residents want input. If residents want a Town Meeting, they can petition for that. This idea would eliminate those Town Meetings which are held with little, if any, attendance, for matters of housekeeping or smaller items. It was noted there would be a savings on legal notices as well if this were in place.

The potential Planning and Zoning moratorium on building was discussed. The idea of PZC members being elected was discussed. ZBA is elected. It was noted that PZC has guidelines to follow, while ZBA goes outside those guidelines.

The Commission will start to review the charter on a chapter by chapter basis making preliminary changes, nothing is locked in at that point. The second run through those preliminary changes the Commission will start locking in their decisions.

VIII. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn at 9:10 p.m.

Made by Mr. Nelson, seconded by Mr. Saunders.

ALL MEMBERS IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted

/cdc/

Cynthia D. Croxford
Recording Secretary