

Public Hearing – Charter Revision Commission – April 27, 2016

Wayne Rutty, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. at the Station #1 firehouse.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The call of the meeting was read.

Rutty explained this committee was put together to gather information and submit a draft to the Town Clerk and the Board of Selectmen within 16 months from the time the committee was appointed, which was Feb. 2, 2016. Tonight's meeting is to give the public a chance to make any suggestions or changes to the committee. Rutty stated all department heads, commissions and boards have been asked to submit their suggestions.

Some suggestions from the public are listed below.

In Section 4.8 of the charter to change the number of selectmen from three to five. Also, two options were given as to how to pay for these positions; one to not pay the Selectmen, because the BOF and BOE do not get paid to serve or to pay them \$2,500 each. The Selectmen now receive \$5,117 each yearly.

Another suggestion is to have the committee start up a web page on the Town's website, strictly with the Charter Revision information (i.e. what are issues that need to be addressed, timeframe schedule, and suggestions) so that people don't need to come to the meetings to know what is happening.

Chairman Rutty stated one of the reasons this is being done is there is a State Statute that says towns must revisit their charters every 10 years and the last time it was revised was in 2002. Rutty read the timeframe schedules.

2016 Haddam Charter Revision Commission – Statutory Requirements – C.G.S. Chapter 99

1. A Charter Revision Commission ("Commission") can be appointed by the Board of Selectmen pursuant to a 2/3 majority vote of the Board of Selectmen to amend the Charter.
2. Within 30 days after the Board of Selectmen adopt such a resolution to amend the Charter, the Board of Selectmen shall adopt a resolution appointing the members of the Commission, consisting of not less than 5 or not more than 15 electors. No more than one-third of the Commission members may hold any public office in town, and not more than a bare majority shall be members of any one political party.
3. Commission's draft report is due no more than 16 months from the date of the Commissions' appointment.
4. Commission must hold at least two public hearings: a first one before any "substantive" work is done and the second prior to submission of the draft report to the Board of Selectmen.
5. The draft report is submitted by the Commission to the Haddam Town Clerk.
6. The Town Clerk transmits the draft report to the Board of Selectmen. The following consecutive time periods are then triggered from that date of transmittal:
 - Within 45 days: Board of Selectmen shall hold at least one public hearing, and it must conclude its last public hearing on the draft report within 45 days of submission of it to Town Clerk.
 - Within 14 days: After the last public hearing the Board of Selectmen shall make recommendations to the Commission for changes to the draft.
 - Within 30 days: Commission shall make its final report to the Board of Selectmen within 30 days of receipt of the recommended changes.

- Within 15 days: From receipt of the final report, the Board of Selectmen shall vote to approve the proposed charter.
- Within 45 days: If the Board of Selectmen rejects the proposed Charter, 10% of the electors may present a petition to the Board of Selectmen for a referendum on the proposed Charter.
- Within 30 days: Of approval by the Board of Selectmen, or certification of the petition, the proposed charter shall be published in full at least once in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality.
- Within 15 months: Of approval of the final report by the Board of Selectmen, the matter must be sent to referendum.

It was suggested to take the schedule and put the actual dates for the meetings on it.

A question was asked about why the Charter Revision Commission had their meeting at 6:30 tonight. Ruddy stated there was a challenge about the timing of the last agenda so they had the meeting to ratify the officers. The commission was thanked for their time and effort going forward and to read the freedom of information statutes.

Another suggestion was to put public input on their future agendas to give the public a chance to ask questions. Also to adjust the BOS and BOF schedules for the budget. It is pretty tight. It was suggested to eliminate the Treasurer's position because the town now has a Finance Director. To have the Town clerk and Tax Collector's positions be appointed and not elected. To have elected officials abide by the Personnel Policy. In some cases elected officials have used more vacation time than an employee has that has worked for the town for 25 years. Has there been any research done on a Charter Conformance Committee to make sure the charter is being abided by? A suggestion was to check into when an elected official resigns to fill that position until the next municipal election and not keep them on for the original position's full term. To change the charter when a person resigns from a board or commission, and is a democrat or republican to allow unaffiliated person to fill the position. The BOs should be a five member board to eliminate a rubber stamp. Something about the Code of Ethics should be in the charter.

The board thanked the public for their input and adjourned the meeting at 7:28 P.M.

Minutes taken by – Alice Zanelli