

9/20/2017 Charter Review Committee (CRC) Meeting Minutes

Location: Room 204, Town Hall
Present: S. Pichette, D. McLachlan, D. Bruce, M. McCall, S. Chase, V. Diggs, D. Burke
Absent: G. Thoren
Meeting called to order: 7:03 PM

No Media present.

Open Session/Public Input: None

Approval of Minutes: 8/8/2017: Motion to approve by S. Pichette, Second by D. Burke, no discussion, Vote 6 for, 0 opposed, 1 abstention (M. McCall). 8/22/2017: Motion to approve by D. McLachlan, second by V. Diggs, no discussion. Vote 7 for, 0 opposed.

Updates: M. McCall drafted CRC warrant articles, and the Board of Selectmen will be voting recommendations at its 9/25/2017 meeting. M. McCall will be at the meeting in his capacity as Assistant Town Manager. D. Bruce and S. Chase plan to attend as well. At town meeting, S. Chase will make a very short introductory presentation, and M. McCall will present the articles for consideration.

General: S. Chase said that this meeting will be the last for CRC, and thanked everyone for their contributions. Every member contributed substantively, and we worked well together. M. McCall recognized V. Diggs for her work in documenting running recommended changes via PPT slides; this substantially reduced the amount of time it took to prepare the August 21, 2017 PPT presentation to the Selectmen. S. Chase estimated that V. Digg's efforts saved at least 30 hours of preparation and formatting time for the 8/21 presentation and the Final Report.

S. Chase invited committee members to comment on the Report generally, and to recommend specific changes they would like made before the report is sent to the Selectmen. The Selectmen have indicated a preference for receiving the report electronically vs. hard copy, and we would like to get this to them in time for it to be included in their 9/25/2017 meeting packet (submitted no later than 9/21/2017 noon).

S. Pichette asked members what they think is the most controversial recommendation?
Answer: Changing the Constable from elected to appointed by the Town Manager. M. McCall said that the Police Chief will participate in presenting that article, and hopefully that will be persuasive.

Comments on the Draft Report: Page 7, Section 4-2. Advisory: V. Diggs questioned the use of "subject to" in the last sentence. V. Diggs feels that this needs to be stronger, and suggested changing the language to indicate that the Chief would "directly supervise" the Constable's activity. General Committee sense is that this is a distinction without a difference; supervision is supervision. No change.

Page 8, Section 2-1. V. Diggs would like a modification to the first sentence to indicate that there is no definitive information that there is little sentiment for changing town meeting structure. "There is little sentiment..." is not a factual statement, and we should not be so definitive without evidence. The Committee agreed to change the first sentence to read, "During its review, the CRC neither heard nor found any sentiment for changing..."

Page 11, Section 3-2. V. Diggs questioned the use of the word "participate" in the last sentence, subsection (b). V. Diggs feels that "participate" implies that a Selectmen would actively contribute to a negotiating session. V. Diggs asked if M. McCall ever checked with Counsel concerning limitations on who can attend and/or participate in a negotiation session. Answer: M. McCall did not check with Counsel. General sense of the Committee is that the meaning of "participate" can range from mere attendance to full-blown contributive discussion. S. Chase explained that this portion of the report is essentially a "running narrative" of Committee discussion and the comments will not always be exactly reflected in the final report recommendations or Advisories. The suggestion is to change "participate" to "attend and/or participate." Committee agreed that either alternative is acceptable.

Page 32, Appendix A: V. Diggs said that before seeing this section, she had been under the impression that the percentages for removal votes were the reverse of what is shown; that is, that 37% of the towns had a 3/5 removal requirement and 63% had a 4/5 requirement. S. Chase confirmed that that percentages shown are correct; the majority of towns require a 3/5 vote for removal (63%), while 37% require a 4/5 vote. S. Chase said that the MMA advised that the "strong manager" towns with the newer charters tended to go with the 4/5 vote, while the "older charter" towns and those with "weaker" administrators tended to favor the 3/5 vote. V. Diggs asked whether or not the MMA was invited to attend a CRC meeting? S. Chase said that the MMA representative indicated that they did not want to participate in any discussion that might have political overtones and indicated that they would rather not attend. D. Bruce confirmed S. Chase's recollection.

Committee Action:

Motion by D. McLachlan, second by S. Pichette to approve the Report as amended and send to the Board of Selectmen. Vote 7 for, 0 opposed.

Motion by D. McLachlan to adjourn; the Committee having completed its work, no further meetings will be scheduled. CRC appointments will expire on 12/31/2017. Second by D. Burke. Vote 7 for, 0 opposed.

Meeting adjourned, 7:46PM.

Submitted, S. Chase 9/21/2017