

TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

**Regular Meeting
Monday, April 8, 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; Don Arcari, Secretary; Cher Balch, William Loos,
John Mazza, Rachel Safford, Keith Yagaloff, and Bonnie Yosky

Absent: Betsy Burns, and Charlie Szymanski,

GUESTS: Sarah Andrews, Main Street, Broad Brook; Bob DeCrescenzo, Town Attorney.

Press: No one from the Press was present.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL/ADDED AGENDA ITEMS:

MOTION: To APPROVE the Agenda as presented.

Balch moved/Yosky seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (Matthews/Arcari/Balch/Loos/Mazza/
Safford/Yagaloff/Yosky.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES/A. Regular Meeting, March 25, 2019:

MOTION: To ACCEPT the Minutes of the Charter Revision Commission
Regular Meeting dated March 25, 2019 as presented.

Balch moved/Mazza seconded/

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VOTE: **In Favor:** **Matthews/Arcari/Balch/Loos/Mazza/Yagaloff/Yosky**
 Opposed: **No one**
 Abstained: **Safford**

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.*

Ms. Andrews indicated she just dropped in to observe; she had no comments at this point.

6. **HOUSEKEEPING:**

Chairman Matthews advised the Commission he has been asked to schedule the CRC's Public Hearing on Monday, April 22nd, at the Town Hall Meeting Room. The Commission will convene their Regular Meeting at 7:00 p.m., and recess to hold the Public Hearing at 7:30 p.m. The Commission can then reconvene the Regular Meeting at the close of the Public Hearing. Chairman Matthews suggested the Commission consider scheduling another meeting on April 29th to finalize the report of recommendations prior to submission to the Board of Selectmen at their May 2nd Regular Meeting.

MOTION: **To SCHEDULE the Charter Revision Commission's Public Hearing on Monday, April 22nd, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Meeting Room.**

Loos moved/Balch seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: **In Favor:** **Unanimous (Matthews/Arcari/Balch/Loos/Mazza/Safford/Yagaloff/Yosky)**

MOTION: **To SCHEDULE A SPECIAL MEETING of the Charter Revision Commission for Monday, April 29, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at Scout Hall, 28 Abbe Road, East Windsor.**

Balch moved/Mazza seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: **In Favor:** **Unanimous (Matthews/Arcari/Balch/Loos/Mazza/Safford/Yagaloff/Yosky)**

7. **CORRESPONDENCE AND LOCAL NEWS:**

Chairman Matthews reported the First Selectman has been following the Commission's proposed changes. The First Selectman has recommended the following change, which he feels is consistent with the responsibilities of similar positions in other towns.

MOTION: **To CHANGE the title of Finance Officer to Finance Director.**

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Loos moved/Yosky seconded/

DISCUSSION: The Commission noted they had discussed the title of this employee extensively; other options had been Chief Financial Officer and Finance Officer. The Commission is fine with the title Finance Director.

VOTE: **In Favor:** **Unanimous (Matthews/Arcari/Balch/Loos/Mazza/
Safford/Yagaloff/Yosky)**

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

Line Item Voting:

The Commission noted Mr. Hoffman had referenced during previous meetings the results of the Commission's survey which indicated the respondents had voted 4 to 1 in favor of being given the option of voting at referendum on several of the largest department budget requests. Chairman Matthews queried the Commission for their opinion of line item voting; he indicated he wouldn't vote on department budget requests unless the budget default was zero. Mr. Mazza felt multiple line options would be too complicated; he felt people won't spend the time to read the various line items. Mrs. Balch indicated she didn't like separating the budgets into Town and Board of Education options.

MOTION: **For the purpose of discussion move to offer a line item vote on budget requests at the three referendums, with the final default to be 2%**

Arcari moved/Yosky seconded/

DISCUSSION: Mrs. Yosky felt no one will know what the people will really do with their vote but she didn't like the line item vote because people will choose their favorites which will get boosted up. Mrs. Balch reported most people she talks to don't want higher taxes. Mr. Loos felt the Town Administrator should research the fairness of the department budget requests. Mrs. Yosky felt the line items will pit people and budgets against each other. Mr. Arcari noted many Towns split their budgets for voting purposes.

VOTE: **In Favor:** **No one**
 Opposed: **Unanimous (Matthews/Arcari/Balch/Loos/Mazza/
Safford/Yagaloff/Yosky)**
 Abstained; **No one.**

2% Budget Default:

The Commission has been considering the effect of an automatic 2% increase on department budget requests. Chairman Matthews queried the Commission regarding retaining the 2% or reducing the default to zero.

MOTION: **To CHANGE the budget default after 3 referendums to zero percent (0%).**

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Balch moved/Loos seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

**VOTE: In Favor: Matthews/Arcari/Balch/Loos/Mazza/Yosky
Opposed: Safford/Yagaloff
Abstained: No one**

Inter-department Transfers:

The Commission has been considering giving the Board of Selectmen the ability to consider the status of the department needs at the 6 month point of the current budget process and to transfer unencumbered, or undesignated, funds from one department to another. Discussion followed regarding at what point in the budget year should funds be considered excess.

MOTION: With 3 months remaining in the current budget year to allow the Board of Selectmen to transfer from department to department funds up to \$20,000 without a Town Meeting; transfers in excess of \$20,000 should go to Town Meeting.

Yagaloff moved/Yosky seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

**VOTE: In Favor: Matthews/Arcari/Balch/Loos/Mazza/Yagaloff/Yosky
Opposed: No one
Abstained: Safford**

MOTION: To EXTEND THE MEETING to 9:15 p.m.

Balch moved/Mazza seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

**VOTE: In Favor: Matthews/Arcari/Balch/Loos/Mazza/Yagaloff/Yosky
Opposed: Safford
Abstained: No one**

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

Final Report – Draft:

FINDING #12 – Add New Section 10-9. Automatic Referendum:

MOTION: Under Item #12 of the Final Report to reduce the amount referenced to \$125,000; new language to be: “The Commission believes that all proposed expenditures in excess of ~~\$150,000~~ \$125,000 initiated by Town meeting should be subject to an automatic referendum.”

Balch moved/Mazza seconded/

DISCUSSION: The Commission cited the right of the people to come to a Town Meeting to ask for an expenditure. They acknowledged this proposal is a big

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change. Mr. Yagaloff cited concern for setting the amount of the expenditure too low being seen as an attempt to prevent expenditures; Mr. Yagaloff and Mr. Arcari favored retaining the \$150,000 amount. Mrs. Balch and Mr. Mazza felt the amount should be lower to increase transparency.

VOTE: **In Favor:** **Matthews/Arcari/Loos/Yagaloff/Yosky**
 Opposed: **Balch/Mazza**
 Abstained: **No one**

LET THE RECORD SHOW Ms. Safford left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

The Commission continued to review proposed language revisions.

Section 10-10: Power or Override:

New Section, creating a charter section on referenda to rescind actions of the Town Meeting, Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen.

This section allows the public, with the collection of 5% of the total electors, to present a petition to the Town Clerk to call for a referendum to allow voters to over-rule a decision made at Town Meeting. The petition must be filed with the Town Clerk within 10 days of the Town Meeting at which the decision being considered for over-rule occurred.

The Commission discussed extending the 10 day collection time period to 30 days to promote better voter participation. The Commission discussed the typical voter turn-out (800 to 1200 people) vs. the number of registered voters (7,000+/-) and considered reducing the number of people required to sign the petition to a number more representative of the actual voter participation. Mr. Yagaloff cited this proposal takes away the decisions made by the Board of Selectmen and voter at Town Meeting. Mr. Yagaloff suggested the Town Meeting is the Town's legislative body; he is concerned with over-riding a lawful decision made by the Town Meeting process. Mr. Yagaloff cited that the requirement under Robert's Rules of Order to over-ride a vote is 2/3 of those people voting.

MOTION: **To require that 60% of those voting shall have voted in favor of the override.**

Balch moved/Mazza seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: **In Favor:** **Matthews/Mazza/Balch/**
 Opposed: **Arcari/Loos/Yagaloff/Yosky**
 Abstained: **No one.**

MOTION: **To require that 2/3 of those voting shall have voted in favor of the override.**

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Yosky moved/Yagaloff seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

**VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (Matthews/Arcari/Balch/Loos/Mazza/
Yagaloff/Yosky)
(No one opposed/No abstentions)**

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

See motions made during above discussions.

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

See discussion above.

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

No additional discussion.

10. 2ND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Ms. Andrews reported she attended the meeting to observe; she had no comments for the Commission.

11. SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING AGENDA:

Continue to work on current brainstorming list.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To ADJOURN this Meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Arcari moved/Yosky seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary for the 2018 Charter Revision Commission