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*By Town Clerk's Office at 3:46 pm, May 19, 2017*

Minutes of the Charter Review Committee (CRC) meeting on 1/10/2017.

Attendance:

Present:

Doug Bruce

Dan Burke

Sam Chase

Valerie Diggs

Sheila Pichette

Glenn Thoren

Michael McCall (arrived shortly after 8:00)

Absent

David McLachlan

A ninth member has been appointed but was not present.

Call to order- 7:01

Speakers:

Jim Spinney, the Chief of Police, came forward to speak in favor about the Town Manager's proposal to appoint the Constable. The Constable has very broad powers and duties. They have all the powers of a police officer. They often handle very sensitive duties such as serving civil writs and therefore the individual must be thoroughly vetted. This person will also have to inform the police department when visiting homes to serve civil writs. The appointment of this position gives the town more discretion if ever an issue with the individual in the position.

Mr. Thoren asked how the removal per cause would occur. Mr. Spinney said the police department would work with the Town Manager to ensure due process for the individual.

Mr. Burke questioned the need for law enforcement knowledge. Chief Spinney said he is more concerned with character and this person as an individual.

Mr. Bruce questioned the power and authority of constables in other towns besides Chelmsford. All constables have the ability to carry their power into other towns across the state however it is a rare occurrence in which they need to.

Mrs. Pichette asked about the roles of the deputy with the constable. Going forward, Chief Spinney hopes to work together more with the Constable and the police department.

Gerald Hardy, Chair of the Cemetery Commission, came forward with members Valerie Pearson, David Boyle, and Thomas St. Germain, to discuss the Town Managers proposal to incorporate the Cemetery Commission into the Department of Public Works. The Cemetery Commission has three full time employees and two part time employees. The employees are efficient, experienced, skilled, and timely. All of those things are not always found when people are pulled between departments. There is cooperation between the DPW and the Cemetery Commission however they are best kept separate. By keeping them separate, they are also protecting the perpetual care fund.

Approval of December 13, 2016 Minutes-

Motion to approve as amended by Mr. Thoren, seconded by Mr. Bruce, vote: 7 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstentions (2 absences)

Updates- Mr. Chase contacted the Mass Municipal Association in regards to the finance committee appointment or election. They wished to not get involved as it was a local matter.

Review of existing Charter-

3-8: The general consensus of the committee was that the Cemetery Commission is working well and there seems to be no reason to change the Cemetery Commission, financial or otherwise.

The Committee recommends no change at this time.

3-6: Previously tabled, the Committee is still waiting to hear from the Board of Health.

3-10: The Committee recommended changing the position of Constable to appointed rather than elected. The section is subject to change in wording and position.

By appointing the Constable, the committee felt that quality of service would be kept up, the position would be safer, and provide another level of vetting. There was discussion about how the individual would be appointed. Most likely, the Town Manager would appoint an individual who would then be approved by the Board of Selectmen. The appointment may also be similar to the animal control officer. There was a discussion about where the Constable should be included in the charter.

3-11: Overall the Committee was pleased with the Housing Authority as written in the Charter.

3-11a) No change was recommended. There was a brief discussion regarding the number of members.

3-11b) No change was recommended as this is dictated by state law.

3-12: Mr. Chase will invite the Town Clerk to weigh in on this section.

Adjournment- motion made by Mrs. Pichette, seconded by Mr. Thoren, vote: 7 yea; 0; nay; 0 abstentions (1 absence).