

**MEETING MINUTES
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 11, 2024 7:00PM
911 MOUNTAIN ROAD, SUFFIELD CT**

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Remington, Mike Haines, Jeremy Lambert and Ray Dalrymple

ABSENT: Rick Dubour

ALSO PRESENT: Selectman Kathie Harrington

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Remington called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 PM and invited all to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 27, 2024 SPECIAL MEETING

Mr. Haines MOTIONED and Mr. Lambert seconded to approve the minutes.

Discussion: Chairman Remington MOTIONED to amend the minutes to include the decision to hold a Special Meeting on Thursday, July 18, 2024 which had not been reflected.

Motion passed unanimously to accept the minutes with the amended inclusion.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 27, 2024 PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Lambert MOTIONED and Mr. Haines seconded to approve the Minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Tom Frenaye, 489 Warnertown Road - Mr. Frenaye encouraged the commission to expand on their minutes as there are not a large number of individuals attending the actual meetings and he feels that more detail would be helpful. He also pointed out that the minutes from June 27th did not accurately reflect his comments when he stated that “the First Selectman should not abstain since he was not present at the past meeting during the vote to approve the minutes.” His point was that the First Selectman does not get a vote as he is not a member of the commission, therefore, the way in which the vote was recorded is inaccurate. Mr. Frenaye also shared his concerns surrounding a potential issue with the commission due to Mr. Dubour’s decision to resign from the commission and then his subsequent request to stay on until a replacement could be found. Mr. Frenaye assumed that the June 20th meeting was cancelled with extremely short notice due to the fact that earlier in the day Mr. Dubour had submitted his resignation “effective immediately.” This decision reduced the number of members to four, which is one less than the minimum allowed, therefore leaving the commission in a position where they could not proceed until a new member had been selected to fill the open seat. In his opinion, this poses a potential problem with the validity of the June 27th meeting depending on how one looks at it. He noted that six or seven days later it was noted that Mr. Dubour decided to stay on until the position could be filled which Mr. Frenaye feels is not a decision that Mr. Dubour can make on his own

based on his resignation letter stating that he resigned effective immediately. He feels this is a decision that must be made by the Board of Selectmen who have not held a meeting since this issue arose. He also pointed out that without Mr. Dubour, the commission is broken out as three Republicans and one Democrat which is not allowed either. He suggested the committee should consult the Town Attorney for their opinion and take any actions deemed appropriate.

Chairman Remington said he appreciated Mr. Frenaye's concerns and explained that he had consulted the Town Attorney on the subject of Mr. Dubour's resignation and he indicated that in his opinion Mr. Dubour is still considered to be a member of the commission.

Selectman Harrington commented that she is in agreement with the Town Attorney's opinion and since Mr. Dubour's second letter, outlining his desire to remain a member of the commission until a replacement has been appointed, was accepted it means that he is still a member. She thanked Mr. Frenaye for his comments.

Tom Frenaye, 489 Warnertown Road questioned who accepted Mr. Dubour's second letter.

Selectman Harrington confirmed that the letter was addressed to the First Selectman, Colin Moll, who accepted it.

Sandra Janik, 380 Prospect Street thanked Mr. Frenaye and the commission members for clarification behind the resignation issues surrounding Mr. Dubour, however, she expressed concerns regarding the fact that the position is being held in abeyance until the next Board of Selectmen meeting which is scheduled for mid-August. She noted that Mr. Dubour has not been present in person or via zoom and in her opinion that sends a strong message that he is not interested in being involved and is leaving the commission with only four members to make decisions and a make-up of three Republicans and one Democrat. She is concerned about a lack of female representation on the commission as well as the lack of two Democrats, as Mr. Dubour has not been present or involved recently, it is not truly a full commission in her opinion.

Mr. Haines cautioned that from the commission's standpoint they need to be careful about getting into a question and answer session during public comment.

TOWN TREASURER INTERVIEWS

Mr. Remington reiterated that one of the tasks of this Charter Revision Commission includes reviewing the Town Treasurer position and considering whether it should be changed from an elected position, as it currently exists, to an appointed position. He invited the Town's current Treasurer, Kacy Colston, the current town Treasurer to address the commission and provide information on her background, how she came to be Treasurer and what jobs she performs in her role as the Treasurer today.

Ms. Colston took over as Treasurer in April 2022 when the previous Treasurer was having difficulties keeping up with the duties of the job. Ms. Colston described her background in detail, including her 30 years of experience in IT project management at CIGNA. Her experience includes work on small, large and multi-year projects and includes extensive experience with sophisticated budgets and cost-benefit analysis. In addition she is strongly proficient using spreadsheets and online systems. Ms. Colston described the work she does as "very transactional." She explained that she volunteered to take on the position in the middle of its 4-year term in April of 2022 and was provided with a \$9,400 per year stipend.

She was elected in November 2024 to a four year term. During the FY 2024-25 Budget cycle the Treasurer stipend was increased to \$15,000 per year. The Treasurer is an ex-officio member of the Helena Bailey Tree Committee, a member of the Retirement Commission and attends most Board of Finance meetings. Ms. Colston logs in daily and works approximately 10-15 hours per week. She has an office space located in the Finance Department at Town Hall and usually comes in an average of 3 days per week. She spoke about her daily actions including maintenance of various accounts, financial transactions and working with the Board of Education and the WPCA on their financial needs as well. Commission members asked numerous questions of Ms. Colston which she answered accordingly.

Chairman Remington invited former town Treasurer Christine Davidson to address the commission and explain her background and the duties that she performed during her time in office. Ms. Davidson served as the town Treasurer for twelve years and developed many of the processes that Ms. Colston described to the group this evening. When she took the position the town was extremely short staffed and there were no policies or procedures in place and basically no structure as far as how to perform the job. Despite not being given any guidance when she stepped into office, she relied on her financial management background to create what was missing. She also undertook a major account clean-up during her time in this position. Ms. Davidson believes the position should be elected and provided her rationale for this opinion. Commission members asked numerous questions of Ms. Davidson which she answered accordingly.

ADDITIONAL INTERVIEWS RELATED TO THE TOWN TREASURER POSITION

Chairman Remington noted he had no additional interviews for this evening.

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE MEETINGS, RESEARCH AND INTERVIEWS

Chairman Remington discussed the interviews that have been completed thus far. He noted that next Thursday, the Town Clerk will be in attendance for discussion and interview. He would like to have the current First Selectman, Colin Moll, come in for an interview as well as prior First Selectmen who are still in the local area. He said he would extend invitations to the former First Selectmen. The group discussed potential research and when it should be completed in order to discuss and determine if the information should be included in recommendations. Potential meeting dates and timelines were discussed, especially the August 21, 2024 deadline that had been created at the inception of the commission and its charge. Chairman Remington emphasized that there is still much work to be done, especially if the recommendation is to change the charter in any way. An extension of the deadline was considered and discussion ensued with regard to a fifth member of the commission being appointed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Annie Hornish, 864 Thrall Avenue – Ms. Hornish provided information on where the commission can find details on which towns in CT currently have elected positions and which have appointed positions for Treasurer, Tax Collector and Town Clerk. She also shared her experience on the Town of Granby's Charter Revision Commission. She recommended the commission takes their time on this task and not rush to a decision.

Neil Hornish, 864 Thrall Avenue – Mr. Hornish suggested that while the commission is gathering information on other towns they should also determine whether they have a Town Manger to determine if there may be any correlation between the two.

Selectman Harrington – Selectman Harrington spoke in defense of Mr. Dubour regarding comments made earlier in the evening regarding his resignation and any possible negative connotations. She noted that it is a great loss for the commission and she expressed disappointment over his decision but could completely understanding his reasoning. She commented that it is a very sad state of affairs that he felt compelled to step down and she wants to be clear that there should be no negative connotation attached to his resignation.

Sandra Janik, 380 Prospect Street – Ms. Janik thanked Selectman Harrington for her comments on Mr. Dubour and clarified that during her earlier comments she did not mean to come across as negative but was just trying to point out that an empty seat exists.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Haines MOTIONED and Mr. Lambert seconded to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary