

TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

**Regular Meeting
Monday, March 25, 2019
Scout Hall, 28 Abbe Road, East Windsor, CT.**

Commission Members

John Matthews, Chairman; Don Arcari, Secretary; Cher Balch, Betsy Burns, William Loos, John Mazza, Rachel Safford, Charlie Szymanski, Keith Yagaloff, Bonnie Yosky

MEETING MINUTES

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

1. TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:

Chairman Matthews called the Meeting to Order at 7:05 p.m. in Meeting Room 2, Scout Hall, 28 Abbe Road, East Windsor, CT.

2. ATTENDANCE:

Present: John Matthews, Chairman; Cher Balch, Betsy Burns; William Loos, John Mazza, Charlie Szymanski, Keith Yagaloff, and Bonnie Yosky

Absent: Don Arcari, and Rachel Safford.

GUESTS: Bob DeCrescenzo, Town Attorney; Paul Anderson, Mystica Davis, Andy Hoffman, Bob Leach, Chairman of the Police Commission; Andy Masters, Educator, East Windsor School System; Sarah Muska, Board of Finance, Fran Neill, Board of Education Member; Charlie Nordell, Cathy Simonelli, Chairman, CIP Committee/Chairman, Board of Education,

Press: No one from the Press was present.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL/ADDED AGENDA ITEMS:

MOTION: To APPROVE the Agenda for March 25, 2019 as presented.

Balch moved/Yosky seconded/DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (Matthews/Balch/Burns/Loos/Mazza/Szymanski/Yagaloff/Yosky)

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES/A. March 11, 2019:

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MOTION: To APPROVE the Minutes of the Charter Revision Commission dated March 11, 2019 as presented.

Balch moved/Szymanski seconded/

VOTE: In Favor: Matthews/Balch/Loos/Mazza/Szymanski/
Yagaloff/Yosky
Opposed: No one
Abstained: Burns

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** *The public is encouraged to provide their thoughts as succinctly as possible. CRC members will not comment on the merits of an idea at this meeting, but may ask questions to clarify the proposal. A time limit may be imposed.*

Cathy Simonelli, 170 Depot Street: Mrs. Simonelli said she looked on the (Town) website and couldn't find the Minutes or Agendas for the Charter Revision Commission. Mr. Yagaloff explained the process, beginning with the Minutes and Agenda Button (the "gavel" to the left on the Home Page. Mrs. Simonelli searched her phone and indicated she was unable to find Commission Minutes.

Sarah Muska, 25 Maple Avenue: Ms. Muska questioned if there was a draft document, and where could she obtain a copy? Chairman Matthews suggested the discussion is contained in the Minutes. Any draft documents are only preliminary at this time.

Paul Anderson, 89 Main Street: Mr. Anderson indicated his two biggest concerns are:

- He doesn't want to see 2%, or any percentage, in the budgets going forward.
- He would like the Town and the Education Budgets split for the residents to vote on.

Mr. Anderson indicated the Town does a lot of cutting before the public gets to vote on the budget. Mr. Anderson reported he's made a proposal to the Board of Selectmen that he would rather see all the budget requests on the first vote. If the budget passes the Town has no further votes/referendums. We adjust the Town budget twice before it goes to the voters. The Board of Selectmen does nothing with the Education Budget; it's just passed on to the voters. He would rather vote on the budget that runs the Town and the Education budget separately.

Mr. Yagaloff noted the CRC discussed the 2% cap at the previous meeting. If you don't have the cap the voters could go lower. Mr. Anderson suggested the 2% cap isn't good for the whole budget. He felt the goal in general is to vote no until we get to the 2% so it doesn't matter; the Town can't move forward. Most other towns don't have a cap; they vote until they have a budget. The 2% cap hurts the Town; we can't live on it, we cut

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services we need, and the departments don't get the budget they need to operate correctly. Mr. Anderson felt the public has no understanding how the 2% functions.

Andy Hoffman, 6 Acorn Drive: Mr. Hoffman indicated he doesn't like the 2% cap either but he recalled a few years ago one town had 11 or 12 referendums before establishing a budget. Mr. Hoffman noted that one of the questions in the resident survey was if the voters would like a line item budget to vote on. He noted that there are towns in Connecticut that do that; he cited a town in Maine that has 20 line item choices, which he felt were too many. Mr. Hoffman felt it would be a good idea to allow the voters to vote on 5 or 6 major budget items for the Town; he felt we owe that to the voters. Mr. Hoffman cited the results of the recent resident survey came back 4 to 1 to have that option of line item voting. Mr. Hoffman indicated that as a voter, and a Selectman, he feels it's a good idea. It puts the finances of the Town in the hands of the voters.

Cathy Simonelli, 170 Depot Street: Mrs. Simonelli opposed splitting the budgets; she felt it pits one side of the Town against the other rather than looking at the community as a whole.

Mr. Yagaloff reported that the CRC has had discussions on line item voting, and splitting the Board of Education and the Town Budgets. Mr. Yagaloff felt rather than pitting each side against the other people will support what is important to them and those items will pass. The other items will go through the rest of the budget process. The items people like will get voted on early and the others will be rolled into the remainder of the budget process. Mr. Yagaloff questioned if Mrs. Simonelli had thought of it in that way? Mrs. Simonelli felt that while people will be voting for the thing they support they will be voting against something else.

Mrs. Yosky noted that last year was the first year since the 2% was originally proposed that the budget passed on the first vote. The original plan was for the reason/purpose of the budget proposals to be explained to the voters in some manner, and last year was the first time that happened when the Treasurer put out the budget flyer. Mrs. Yosky felt that if you can give the people the reason for something and point out the benefits to the Town the people will go for it. Mrs. Yosky suggested she doesn't know of anyone who wouldn't want to educate the kids.

Mr. Szymanski noted that after reading the Charter he spoke with the Treasurer, and found she was preparing such a document. He felt the document presented was an excellent job. Mrs. Simonelli felt the document addressed numbers but didn't explain the benefits. Mrs. Yosky noted the reasons and benefits were intended to be Charter requirement in the last amendment to the Charter. Mr. Mazza reported he doesn't like the 2% default; if he were a department head he would know he was going to get 2% and wouldn't have to explain the need for the increase.

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Noting the time Chairman Matthews queried the Commission to extend the meeting adjournment time.

MOTION: To EXTEND the Meeting time from 9:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Balch moved/Szymanski seconded/DISCUSSION: None

**VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (Matthews/Balch/Burns/Loos/Mazza/
Szymanski/Yagaloff/Yosky)**

6. HOUSEKEEPING:

The Commission discussed the meeting schedule, and considered the timing of the next CRC Public Hearing.

7. CORRESPONDENCE AND LOCAL NEWS:

Chairman Matthews reported he had no correspondence to discuss this evening.

8. OLD BUSINESS/A. Discuss previous minutes open items:

See discussion under various items below.

9. NEW BUSINESS/A. Review Attorney's draft of proposed Charter changes:

Attorney DeCrescenzo reviewed draft language revisions as follows:

Section 6.6(H): Administrative Officer (new position):

Defines qualifications, duties to include comparative research/analysis, benchmarking, and coordination of day to day operation of departments. Position is hired/fired by the First Selectman with concurrence of the Board of Selectmen; position reports to the First Selectman. Discussion continued regarding the role of the CIP Committee, and to whom they would report.

Section 6-5B: Town Attorney (revises current language)

The Town Attorney serves at the pleasure of the Town. Current potential revisions make the term of the Town Attorney concurrent with the term of the Board of Selectmen. Should the BOS choose to change the Town Attorney time is allotted for soliciting RFPs and turn-around time for change of attorneys. Discussion followed regarding phraseology of potential ballot questions.

Section 6.6: Finance Officer (replaces Treasurer):

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The position of Finance Office replaces the position of Treasurer. Language revisions address the duties of the current Treasurer. The Finance Officer manages the personnel of the Treasurer's Office. Discussion followed regarding process of disbursement of departmental funds vs. purchase orders, and responsibilities of the Pension Board.

Section 6-6(I): Police Department (new)/Section 7-7: Police Commission (replaces ordinance):

New language applies the powers prescribed under the Charter to the Police Commission. Language defines their duties under the Charter rather than those ascribed under the Connecticut General Statutes. Language does not eliminate the Police Commission; working with personnel matters stays with the Police Commission. Day to day operational non-criminal matters would be the authority of the First Selectman as assisted by the Administrative Officer. Discussion continued regarding the current oversight of the Police Department by the Police Commission vs. oversight of other Town Departments by the First Selectman/Board of Selectman. The CRC reiterated the intent of the Administrative Officer is to keep open lines of communication and provide consistency throughout the Town administration.

Section 8-3: Finance General Provisions (revised current sections):

Revised language enables the Board of Selectmen to transfer unencumbered balances from one department to another in the latter half of the year. Discussion continued regarding identification of fund balances necessary for department functions but not yet spent in the remaining months of a fiscal year.

Section 8-4(c)(1)(b): Budget Format (modifies current section):

The CRC is seeking consistency of narratives supporting individual department budget requests. Discussion followed regarding the authority to determine the correctness/appropriateness of the narrative; should it be the Financial Officer or the First Selectman/Board of Selectman? Discussion followed regarding consequences for lack of narrative submissions.

Section 8-6: Duties of the Board of Finance re: Supplemental Appropriations (revises current language):

Discussion followed regarding the need for detailed descriptions of the requested supplemental appropriation, and input regarding cost estimates to the Finance Officer for any supplemental request.

Section 8-9: Audit (modifies current section):

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This section refers to financial audits and operational audits. Discussion followed regarding license requirements specific to the State of Connecticut. The CRC discussed the rotating schedule for operational audits

Section 10-5(c): Petition Signatures (revises current language):

Discussion continuing.

Section 10-8(I): Board of Finance Review of Proposed Town Meeting Action (eliminates section):

This section is intended for the Board of Finance to do a qualitative analysis of the need for the action proposed.

Section 10-9: Automatic Referendum (new section):

The section is being proposed based on feedback from the CRC's resident survey. The intent of this section is to increase/encourage voter participation. Discussion to continue.

Section 10-10: Power of Override (new section):

Discussion continuing.

NEW BUSINESS/B. Identify additional tasks for CRC attorney effort:

Recommendations made during review of specific section revisions.

NEW BUSINESS/C. Brainstorm for additional changes, Round Three continued:

Discussion occurred under Agenda items reviewed above.

NEW BUSINESS/D. Discuss changes from Item C. as time permits:

The CRC preferred to take Public Participation rather than engaging in general discussion.

10. 2ND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Cathy Simonelli, 170 Depot Street: Mrs. Simonelli indicated she didn't disagree with the Commission's intent, or the Commission's preference for checks and balances but she sees everything rolling up to this one person rather than the CIP or the Police Commission. Chairman Matthews reviewed the Commission's objectives for Mrs. Simonelli. Mr. Szymanski cited there should be a methodology that's uniform throughout the Town. Chairman Matthews reiterated the item which received the top

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response on the resident survey was to improve transparency and communication; these changes are intended to improve that transparency.

Bob Leach, 39 Church Street: Mr. Leach felt the CRC speaks of consistency yet when considering the Police Commission their responsibilities are spelled out in the Connecticut General Statutes. Mr. Yagaloff felt that South Windsor is currently doing what this Commission is proposing; they have a Police Department and an advisory Police Commission. Mr. Yagaloff suggested this proposal is analogous to that; this is similar to other Towns. Attorney DeCrescenzo cited that since 1957 when Connecticut passed the Home Rule Act if you have a Charter you operate under that document; the Charter is the organic rule of the Town. Attorney DeCrescenzo felt if you have a Charter the Police Commission is a matter of local concern if they are created in the Charter.

Andy Hoffman, 6 Acorn Drive: Mr. Hoffman noted he's sat in on many of the CRC Meetings. He noted when the CRC did their survey one of the top results was the public wanted an opportunity to vote yes or no on budget line items; he noted he hasn't seen any verbiage that the CRC is even considering that opportunity for the voters. If it came out 4 to 1 in the survey that the public wanted a line item veto on the budget you should pass that question on to the public. Mr. Hoffman reiterated he hasn't seen that the CRC is even considering that. Chairman Matthews felt the Commission had discussed the line item voting; Mr. Szymanski suggested Mr. Hoffman is tired of hearing there's discussion. Mr. Yagaloff suggested as a Selectman Mr. Hoffman could make that recommendation when the Board received the Commission's report. Mr. Hoffman suggested that wasn't the place to make that recommendation; the CRC should give that issue consideration – if for no other reason than that the public said 4 to 1 that they wanted the opportunity to have that vote. Mr. Hoffman suggested the CRC should not make the voters feel they're too dumb to make that decision.

Cathy Simonelli, 170 Depot Street: Mrs. Simonelli noted she's not heard any proposal for reducing the First Selectman's salary if you're bringing in this additional position. Mrs. Yosky noted the CRC has discussed that; some options could be to reduce the First Selectmen's hours. Chairman Matthews felt efficiencies would be realized in other areas due to the involvement of the Administrator Officer. Mr. Yagaloff felt restructuring of tasks would increase the efficiencies as well. Mrs. Simonelli felt there should be a job description for the First Selectman also. Mr. Szymanski cited everyone needs to understand how the Town has grown; it has become far more complex than 20 years ago. Mr. Yagaloff suggested you would want someone coming into the elected position of First Selectman to be working hard for the Town; the salary is the consequence of that responsibility. Mrs. Yosky noted the CRC has many ideas but the Commission can't rewrite the whole Charter; they're concentrating on the things they feel they can promote for improvement and transparency. Then it will be up to the next CRC to deal with the remainder of the issues.

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Andy Hoffman, 6 Acorn Drive: Mr. Hoffman indicated he saw the most important addition is the Administrative Officer, however, he suggested it may be a difficult sell. The Commission must be very clear regarding the purpose of the position and explain why the position is needed and that it will improve the operation of the Town rather than just be another cost.

Andy Masters: Mr. Masters requested clarification that there are no job descriptions for the Board of Selectmen and First Selectman? Chairman Matthews indicated there are no written descriptions for responsibilities or duties. Mr. Yagaloff cited there are no policy or procedures manuals regarding how to operate a meeting, or how to consider replacements on boards and commissions; he cited it's a deficiency across the Town. Mr. Masters cited surprise. Chairman Matthews felt the C.G.S. define most of what they do.

Mystica Davis, 86 Griffin Road: Ms. Davis noted she has tried to become more involved in areas of the Town but has not yet had the opportunity to attend a CRC Meeting. Ms. Davis indicated she learned a lot, and will try to compose her notes. Chairman Matthews cited the recording secretary will produce minutes of the meeting. Ms. Davis thanked the Commission for letting her attend the Meeting.

11. SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING AGENDA:

Continue to work on current brainstorming list.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To ADJOURN this Meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Mazza moved/Balch seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary for the 2018 – 2019 Charter Revision Commission