

**TOWN OF HADDAM
 CHARTER REVISION COMMITTEE
 SPECIAL MEETING
 ANNEX BUILDING
 11 JAIL HILL ROAD, HADDAM, CT 06438
 MONDAY, 1 AUGUST 2016
 UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

ATTENDANCE

X	Michael Battistoni, Assistant Secretary
X	Thomas Berchulski
X	William Bowles
X	Audrey Brookes, Secretary
X	John Fernandes, Vice Chairman
A	Harlan Fredericksen
A	Amy Jacques-Purdy
X	Wayne Rutty, Chairman
X	Lizz Milardo, First Selectman (left at 6:55 p.m.; returned 7:10 p.m.)
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

Recording Clerk’s Note: This meeting was rescheduled from Monday, 18 July 2016.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Rutty, chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Guest Speaker – Matthew Hart, Town Manager, Mansfield, CT

Mr. Hart distributed an outline on the council/manager form of government (copy available in the Town Clerk’s Office with these minutes). Mr. Hart reported he’s the town manager for the Town of Mansfield which includes UConn and Storrs - a community of 45 square miles and 26,000 residents including students on campus (year round population 12,000), and a budget of approximately \$49 million including the town’s contribution to the regional school district and 155 full time equivalent staff.

Mr. Hart reported he has been invited to various Charter Revision Commissions around the state to discuss the position of town manager and the choice of government is a local decision – whatever is the best choice for the town/community. Mr. Hart stated there are three main types of local government in Connecticut – 1) selectmen/town meeting (105-110 towns out of 169 towns within the state have this form of government; 2) council/manager or some sort of hybrid (30-35 towns); and 3) mayor/council (balance of towns). Mr. Hart explained that Mansfield has had the council/manager form since 1974 and most of the council/manager communities are in the Greater Hartford region.

Mr. Battistoni asked what precipitated the decision in Mansfield to make the change. Mr. Hart stated from his research it was just part of a good government movement in the town and, by and large, has worked

out rather well – three managers since 1974. Mr. Hart stated he started as the assistant manager and has been with the community going on 17 years; has been in the field for 20 years; and before that worked in the private sector in the family business, served in the military, and attended college.

Mr. Fernandes asked the size of the town in 1974. Mr. Hart stated he would estimate 12,000-13,000 including students. Mr. Hart stated the community has nearly doubled in size in the 42 year time span and that growth has primarily taken place on campus not off campus (a lot of changes over last 20 years).

Mr. Hart explained how the council/manager system works. Council serves as the legislative body for the town and they hire a professional manager to oversee the day to day operations. Mr. Hart noted the majority of managers are unaffiliated. Mr. Bowles asked the average length of term of a manager. Mr. Hart stated nationwide seven to eight years and in Connecticut there is longevity (a number of managers with 20 years or more). Mr. Bowles stated he meant by contract. Mr. Hart stated a typical contract is three years (he's working on his third contract). Mr. Hart explained that a council would set the policies that the staff would follow, approve the budget, and adopt all the ordinances – things that would be done by a town meeting. Mr. Battistoni asked if the town would vote on fewer things. Mr. Hart stated yes, there would only be a town meeting for a budget or if an ordinance is petitioned to town meeting.

Mr. Hart explained his duties – prepare the budget in March, reviewed by council in April, make their changes, and present the budget during the town meeting in May. A Board of Finance is not used. Mr. Bowles asked how many sit on the council with Mr. Hart responding nine with a finance committee of three members. Mr. Hart noted the Town of Avon, also council/manager, does have a Board of Finance. Mr. Bowles asked if the residents can petition for referendum on anything. Mr. Hart stated only ordinances and the budget can be petition for referendum; and in regard to the budget, what is adopted at the town meeting can be petitioned for only one referendum (per Mansfield's Charter). Mr. Hart stated if the budget adopted at town meeting is defeated at referendum, the Council sets the budget and it's done. Mr. Hart stated the Town of Coventry, also council/manager, have an automatic referendum on the budget which can go on and on. Mr. Hart noted in large communities with council/managers, the council sets the budget with no town meeting. Mr. Hart further explained other staff members are part of the civil service – department heads report directly to the manager and other staff report to the department heads.

Mr. Battistoni asked if the council members are elected. Mr. Hart stated yes, and in Connecticut there are seven to nine on a council, some have eleven, and all serve a two year term together. Mrs. Milardo asked how often a council meets. Mr. Hart stated two regular meetings a month with committee meetings in between, special meetings as needed, and typically two regular meetings are canceled one around the holidays and one in August. Mr. Battistoni asked if political parties typically run nine candidates. Mr. Hart stated no, they can only run six because of the majority party limitation. Mr. Hart stated in Mansfield after the election, the council appoints one of the council members as mayor. Mr. Hart also stated some council/manager systems will have a separately elected mayor such as Windham and Newington, but voiced caution with this type of system as it can cause confusion as to who really is the chief executive officer.

Mrs. Milardo asked Mr. Hart who works in his office. Mr. Hart stated he negotiates all the contracts with the unions, but he does have an assistant manager, an executive assistant, and a part-time Human Resource person. Mrs. Milardo asked about the finance department. Mr. Hart stated they share services with the two Boards of Education (seven people including the director).

Mr. Hart explained that the council mayor's/chairman's duties are set out by the Charter; and although a ceremonial position, it is important as this individual runs the meetings and represent the town at official functions. Mr. Hart stated the council mayor/chairman is the official representative and the town manager is the alternate (noted that he attends most of the meetings). Mr. Hart also stated the council mayor, per Charter, sets the council agenda with the town manager and any council member can request agenda items.

Mr. Battistoni asked who would have the closest relationship with legislative officials the council mayor or the town manager. Mr. Hart stated usually the manager on matters of substance; however, a manager is not affiliated by party; therefore, the mayor would have the party connections.

Mr. Battistoni asked if the council chairman is a volunteer. Mr. Hart stated yes, there is no compensation and it can require a lot of time. Mr. Hart stated he interfaces regularly with the three state representatives and the state agencies; however, the mayor has the political connections that he does not have.

Mr. Hart explained his role as a town manager - hired based on qualifications, serves at the will of the council, has a three year contract, and the council can vote to let him go (have negotiated various severance provisions within the contract should he be let go - this is typical). Mr. Battistoni asked what he could be let go for. Mr. Hart stated it does not have to be for cause and explained a couple of scenarios. Mr. Battistoni asked how a council would remove a town manager that is not doing what a council and/or town residents want noting several towns currently having difficulty with their town managers. Mr. Hart stated he doesn't know what the policies are of those towns. Mr. Hart noted that he does have an annual performance evaluation every year with set goals (three month process to complete review and all council members take part in the review). Mr. Bowles asked if the manager's contract is public record with Mr. Hart responding yes. Mr. Hart offered to send copy of contract to Mr. Bowles (to be sent to Mrs. Milardo).

Mr. Hart stated the town manager is responsible for implementing the council's policy and his duties include: 1) serving as the Chief Executive Officer or Chief Administrative Officer, 2) oversee the work of the various municipal departments, 3) all department heads report to him (meets with them as a whole team on a monthly basis, individually on a regular basis, and meets with them informally all the time). Since the town is small, Mr. Hart's duties also include Human Resource Director, but in a larger community, there may be a separate director. Mr. Hart stated he's responsible for preparing the budget as well as an annual and five year capital improvement program. Mr. Hart stated he's very proud of Mansfield's capital improvement program noting that over five to six years the town now has a pay as you go program for all routine capital needs such as a fire truck, dump truck, smaller repairs to buildings are all done on a cash basis (may take a few years to set aside money to make the purchase so as not to have to issue debt).

Mr. Bowles asked if individual departments have input into the capital program. Mr. Hart stated yes, as well as in the budget process (department heads prepare proposed budget that is presented to him in early January allowing him two months to review and assembly into his budget).

