

**MEETING MINUTES
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 19, 2024 7:00 P.M.
83 MOUNTAIN ROAD, SUFFIELD, CT**

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Remington, Jeremy Lambert, Ray Dalrymple, Elizabeth Kaplan and Mike Haines (via Zoom.)

ALSO PRESENT: Selectman Kathie Harrington

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Remington called the Special Meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and invited all to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 8, 2024 REGULAR MEETING

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 15, 2024 SPECIAL MEETING

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 18, 2024 SPECIAL MEETING

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 29, 2024 SPECIAL MEETING

Commissioner Kaplan MOTIONED and Commissioner Dalrymple seconded to approve the minutes from the August 8, 2024 Regular Meeting, August 15, 2024, August 18, 2024 and August 29, 2024 Special Meetings. Motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Remington noted that he had neglected to hand out information provided by Tom Frenaye at the last Charter Revision Commission meeting, however, he has since emailed the information to all commission members for review. He offered a brief overview of the documentation, which included a study of towns by size and their corresponding form of government. He suggested that Mr. Frenaye may have provided this information to help illustrate a trend that as towns grow bigger they tend to move away from an elected First Selectman to more of a Town Manager form of government.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Frenaye, 489 Warnertown Road – Mr. Frenaye agreed with Commissioner Remington’s summary of the information he had provided previously. He also had additional information for distribution this evening, based on research he had conducted that included a more detailed representation of information regarding Tax Collectors, Town Clerks and Treasurers in Connecticut. (See attachment for complete details.) Mr. Frenaye walked the group through the information and expressed his hope that the additional data will help them in their decision making process. He also expressed his desire to have the Town Manager issue addressed in the near future.

Jim Irwin, 58 Marbern Drive – Mr. Irwin wanted to discuss his concerns with a message he feels he has been hearing repeatedly at Charter Revision Commission meetings which is “the people of our town do not want a Town Manager.” He conducted “extensive research” on the subject and shared the results with the commission members. He believes most of the current voters in town have never been asked the question as to whether Suffield should consider a Town Manager. He suggested that perhaps this question should be included on the ballot in order to get a better understanding of how the residents of town truly feel about the subject.

RECAP PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Chairman Remington gave a brief recap of the presentation given to the Board of Selectmen and the expected timeline moving forward. All members agreed that the work they are tasked with can be completed by the end of October for presentation to the Board of Selectmen at the November 6, 2024 meeting.

FURTHER DISCUSSION REGARDING THE TREASURER POSITION/ROLE

Chairman Harrington summarized what has been discussed thus far with regard to their charge and noted that after the last meeting the commission determined they needed more time to consider the Treasurer Position in particular. Extensive discussion ensued among all commission members regarding the responsibilities of the position, how other towns handle this position, statutory requirements of a Treasurer and what the position would look like if it were absorbed into the Finance Department. Chairman Remington briefed the group on a conversation he had with current Finance Director Amanda Moore who recently joined the town after serving as the Finance Director for Windsor Locks. The commission requested that Ms. Moore come to a future meeting to speak with them about her thoughts and experiences. The group agreed that the town currently has an amazing Treasurer, however, that will not last forever and the town needs to explore whether it would be in their best interest to move to an appointed Treasurer where there are more protections in place. In addition, the group took an in-depth look at what they are hoping to accomplish with change and discussed a list of objectives presented by Commissioner Dalrymple.

DISCUSS ANY OTHER AREAS OF THE CHARTER THE COMMISSION WOULD LIKE TO CONDUCT FURTHER REVIEW

The commission discussed the concerns raised by Permanent Building Commission Chairman Kevin Goff regarding the interpretation of the role the PBC plays based on the wording in the Charter. Mr. Goff has provided suggested wording to be considered, which will be distributed and reviewed. All members agreed that the subject should be studied further.

APPROVE TIMELINE TO CONCLUDE THE WOK OF THE COMMISSION

Chairman Remington advised that he had reviewed the commissioner’s schedules against available dates for remaining meetings. The following dates have been selected for tentative meetings:

- September 25th – Special Meeting
- October 1st – Special Meeting
- October 14th – Special Meeting
- October 22nd – Special Meeting
- October 30th – Public Hearing

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Frenaye, 489 Warnertown Road - Mr. Frenaye discussed observations he made during this evening’s discussion and reminded the commission of topics they had hoped to visit when they began their charge. He is hopeful that some of those topics have not been forgotten and will still be considered. He also discussed the

role of the Finance Director and encouraged the group to be aware of options available to them if or when an individual holding an elected position commits an offense that requires removal.

Annie Hornish, 864 Thrall Avenue – Ms. Hornish provided her thoughts on incorporating Zoom and similar technology into the charter. Her hope is that it would be done via charter versus addressing the topic only as a policy.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kaplan MOTIONED and Commissioner Dalrymple seconded to adjourn at 7:57 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary