



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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Ted Graziani
Chairman

Tom Palshaw
Vice Chairman

Bill Correia
Keith Durao
Jim Prichard
John Ridzon
Heather Stavens

Charter Revision Commission

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

June 20, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Correia, Keith Durao, Ted Graziani, Tom Palshaw and Jim Prichard

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Ridzon and Heather Stavens

OTHERS PRESENT: Lori Spielman, First Selectman; John Turner, Robert Ludwig, Joe Wehr

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Graziani called to order the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) Regular Meeting at 6:32 p.m. in the Town Hall Meeting Hall, 55 Main Street, Ellington, CT.

II. CITIZENS' FORUM [Non-agenda items]:

Lori Spielman noted that news media outlets have recently reported that the Fire Department in the Town of Morris voted to cease providing fire, rescue and EMS services to the Town after 75 years of service. The reports cite poor working relationships with the Fire Department and the Town over budget accountability.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. May 16, 2018 Joint Special Meeting Minutes

MOVED (PALSHAW), SECONDED (PRICHARD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN JOINT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 16, 2018 AS WRITTEN.

B. May 16, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes

MOVED (PALSHAW), SECONDED (PRICHARD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 16, 2018 AS WRITTEN.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Discussion regarding proposed changes to:

1. Section 910 – Department of Public Works and new section for the Hall Memorial Library Board of Trustees

This item was tabled as the Chair of the Library Board of Trustees and the Director of Public Works were unable to attend this meeting.

2. Section 923 – Director of Fire & Emergency Medical Services

Lori Spielman stated that she recently met with Jack Rich II, the new Ellington Volunteer Fire Department (EVFD) Chief and Brendan Burke, the new Assistant Chief, to review the proposed Director of Fire & Emergency Medical Services position which would essentially have one person responsible for the three emergency services agencies. She also met separately with Peter Hany, Sr., the newly re-elected Ellington Volunteer Ambulance Corps (EVAC) Chief and noted that both agencies want to work with the Town regarding the establishment of the Director position and are open to change. Ms. Spielman will also be meeting with the Crystal Lake Fire Department Chief to accomplish the same. Ms. Spielman noted that there is a proposal to conduct a Fire-Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Study and stated that it is essential that the recommendations of that study be implemented which will be accomplished if there is continuity with leadership. In addition, Ms. Spielman pointed out that there are paid staff at EVAC and she anticipated that the Fire Departments will be hiring paid staff in the future, and such personnel need to be supervised by a Town employee.

John Turner, 29 Fairview Avenue, stated that the guest speakers at the last two CRC meetings gave convincing reasons why it makes sense to hire a Director of Fire & Emergency Medical Services. He noted that it is not a matter of if it happens but when it happens. He noted that the most important issue of this CRC is to present to the voters the proposal to change Section 923 – Emergency Services which will give the Town flexibility in determining who will provide emergency services to the Town. Mr. Turner suggested letting the Board of Selectmen work on implementing the Director of Fire & Emergency Services position, fully vet the development of the job specifications and present it as a whole package by the next budget cycle.

Robert Ludwig, 66 Crystal Lake Road, came forward. He noted that he is a member of the Crystal Lake Fire Department but was not speaking on their behalf tonight. He stated that he has no concerns with the proposal to add a Director for Fire & Emergency Services position but was disappointed on how it was presented. He would like to see all three agencies work together on this proposal.

Joe Wehr, 155 Windermere Avenue, stated that the input of all three entities is needed and suggested that the CRC invite them to come to a meeting. Mr. Correia stated that all three agencies were invited and able to voice their opinions on a number of occasions. Ms. Spielman noted that with the new EVFD Chief they need to start again.

Mr. Turner noted that the Town is preparing an RFP to study the emergency services in Town, which may include a recommendation that the Town consider adding the Director position. He noted that now the emergency services agencies meet periodically and make recommendations regarding the incentive program and insurance issues but feels it is essential to have one person in charge and accountable to the Town.

3. Section 1011 – Purchasing/Competitive Bidding

This item was tabled pending action at the June 25, 2018 Town Meeting re: Revisions to the Competitive Bidding Ordinance.

4. Section 605 – Power to Overrule Town Meeting Action

The CRC members briefly discussed the motion proposed by Mr. Palshaw at the last meeting to revise the language regarding the percentage requirement needed to overrule action taken at a Town Meeting from 15% to 10% with a simple majority. Mr. Graziani recommended tabling this item until all CRC members are in attendance. By consensus, this item was tabled.

5. Section 302 – Election & Terms of Office: Staggered terms for proposed 4-year terms for Board of Selectmen

Mr. Duraó suggested the terms of the Board of Selectmen be staggered similar to the other elected board members and to develop language to explain the transition. Mr. Prichard stated that he was not in favor of the proposed 4-year terms for the First Selectman or the Board of Selectmen, noting 2-year terms provide a recall mechanism which allows the voters to voice their dissatisfaction if the elected official is not performing.

Mr. Correia suggested that this item be voted on by the full board. This item was tabled.

6. Section 1211 – Effective Date: re: terms of office for First Selectman and Board of Selectmen

Marie Sauvé stated that Section 1211 is the place for the CRC to draft language to determine how the four-year terms of the First Selectman/Board of Selectmen will transition, if the CRC decided to move forward with the proposal to change such terms. It was noted that the CRC will recommend an effective date to the Board of Selectmen but it will not be a ballot question.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Consider Other Changes to the Town Charter

No new proposals were received.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (PRICHARD), SECONDED (PALSHAW) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION AT 7:53 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Marie Sauve
Recording Secretary