Mr. Hart stated fiscal and accounting responsibilities are an important part of the position; and explained a situation that took place in Mansfield. Mr. Hart stated annual audits as well as an occasional forensic audit are important.

Mr. Hart continued to review his responsibilities – implementation of programs, policies, and initiatives, coordination of service delivery, and performance management.

Mr. Hart reviewed typical manager's training and qualifications – educational requirements, 5-10 years progressively responsible experience, professional development, International City/County Management Association (ICMA) credentialed manager, and traditional and other career tracks. Mr. Hart stated there aren't as many people going into the profession as there once were and the ICMA is trying to recruit more people from graduate school into the profession. Mr. Battistoni asked if it's due to money. Mr. Hart stated in roads are being made with millennials, but they may not have the experience a town is looking for, compensation may be part of it as well as the economy.

Mr. Hart stated the benefits of having a council/manager form of government depends on the community and the complexity of the community. Some of benefits include: 1) frees elected officials to focus on policy making/community issues while the manager focuses on the day to day responsibilities; 2) offers flexibility to go in new directions while providing continuity during transitions; 3) encourages open communication between citizens and government; 4) diffuses power of special interests; 5) eliminates partisan politics; 6) encourages development/retention of talented municipal employees; and 7) fosters professional ethics.

Mr. Hart briefly reviewed the new Storrs Center, new downtown development near the campus, and the formation of a public/private partnership to help get this project completed. The development is a mixed

use project – residential/commercial/retail – a number of restaurants, 600 units of apartments – and has increased the tax base by close to 10 percent. Mr. Bowles asked if municipal infrastructure was already in place. Mr. Hart stated infrastructure had to be built – town responsibility – parking garage, streetscape enhancements, water, and sewer. The town's contribution \$30 million (\$26 million in federal and state grants and one \$3 million tax abatement; not a dime of debt). The net taxes are approximately \$1.3 million a year and when the tax abatement goes away (after seven years) will be looking at a net, after costs, of approximately \$2 million a year.

Mr. Bowles asked if the town clerk, tax collector, town planner, and tax assessor would be hired by the town manager. Mr. Hart stated yes, but there are some elected positions such as board/commission members. Discussion followed in regard to these positions (hired) having for cause protection (personnel policy; approved by personnel committee).

Mrs. Milardo asked if union employees have an annual performance review. Mr. Hart stated yes, as well as the setting of annual goals.

In terms of not supporting a political party, Mr. Battistoni asked if it's important for a town manager to not live within the town he or she works for. Mr. Hart stated no, and that they are usually required to live within the community. Mr. Hart also stated a manager can vote, but cannot publicly display support for a political party.

Mr. Hart stated the value of a professional manager is that they are: 1) knowledgeable about the business of government; 2) share and apply skills gained; 3) access to information about latest trends/best practices; 4) devote time/skills to tackle a problem or opportunity; 5) assist elected body; 6) recommend cost saving ideas/productivity improvements; 7) provide administrative/fiscal accountability; and 8) develop corps of professional staff.

Mr. Hart discussed how Mansfield shares the following services with the Boards of Education – financial management, information technology, and facility services, and same employee benefits pool. Mr. Hart noted the benefit of developing long standing working relationships. Mrs. Milardo asked how long the shared services have been taking place. Mr. Hart stated the mid-70s.

Mrs. Milardo asked if Mansfield's Park and Recreation and Public Health/Social Service are covered under the town. Mr. Hart stated yes, the Park and Recreation is under the town; and although human services is under the town, the town is part of a ten town health district.

Mr. Hart noted that the council/town manager form of government is used by 34 communities within Connecticut as well as a number of large cities throughout the United States.

Mr. Battistoni asked Mr. Hart if he had ever seen a hybrid where the town retains the selectmen but has a town administrator that consolidates several other positions. Mr. Hart suggested looking at the Towns of Columbia and Hebron.

Mr. Hart reported on some of the criticisms he's heard: 1) How can a town manager be held accountable if he or she is not elected. Accountability is through the council and the contract as well as the ICMA Code of Ethics. 2) Average salary. In Connecticut there's a range – in larger communities the average is \$150,000.

Mr. Battistoni asked Mr. Hart to walk the Committee through a transition period. Mr. Hart stated the Committee would need to get it on the ballot, need to make sure there's sufficient transition time, and sometimes a town will hire an interim manager to work with the first selectman until the new council is in place.

Discussion followed in regard to emergency services – state police/campus police, fire – combination career/volunteer personnel, ambulance (fire department covers with paramedic service out of Windham Hospital).

In regard to water/sewer, Mrs. Milardo asked Mr. Hart if Mansfield had previously been well and septic. Mr. Hart stated the majority of the town is still well and septic with the university area and the intersection of Routes 195 and 44 to be served by water/sewer. Mr. Hart noted Mansfield did not have to issue debt as they were able to negotiate and there was no need to go to a town meeting (approved through the council).

Mr. Fernandes asked the median income in Mansfield. Mr. Hart stated due to the student population, the income level is quite low, but a more appropriate benchmark is median family income which is mid to high 60's. Mrs. Milardo asked about the mil rate with Mr. Hart responding 29.87, no tax increase this year or the year prior 60 percent of homeowners saw a tax decrease. Mrs. Milardo asked the date of the reevaluation. Mr. Hart stated 2014 and there was a shift from residential to commercial.

Mr. Battistoni asked how the town planner interfaces between the town manager and the council. Mr. Hart stated department heads attend council meetings when they have items on the agenda.

Mr. Bowles asked how public comment is integrated into council meetings. Mr. Hart stated public comment is placed toward the beginning of the agenda.

Mr. Battistoni stated he doesn't feel comfortable potentially changing the town's form of government based on what the Committee was charged with and that this topic should be a more engaged process (a separate committee). Mrs. Milardo stated the Charter had to be revised, but there is nothing saying another committee couldn't be formed. Mr. Hart suggested the Committee provide recommendations when submitting their revisions to the Charter and that the Committee speak to the Town of Windham as they are currently going through the process.

The Committee thanked Mr. Hart for his time and expertise on this matter.

The Committee took a two minutes recess at approximately 8:02 p.m. and resumed at approximately 8:04 p.m.

4. Review Minutes – 20 June 2016

Tabled.

5. General Discussion

Mr. Fernandes asked Mrs. Milardo how many full time town employees there are. Mrs. Milardo stated approximately 50. Mr. Bowles stated Haddam has differences from Mansfield and briefly discussed the Park and Recreation Authority. Mrs. Milardo stated she selected a group of individuals who would look at the Charter and do what is best for the town. Mr. Bowles stated perhaps the Committee should just look at cleaning up the document after Mr. Fredericksen makes his presentation on the Board of Finance recommendations.

Mrs. Milardo stated the state is looking to make changes in regard to the Council of Governments (COG) by creating four COGs which would place Haddam and Middletown in both the Hartford and New Haven COGs.

A brief discussion followed in regard to capital planning, updating the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), and water in Tylerville.

Mr. Ruddy stated he feels the Committee should continue to proceed as originally directed and make the recommendation that another committee be formed to look at the town manager's position only.

Discussion followed in regard to hiring people with the appropriate qualifications whether or not they're Haddam residents; contracted services; keeping business in town; and not letting history/traditions handi-

capping the process. Mrs. Milardo asked that any questions that may go to Mr. Hart be cc'd to all Committee members.

Mrs. Brookes asked Mrs. Milardo, as first selectman, if she felt things are working the way they are now or should there be a change. Mrs. Milardo stated she feels the town is in a good position; however, you never know who will be first selectman. Mrs. Milardo also stated it may be time to start to look at doing some things differently.

6. Adjournment

MOTION: Bill Bowles moved to adjourn. Audrey Brookes second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 15 August 2016.