

TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR BOARD OF SELECTMEN

SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, August 27, 2020

7:00 p.m.

East Windsor, Connecticut

Meeting held via ZOOM Teleconference

Meeting ID: 332 683 3563

Town Hall closed to the public by
Executive Order of First Selectman Jason E. Bowsza
Due to Coronavirus pandemic

Meeting Minutes

**** These Minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting ****

Board of Selectmen:

Jason E. Bowsza, First Selectman
Marie DeSousa, Deputy First Selectman
Alan Baker, Selectman
Sarah Muska, Selectman
Charlie Nordell, Selectman

ATTENDANCE: **Board of Selectmen:** Jason E. Bowsza, First Selectman; Marie DeSousa, Deputy First Selectman; Alan Baker, Selectman; Sarah Muska, Selectman; Charlie Nordell, Selectman

ABSENT: All Selectmen were present this evening.

GUESTS signing in to teleconference: Attorney Michael Andreana, Partner, Pullman & Comley, LLC., **Board of Finance:** Jerilyn Corso, Chairman; Noreen Farmer, Tom Lansner; **Capital Improvement Planning Committee:** Bob Leach; **Charter Revision Commission:** Rebecca Talamini, Co-Chair; Nicole Vacila, Heather Spencer;

Public: G. Bancroft, Fred Stuckler.

TIME AND PLACE OF REGULAR MEETING:

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Special Meeting –August 27, 2020
ZOOM Teleconference
Meeting ID: 332 683 3563
MEETING MINUTES**

First Selectman Bowsza called the August 27, 2020 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectman to order at 7:00 p.m. The Meeting is being held via teleconference due to closure of the Town Hall to the public as the result of the coronavirus epidemic.

ATTENDANCE:

First Selectman Bowsza noted the Board has established a quorum with five Selectmen present via video conference.

PLEGDE OF ALLEGIANCE:

First Selectman Bowsza requested Selectman Baker to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Jerilyn Corso, Chairman, Board of Finance: BOF Chairman Corso noted that one of the big questions of this Charter revision affects her Board. BOF Chairman Corso indicated she isn't in favor of this revision for holding the 3 referendums and sending the budget back to the Board of Finance. It's not about one board having so much power, it's about boards offsetting each other. BOF Chairman Corso recalled that in past there were times we didn't have a good Board of Finance. She questioned what if the Board was against the Police Department; they could bring it down. BOF Chairman Corso suggested she doesn't like being in the position this puts the Board of Finance in; they don't like not giving the budget to the taxpayers.

NEW BUSINESS/ Discussion of Charter Revision Questions and Potential Vote:

First Selectman Bowsza referenced an e-mail sent to the Selectmen earlier which contained the potential questions for review. He's discussed the language of the questions with Attorney Andreana. Attorney Andreana reviewed the process before the Board this evening.

- Board of Selectmen to review the draft resolutions, which are:
 - The Board of Selectmen will prepare the Annual Report – Attorney Andreana noted under the C.G.S. it's the Board of Finance that's required to prepare the Annal Report.
 - If the budget fails after the third referendum it will be referred back to the Board of Finance for final review and approval.
- Approve the questions for ballot, which would appear on the November 3, 2020 election
- Approve that the Town prepare an explanatory text of the questions for the voters.

Discussion of the process continued. First Selectman Bowsza cited the Board needs to accept the CRC's Final Report, either as proposed or in part, or reject the Final Report. If the Board accepts the Final Report they would then need to approve 3 of the 4 questions to go ballot. Attorney Andreana suggested the Board can reject sections of the Final Report that they don't

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Special Meeting –August 27, 2020
ZOOM Teleconference
Meeting ID: 332 683 3563
MEETING MINUTES**

want to move forward to a referendum vote. He clarified that if the residents want a rejected question back on the November ballot for vote they could submit a petition of 10% of the voters.

MOTION: To APPROVE the resolution to accept the Final Report of the Charter Revision Commission, except for the changes proposed to Section 8.10 regarding the Board of Selectmen shall prepare and publish the Annual Report.

DeSousa moved/Muska seconded/

DISCUSSION: First Selectman Bowsza noted the Commission is considering 4 amendments to the Charter Revision Commission's Final Report:

1) *minor grammatical, technical changes and clarifications that do not affect the meaning of the Town Charter* – none of the Selectmen opposed this change.

2) *Shall Section 6-6 of the Town Charter be amended to permit the Town Treasurer to be the Town Finance Director?* Deputy First Selectman DeSousa didn't like the language as proposed, she felt it suggested a dual role for the position rather than a title change for the position.

Attorney Andreana questioned the CRC's intent with this proposal? First Selectman Bowsza felt it was a title change, not that the position was Treasurer and Finance Director. CRC Co-Chair Talamini clarified that they had intended to allow the Town to have the flexibility to have the choice for either position. First Selectman Bowsza suggesting deleting the word "also" from the CRC's language, which would then mirror the language in the Final Report. The consensus of the Board was to delete the word "also" from the proposed language and to move that question forward to the November ballot.

3) *to require the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education to each submit their initial budget recommendations to the Town Clerk at least five (5) days prior to the initial budget public hearings of each Board?* The consensus of the Selectmen was to move this question to the November ballot.

4) *If the budget fails after the third referendum it will be referred back to the Board of Finance for final review and approval.* First Selectman Bowsza suggested he's spent significant time considering this proposal since it originally came before the Board. He feels there's a perception that the people's vote is being taken away from them by returning the budget to the Board of Finance, but, the current process already does that. It's apparent that the 2% doesn't work to manage Town functions, but is this set of circumstances any better than the current process? The members of the Board of Finance are elected to 4 year terms; if an anti-growth board is elected it could take many years to correct that situation. First Selectman Bowsza reported he spoke to many people regarding this proposal, and in the correspondence he received from the public, almost universally they would prefer to retain the 2%. First Selectman Bowsza indicated he felt the proposed change is worse than the current process; he isn't in favor of moving this change to the November ballot. Selectman Baker indicated he went through a similar process as First Selectman Bowsza. He's been on both sides of the current process, and

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Special Meeting –August 27, 2020
ZOOM Teleconference
Meeting ID: 332 683 3563
MEETING MINUTES**

he also spoke with other people about this proposal. None of the people he spoke with wants to change the budget process to returning it to the Board of Finance for the final decision. Selectman Baker indicated he can't support this proposal. Selectman Nordell reported he's considered both sides as well; he feels the Board should move this proposal forward and let the voters decide. Selectman Muska indicated she's gone back and forth considering this proposal as well; she also solicited resident feedback. Selectman Muska indicated she's gotten mixed reviews; some people are in favor of the proposal while others are against it. Selectman Muska indicated she can see how people feel this disregards the people's vote. Selectman Muska is in favor of moving this proposal to the November ballot. Deputy First Selectman DeSousa reported she isn't happy with the 2%, and she doesn't like this proposal either for the reasons she's mentioned previously. Deputy First Selectman DeSousa is against moving the proposal forward.

AMENDED MOTION: **To REJECT the resolution regarding Section 8.5B(4) - *If the budget fails after the third referendum it will be referred back to the Board of Finance for final review and approval.***

Baker moved/DeSousa seconded/DISCUSSION: Attorney Andreana pointed out that anyone reading the Final Report who is in favor of this proposal has the ability to file a petition of 10% of the voters to have the question returned to the ballot. He noted that within the current timeframe it's unlikely that they would be able to do that in time to get the question on the November 2020 ballot. He noted the Town has 15 months to complete the Charter changes. Selectman Baker questioned that the petitioner had 45 days to submit the petition; Attorney Andreana replied affirmatively. First Selectman Bowsza suggested 10% would be approximately 750 signatures. Further **DISCUSSION:** None.

VOTE by rollcall: **In Favor:** **Baker/DeSousa**
 Opposed: **Muska/Nordell**
 First Selectman Bowsza voted in favor of rejecting the proposal regarding Section 8.5B(4); the motion passes.

MOTION: **To REJECT the Charter Revision Commission's recommendation to revise Section 8.10 of the Charter proposing the Board of Selectmen shall prepare the Town Report.**

Baker moved/Muska seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE by rollcall: **In Favor:** **Baker/Muska/Nordell/DeSousa**
 (No one opposed/No abstentions)

MOTION: **To REJECT the Charter Revision Commission's recommendation to revise Section 8.5B(4) If the budget fails after the third referendum it will be referred back to the Board of Finance for final review and approval.**

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Special Meeting –August 27, 2020
ZOOM Teleconference
Meeting ID: 332 683 3563
MEETING MINUTES**

**VOTE by rollcall: In Favor: Baker/DeSousa
Opposed: Muska/Nordell
First Selectman Bowsza voted in favor of rejecting the proposal
regarding Section 8.5B(4); the motion passes.**

**MOTION: To APPROVE the resolution regarding the submission of the revised
Charter as amended, and send to the voters entitled to vote at the election
scheduled for November 3, 2020 during the hours from six o'clock a.m. and
eight o'clock p.m., such vote to be held at the Town's two polling places.**

Baker moved/DeSousa seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

**VOTE by rollcall: In Favor: Baker/DeSousa
Opposed: Muska/Nordell
First Selectman Bowsza voted in favor of approving the motion; the
motion passes.**

MOTION: To SEND the following questions to referendum:

- 1. Shall the Town Charter be amended to make grammatical,
technical changes and clarifications that do not affect the
meaning of the Town Charter? Yes _____ No _____**
- 2. Shall Section 6-6 of the Town Charter be amended to permit
the Town Treasurer to be the Town Finance Director? Yes
_____ No _____**
- 3. Shall Section 8.4 of the Town Charter be amended to require
the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education to each
submit their initial budget recommendations to the Town
Clerk at least five (5) days prior to the initial budget public
hearings of each Board? Yes _____ No _____**

Baker moved/DeSousa seconded/DISCUSSION: None

**VOTE by rollcall: Baker/Muska/Nordell/DeSousa
(No one opposed/No abstentions)**

**MOTION: To APPROVE the resolution authorizing the Board of Selectman the
preparation and printing of an explanatory text in accordance with I
accordance with Section 9-369b of the Connecticut General Statutes for the
questions to be voted on subject to the approval of the Town Attorney. The
Board further authorizes the printing of materials concerning the questions
to be voted on in addition to the explanatory text in accordance with Section
9-369b of the Connecticut General Statutes.**

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Special Meeting –August 27, 2020
ZOOM Teleconference
Meeting ID: 332 683 3563
MEETING MINUTES**

Baker moved/DeSousa seconded/DISCUSSION: Selectman Baker suggested if the Board is putting questions to the voters they should have an explanation. Selectman Baker cited the problem with the 13 questions facing the voters last year. Attorney Andreana clarified that the explanatory text will be fact-based, it's not a pro and con statement of the question.

**VOTE by rollcall: Baker/Muska/Nordell/DeSousa
(No one opposed/No abstentions)**

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Negotiation – Discussion Pursuant to C.G.S. Sec. 1-200 (6)(B), strategy and negotiations. Action Possible. Potential personnel matters following executive session.

First Selectman Bowsza the Board will move into Executive Session; Selectman Nordell will be recusing himself from the Executive Session. A vote is anticipated when the Board returns from Executive Session.

MOTION: To GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION at 8:03 p.m. Attending the Executive Session were First Selectman Bowsza, Deputy First Selectman DeSousa, Selectman Baker, and Selectman Muska.

Baker moved/Muska seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

**VOTE by rollcall: Baker/Muska/Nordell/DeSousa
(No one opposed/No abstentions)**

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:17 P.M.

MOTION: To OFFER Rich Austin the job as the Town Fire Marshal at the rate he is currently getting and not to exceed the appropriation in the budget at this time.

Baker moved/Muska seconded/DISCUSSION: First Selectman Bowsza noted that all four of the candidates interview were very qualified for the position and would have done a great job in the role. He felt Mr. Austin interviewed particularly well and he brought new ideas that might benefit the community as a whole that he brought up during his interview. First Selectman Bowsza felt that it's beneficial to the Town that he's participating in a Fire Marshal function already, including in the Town's economic development work and in staff meetings. He's familiar with our software and processes; First Selectman Bowsza felt he was a good choice. Selectman Baker suggested he wished the Board had the problem of figuring out which excellent candidate they wanted to choose for all the positions we need to fill. They were all great candidates and dedicated to the field. It was really impressive with all their credentials. Selectman Baker wanted to say that the stuff that Rich was going to bring to the table is probably the direction we want to go. Thanks to all of them for applying.

VOTE by rollcall: In Favor: Baker/Muska/DeSousa/Bowsza

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Special Meeting –August 27, 2020
ZOOM Teleconference
Meeting ID: 332 683 3563
MEETING MINUTES**

First Selectman Bowsza noted that Selectman Nordell asked to be recused from this conversation throughout the process due to family conflict.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To ADJOURN this Meeting at 8:21 p.m.

Baker moved/Muska seconded/DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Baker/Muska/DeSousa/Bowsza

Respectfully submitted

Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Board of Selectmen