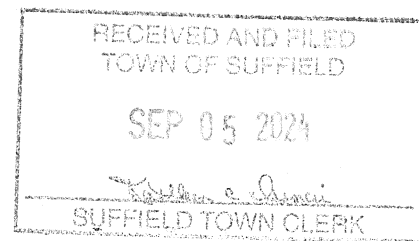


MEETING MINUTES CHARTER REVISION
COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
AUGUST 29, 2024
7:30 PM
SUFFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL
350 MOUNTAIN ROAD
ROOM C120
SUFFIELD CT



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

ALSO PRESENT: Selectman Kathie Harrington

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Remington called the Special Meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. and explained the purpose of the special meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dave Gauthier, 3219 Phelps Road – Mr. Gauthier offered a suggestion regarding the Treasurer position which he felt would be beneficial whether the commission recommends to keep the position as elected or appointed.

REVIEW AND DISCUSS ALL INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE COMMISSION TO DATE INCLUDING PUBLIC COMMENT, TESTIMONY AND INTERVIEWS, RESEARCH CONDUCTED

Chairman Remington discussed the extension granted by the Board of Selectmen which will allow the commission to work on their charge through the end of October. The members reviewed and deliberated over the information obtained thus far and made suggestions as to how they would like to move forward. Discussion included the various information gained from personal interviews of past First Selectmen, the current First Selectman, the current Town Clerk, Treasurer and Tax Collector. They also considered the possibility of political party implications becoming involved, qualification levels of potential candidates, whether there is a need for an expanded focus and input from the public thus far. All were in agreement that there was no need to expand the focus. Concerns included the historical rejection of this recommendation from former First Selectmen, a perceived “lack of appetite” for this type of change from town residents and a weak charter which does not include language to support and protect the town should it be necessary. The Ethics Commission was also considered to be weak link that needs to be addressed in order to provide an avenue for the town should unethical behavior from a person holding an elected position. All members provided their rationale for whether or not they felt this type of change was worth pursuing. It was agreed that at this time the Tax Collector and Town Clerk should remain elected.

Commissioner Dalrymple MOTIONED and Commissioner Haines seconded a recommendation to the Board of Selectman that no changes be made to the Town Clerk or Tax Collector positions from elected to appointed. Vote: All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion continued regarding the Treasurer position with all commission members expressing their thoughts and concerns with the role and how it has evolved over the years. It was determined that this position may need to be revisited as the responsibilities have expanded and the number of hours required to perform the job have increased. The group made numerous suggestions regarding the position currently, how it should be structured moving forward and how it might be reimagined within the Finance Department. The group agreed that this position needs further consideration. They plan to reach out to the Director of Finance and Town Attorney to schedule discussions in order to get a better understanding of what options could be considered.

SET THE COMMISSION’S MEETING CALENDAR THROUGH OCTOBER

The commission discussed the number of meetings they felt would be necessary in order to complete their charge by the end of October. Chairman Remington volunteered to put more dates together and present them to the group.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Annie Hornish, 864 Thrall Avenue – Ms. Hornish commented on the Ethics Commission and their limited powers. She would like to see their powers significantly expanded in the charter.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Haines MOTIONED and Commissioner Lambert seconded to adjourn at 8:32 p.m. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary