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Minutes of the Charter Review Committee (CRC) meeting on 4/11/2017

Attendance:

Present:

Doug Bruce

Dan Burke

Sam Chase

Valerie Diggs

David McLachlan

Sheila Pichette

Glenn Thoren arrived at 7:15

Michael McCall arrived at 7:06

Call to order- 7:01

Approval of March 28, 2017 minutes:

Motion to approve as amended made by Mr. Bruce, seconded by Mrs. Diggs, vote: 6 yeas; 0 nays; 2 absent

Updates:

Mr. Chase got information regarding sections 4.1 and 4.7 from the Massachusetts Municipal Association. The MMA said that in larger towns with a strong town manager, a supermajority vote to appoint and remove the town manager is common. Many towns specify three-fifths vote for hiring and removal and this is common for non-charter towns and those having a "weak" manager structure.

Mr. McCall clarified a question from a previous meeting about the role of the personnel board. The personnel board carries out policy made by the Selectmen and other authority, especially as it relates to the administration for policy making for other post-employment benefits.

Open Session/Public Input:

Glenn Diggs, as a member of the Board of Selectmen, came to give a brief update on how the Board of Selectmen is devoting time to discuss any suggestions for charter changes before they meet on the 8th.

Review of the existing charter:

Mr. Mclachlan addressed the the question from a previous meeting about timing and specified deadlines for the budget process and the difficulties in meeting those deadlines. He hoped that the question could be solved through a possible change in the charter.

Mrs. Pichette wanted to clarify the difference between the budget voted on in April in comparison to the budget voted on in October, be it in the charter or through other means. The committee discussed the need for clarification of the budgets and the possible need for a definitions section.

Section 6-2: The committee discussed the wording and what it meant. They also discussed the timeframe for the budget and how realistic it is to be voted on when it is as well as the possibility of moving the budget timeframe. The committee agreed that they need to talk to the Town Manager about the questions they have and what his opinion is on a possible change to the budget preparation timeframe.

Section 6-3: The committee discussed the role of the Financial Committee in the budget process and the wording of this section. They changed the wording so that it clarified how the budget process works and the Financial Committee's role in the process.

Mr. Bruce felt that sections 6-1, 6-2, and 6-3 could benefit from a complete rewrite depending on the discussions with the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

Section 6-4: The committee discussed the timeframe of five years and felt it was an appropriate length of time. No changes were recommended.

Section 6-5: Mr. McCall is going to seek clarification on the warrant signing process and the parties involved. The committee also discussed the Capital Planning Committee and how it works with the Board of Selectmen as well as the Board of Selectmen's powers in regards to the Capital Project warrants.

Section 6-6: No changes were recommended for this section.

Section 6-7: Mr. Burke suggested changing the charter so that there is a new auditor every fourth year, Mr. McCall suggested making it a bylaw change instead.

Section 7-1: No changes were recommended.

Section 7-2: No changes were recommended.

Section 7-3: No changes were recommended although the wording was discussed.

Section 7-4: No changes were recommended however each member is going to find any words that they feel need to be defined.

Section 8-1: There was discussion about whether this section was needed but no change was made to the section.

Section 8-2: There was discussion about wording in the section. Mr. Chase would like to ask Town Counsel about how necessary the sections in section 8 are.

Section 8-3: No changes were recommended.

Section 8-4: No changes were recommended.

Section 8-5: No changes were recommended.

The committee finished their preliminary pass through of the charter.

Adjournment: motion to adjourn made by Mrs. Pichette, seconded by Mrs Diggs, vote : 8 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions