



# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

## Ad Hoc Government Study Committee

JAMES PRICHARD  
CHAIRMAN

HEATHER STAVENS  
VICE CHAIRMAN

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187  
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

DENNIS CLAVET  
SANFORD COHEN  
MICHAEL FRANCIS  
MARY PERCOSKI  
JOHN RIDZON

Ad Hoc Government Study Committee  
Special Meeting Minutes  
June 16, 2020  
Town Hall Meeting Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mary Percoski, Michael Francis, James Prichard; Present via ZOOM conferencing; John Ridzon, Heather Stavens

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dennis Clavet, Sanford Cohen

OTHERS PRESENT: Lori Spielman, First Selectman; LouAnn Cannella, HR Coordinator/Executive Assistant; Rebecca Einsiedel, Recording Secretary; Present via Zoom Conferencing; Jamelle Elliott

### I. CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Spielman called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. Citizens' Forum [non-agenda items]: No citizens came forward.

### III. INTRODUCTIONS

First Selectman Spielman introduced the members present in person as well as via Zoom. She stated that Sanford Cohen called and is on his way in.

### IV. PURPOSE OF MEETING

- Elect Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson

First Selectman Spielman called for nominations for the position of Chairman.

Michael Francis nominated James Prichard; Heather Stavens seconded the nomination.

First Selectman Spielman confirmed that James Prichard had been nominated for the position of Chairman and asked if there were any more nominations for Chairman. There being none, the following motion was made:

MOVED (FRANCIS), SECONDED (PERCOSKI), AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ELECT JAMES PRICHARD AS CHAIRMAN.

First Selectman Spielman called for nominations for the position of Vice Chairman.

Michael Francis nominated Heather Stavens; Mary Percoski seconded the nomination.

First Selectman Spielman asked if there were any more nominations for Vice Chairman. There being none, the following motion was made:

MOVED (FRANCIS), SECONDED (PERCOSKI), AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ELECT HEATHER STAVENS AS VICE CHAIRMAN.

- Propose Meeting Schedule for Remainder of 2020

Chairman Prichard requested some suggested dates for the next few meetings. Rebecca Einsiedel gave the members five available dates, if they would like to meet every two weeks on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 pm.

Ms. Janelle Elliott, 155 Windermere Ave, asked if the future meetings will be held at the Town Hall and if so will they be open to the public. Ms. Einsiedel answered yes, the meetings would be open to the public for attendance in person or via Zoom. Ms. Elliott will email the First Selectman's Office with her name and address to be included in the minutes. The members all agreed upon the two week schedule starting with June 30, 2020 and continuing through August 25, 2020. They will discuss the remainder of the schedule at an upcoming meeting.

- Discuss Purpose of the Committee

Chairman Prichard read the specific instructions to the Committee from the Board of Selectmen [ATTACHED]. He asked First Selectman Spielman if she still had the paperwork from the last time this was discussed. First Selectman Spielman said she has notes from the prior meetings with Mr. Tom Palshaw and Mr. Ted Graziani that she can provide to the Committee. Discussion was held regarding the difference between a Town Administrator and a Town Manager. First Selectman Spielman commented that the issue with having a First Selectman is that every two years there could be a new one, therefore there is no consistency. Mr. Francis asked if consideration had been made to increasing the First Selectman term to four years. Chairman Prichard said the Charter would need to be revised. Ms. Stavens said that the last time this was discussed within the Charter Revision Commission there was a significant salary differential between a First Selectman and a paid Administrator. Ms. Spielman asked Ms. Stavens if it was discussed that once an Administrator or Manager was in place, that the First Selectman position would then be part time. Ms. Stavens stated that it was her recollection that the Town Manager would be a significantly higher paid position, and then the First Selectman would be a volunteer position. If an Administrator was hired, there would still be two paid positions, keeping the Board of Selectman as volunteers.

Mr. Francis questioned what the difference between an Administrator and a Manager is and what the cost difference would be to the Town. Chairman Prichard asked if the Town of Vernon had a part time Mayor and an Administrator. Ms. Spielman confirmed that they do. Chairman Prichard recommended to take a look at the surrounding towns and compare what form of Government would work best for

Ellington. Ms. Stavens asked what the population difference is between Ellington and Tolland or Vernon. Ms. Stavens also asked Ms. Spielman if the Board of Finance would be eliminated, removing the safety net of how finance matters are currently handled. Ms. Spielman stated it was going to be up to this Committee to discuss and make that recommendation. Ms. Spielman stated that it was her understanding that Stafford and East Windsor will soon be going to a Town Administrator form of government; she will confirm for the Committee. Discussion was held regarding who the Administrator or Manager would report to, their specific duties and decision making. Ms. Spielman and Ms. Stavens discussed that this person would be hired based on their job qualifications and not their political affiliation. Ms. Spielman suggested that before the next meeting a document listing the difference between a Town Administrator and Manager, as well as what their specific duties would be, should be generated for review. Ms. Stavens questioned if the town residents would be willing to give up that intimate First Selectman person to represent the Town. Ms. Spielman said if the First Selectman went to a part-time position that would work. Discussion was then held on who the new position would directly report to in terms of any potential removal process if they are not doing their job. Mr. Ridzon asked if they both would have contracts. Mr. Francis mentioned that he would really like to see the First Selectman term be four years. Ms. Spielman asked Ms. Stavens if that was on the last proposal and Ms. Stavens said that it was discussed to make it more in tune with the regular elections; as it is now, a new First Selectman in office would just get going and things would get implemented and then there would only be a year to get things done. Mr. Francis stated his concerns of having someone in the new position and not being able to get them out if necessary. Mr. Ridzon tried communicating through Zoom but his connection was not audible. Mr. Prichard stated that Ms. Spielman is the most involved First Selectman that we have ever had in Town.

#### V. REVIEW ACTION ITEMS

First Selectman Spielman will gather and provide the notes from prior meetings with Mr. Palshaw and Mr. Graziani, as well as the research that she has from the previous Chair of the Charter Revision Commission, Ellen O'Shaughnessy. A comparison sheet of the duties and responsibilities of a Town Administrator and Town Manager will also be generated for review.

#### VI. NEXT MEETING

The Ad Hoc Government Study Committee will hold its next meeting on Tuesday June 30, 2020 at 6:00 pm at the Town Hall Meeting Hall, located on the third floor of the Town Hall.

#### VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED (FRANCIS), SECONDED (PRICHARD), AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 6:35 PM.

Submitted by:



Rebecca Einsiedel  
Recording Secretary

## **Ad-Hoc Government Study Committee**

The Board of Selectmen is considering the establishment of an Ad-Hoc Government Study Committee to research different forms of government permissible under Connecticut State Statute and recommend possible changes to Ellington's government structure. This Committee will run in advance of the formal establishment of the Charter Review Committee.

Residents interested in serving on this temporary committee, please complete the Statement of Interest. The Board of Selectmen will review all applications received and will appoint membership to the Government Study Committee directly.

### **Charge**

The Committee shall consider different forms of government permissible under state statute and make recommendations for possible changes to Ellington's government structure and/or Charter

As part of its deliberations, the Committee should consider the following:

- Review existing charters of other municipalities in the state of Connecticut and look for "best practices"
- Hold public workshops and/or input sessions to evaluate public opinion on feasible options
- Conduct a public opinion poll to gauge community preferences
- Consult with appropriate town employees, governmental agencies, other municipalities, and outside consultants to assist in developing recommendations

### **Committee Meetings**

The Committee shall meet as required to fulfill their charge. Meetings will be noticed and include time for public comment as a standing agenda item.

### **Committee Composition**

The committee shall consist of seven members (a quorum will consist of four members) as determined by the Board of Selectmen.

Committee members may serve on any subsequent Charter Review Commission

### **Committee Timeline**

The Committee shall present the results of its review for public comment and make a final recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.