

Approved 8/8/2017

Minutes of the Charter Review Committee (CRC) meeting on 6/20/2017

Attendance:

Present:

Doug Bruce

Dan Burke

Sam Chase

Sheila Pichette

Michael McCall

Glenn Thoren

Valerie Diggs

David McLachlan

Approval of the May 23, 2017 minutes- motion made by Mr. Burke, seconded by Mr. McCall, vote: 8 yeas; 0 nays; 0 abstentions

Approval of the June 9, 2017 minutes- there was a general feeling through the committee that they needed more time to review the minutes and they will be voted on at the next meeting.

Meeting schedule- July meetings will now be held on July 18th. August meetings will remain on the 8th and 22nd.

In regards to the discussion about sections 4-1 and 4-7, Mrs Diggs feels that section 4-1 should not be changed but is in favor of a two-to-three vote to remove the Town Manager as well as to suspend the Town Manager.

Charter Review Continued-

No vote is required for sections that do not have any changes.

Per request of Mr. Burke, the names of committee members who are in the minority while voting will be included in the minutes.

Section 1-1: no change

Section 1-2: The committee discussed changing the wording of this section to put Chelmsford Home Rule Charter in quotes. Vote: 8 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions

Section 1-3: no change

Section 1-4: no change

Section 1-5: no change

Section 1-6: no change

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Section 2-1: Although the vote was already taken, the committee decided to further discuss this section.

Mrs. Pichette was in favor of lessening the number of representatives at Town Meeting due to the lack of participation.

Mr. McLachlan disagreed and felt that an increase in the number of representatives was needed to help with participation.

Mrs. Pichette argued that if there aren't enough people stepping up with the current number of representatives then increasing the number of representatives would not help.

Mr. Bruce mentioned that by increasing the numbers, it would make more work for the Town Clerk. Also, by leaving the numbers as is it allows for a change in population and by adding a minimum number of write ins to be elected, the town avoids a voting block from running for Town Meeting representatives.

Mr. McLachlan agreed with Mr. Bruce's points.

Mr. Burke originally was in favor of reducing the number of representatives but now supports increasing the number of representatives.

Mr. Thoren felt that there is nothing wrong with the current system that can be fixed by changing the number of representatives.

Mr. Chase asked the members to state what type of change they were in favor of regarding this section. Mrs. Pichette was in favor of decreasing the number of meeting representatives, Mr. Thoren was in favor of no change, Mr. Bruce was in favor of no change, Mr. McLachlan was in favor of an increase, Mr. Burke was in favor of an increase, Mrs. Diggs was in favor of no change, and Mr. Chase was in favor of no change.

Mr. Chase liked the idea of an open town meeting but seeing as that is not a change most people are in favor of, he recommended no change to the number of meeting representatives because he feels it is a small change and will not make much of an impact.

Motion made by Mr. Thoren to keep the same number of Town Meeting Representatives, seconded by Mr. McCall. Vote: 7 yeas, 1 nay (Mr. McLachlan), 0 abstentions.

Section 2-2: No change

Section 2-3: The committee came to a consensus that section 2-3 b) referenced the nomination process for first time Town Meeting candidates. The committee discussed requiring incumbents to get signatures when running for reelection but believed it was in violation of State Law. They voted to include a new section, Section 2-3 c) which referenced State law chapter 53 section ten, not requiring incumbents to get signatures to be nominated. Motion to add section 2-3 c) made by Mr. McCall, seconded by Mr. Thoren, vote: 8 yeas; 0 nays; 0 abstentions

Section 2-4: Mr. McLachlan recommended creating a third paragraph referencing a minimum write-ins requirement for town meeting representative. Mr. Chase mentioned that having a requirement of at

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least 5 write-ins is consistent with the state primary election process and would ensure more trustworthy elections. Mr. Thoren argued that having a minimum requirement for write-ins nullifies any votes for someone who did not meet the minimum. Mr. Chase recommended removing the second sentence of Section 2-5 d). Mr. Thoren made a motion to remove the second sentence of section 2-5 d), seconded by Mrs. Pichette. Vote: 8 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.

Section 2-5:

a) Language was changed to clarify the resignation process.

b) Language was changed for clarification.

c) The committee discussed if it were possible for them to help the attendance issue at Town Meeting. There was no change made to this section.

Motion to change the language in sections A and B made by Mr. McLachlan, seconded by Mrs. Diggs. Vote: 8 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.

Section 2-6: no change

Section 2-7: no change

Section 2-8: No change

Section 2-9: No change

Section 2-10: No change

Section 2-11: No change, however the committee will write an advisory to the Board of Selectmen to order warrants to prevent attendance loss.

Section 2-12:

a) The committee discussed the possibility of establishing a caucus procedure or seating by precinct at Town Meeting but agreed it would be logistical nightmare. The agreed to make an advisory for materials to be mailed to Town Meeting representatives and for a Town Meeting website to be created with links to materials.

b) No change

c) Wording change and the committee will make advisories.

Motion to change these sections made by Mr. Thoren, seconded by Mr. Bruce. Vote: 8 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.

d) The last part of the last phrase was struck as well as the editors note because the law was repealed. Town Counsel said to leave the stricken part so this section may change again.

Motion to change this section made by Mr. McLachlan, seconded by Mrs. Diggs. Vote: 8 yeas; 0 nays; 0 abstentions.

Section 2-13: No change

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Adjournment: Motion to adjourn made by Mr. McLachlan, seconded by Mr. Thoren, vote: 8 yeas; 0 nays;  
0 abstentions