

MINUTES – CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 23, 2017

Town Hall, Selectmen's Hearing Room

Present: Barbara Farnsworth, Bruce Spitler, William Bowers, Daniel Burke, Donald Gibson, Scott Borstel, Alyssa McNamara Reed (alternate), Jonathan Grabowski (alternate)

Excused: Robert Marzelli; Town Counsel Robert Galvin; and Board of Selectmen Liaison Steve Robbins.

Mr. Bowers opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and announced that the meeting is being recorded by MCTV.

Public Comment:

Barry Cornwall, Cornwell Hill, said that he sent an open letter to the Charter Review Committee to the Marshfield Mariner two weeks ago. Mr. Cornwall said that the role of the Town Administrator referenced in the 2003 Charter focused on communication between departments. Mr. Cornwall said that is not working and has not been working for a long time. Mr. Cornwall added that the Board of Selectmen is responsible for making sure that Town government is working smoothly. Mr. Cornwall closed by saying that the role of the Town Administrator/Town Manager needs to be clarified in the charter as well as what type of guidance if any the Board of Selectmen will provide to the Town Administrator/Town Manager.

New Business:

- Report on Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting – Don Gibson said that he attended the BOS meeting on January 30 for the initial presentation of the FY2018 budget. Mr. Gibson distributed copies of the budget presentation that was given by Rocco Longo at that meeting. Mr. Gibson noted that the joint public hearing with the Board of Selectmen and Advisory Board is scheduled for Tuesday, March 28, 2017.
- Data Review and Carousel Activity – Bill Bowers gave an overview of how the carousel process would work. Mr. Bowers noted that Bob Marzelli submitted his comments in advance since he is unable to attend tonight's meeting. Scott Borstel reviewed the framework of the carousel activity and the process for analyzing the data. The group began the carousel activity at 7:20 p.m.

The committee reconvened at 7:45 p.m. to review the themes revealed through the carousel exercise and the points under each article that warrant further discussion as follows:

Article 1: Governance and Power

- The public enjoys participating in Town government. Majority like the concept of Town Meeting but feel that it needs to be cleaned up. Conflicted opinions on open vs. representative town meeting.
- Need for greater accountability in Town government.
- Town government needs to work better together.
- Centralized government – need for stronger leadership and authority. CRC role is to provide a structure for people to follow.
- Moderator's role at Town Meeting.

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Article 2: Town Meeting

- Open Town Meeting vs. Representative Town Meeting
- Town Meeting Process:
 - Time clock
 - Lottery
 - Rebuttals
 - Board Chairs and Department Heads should be at Town Meeting – strengthen the language in the charter.
 - Warrant process needs adjustment – streamline communication and timetable. Conflict between bylaw and charter language for posting timeline.
 - Moderator's role – strengthen the language in the charter
- Consider eliminating Special Town Meeting and having two regular Town Meetings per year

Article 3: Elected Officials

- Town Clerk – elected vs. appointed
- Explore reducing the number of elected boards, specifically BPW, Planning, Assessors
- Explore expanding the Board of Selectmen – increase the number of members
- Give the Board of Selectmen power to enforce the charter provisions
- Centralized leadership – top down chain of command. Issues of communication among departments and boards. Fear of placing too much authority on one person, yet need to create accountability

Article 4: Appointed Officials

- Explore Town Manager vs. strong Town Administrator
- Explore Permanent Building Committee – look at language in the charter
- Better delineate purpose, role, and authority of the Facilities Manager
- Examine/Define the process/role of Advisory Board in the budget process
- Term limits of appointed officials

Article 5: Finances & Fiscal Procedures

- Explore the need for a Finance Director – keep in mind current structure of finance on the Town side
- Explore the need for a Finance Team – explore financial control, need for central control
- Look at Capital Budget Committee process
- Explore the need to define and codify the budget process

Article 6: General Organization

- Look at replicating School Department model on town side

Article 7: Procedures

- Look at consistency with Mass General Laws for entire charter
- Re-examine procedure of 25 signatures needed to call a meeting

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Article 8: Recall and Removal

- Explore possibility of a provision for removal of an elected official short of a recall

Article 9: General Provisions

- Explore the length of time between charter review process
- Identify process to recommend bylaw changes to the Board of Selectmen
- Discuss whether future Charter Review Committees should be elected or appointed

Article 10: Transition Provision

- Explore language in this article to see how changes approved by Town Meeting will impact the charter transition process.

Don Gibson re-emphasized that this list is just topics for discussion. Dan Burke added that they are shaping the framework for future discussion. Bill Bowers noted that they will still be collecting data and scheduling interviews.

Dan Burke said that he received an email from the Agricultural Commission which he would like added to the next agenda.

Bill Bowers asked for input on next steps:

- Need input from other towns
- Bruce Spitler said that articles 3, 4 & 5 are crucial since what happens with those may impact others
- The group agreed that articles 3 and 4 should be discussed further at the next several meetings.
- Dan Burke said that he will work on scheduling interview with representatives from comparable towns

Bill Bowers said that the Town Administrator asked if the CRC would like to submit a report to be included in the annual report. The group agreed that this would be a good idea and Bill said that he will draft a report.

Acceptance of Minutes:

Scott Borstel moved, seconded by Bill Bowers, to accept the minutes of December 1, 2016 as written. The vote was 4:0 with Alyssa Reed, Don Gibson, Dan Burke and Jonathan Grabowski abstaining.

At 9:25 p.m. Barbara Farnsworth moved, seconded by Don Gibson, to adjourn the meeting. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Burke