



Ellen O'Shaughnessy
Chairman

Mark Joyse
Vice Chairman

STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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ELLINGTON TOWN CLERK

John L. Daigle, Jr.
Bruce Fader
Robert Harvey
Dale Roberson
Michael Stupinski

Charter Revision Commission

MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 10, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: John L. Daigle, Jr., Bruce Fader, Mark Joyse (Vice Chairman), Ellen O'Shaughnessy (Chairman), Dale Roberson, Michael Stupinski

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Harvey

OTHERS PRESENT: Leo Miller, Selectman; Tom Palshaw

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman O'Shaughnessy called the meeting of the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Town Hall Meeting Hall, 55 Main Street, Ellington, Connecticut.

II. CITIZEN'S FORUM:

Mr. Palshaw informed the CRC that they need to be finished with their current phase by the end of April and not by their April meeting date. He suggested that the CRC has two extra weeks to work and he expressed a hope that charter revisions would be presented in the November 2016 election. He also found that the Town Manager is defined in State statute.

Mr. Miller asked the CRC to ensure that Town government meetings are videotaped and broadcast, particularly Board of Selectman meetings.

Mr. Miller asked the CRC to consider an automatic threshold for budget referendum if either the budget or mill rate increase were over a certain amount. This suggestion would refer budgets directly to referendum bypassing the Town Meeting if a certain threshold were met. Mr. Miller says that the advantage of the automatic threshold would be cost savings.

Mr. Miller suggested a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) approach to budgeting to the CRC.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. January 13, 2015

Mr. Daigle suggested corrections: on page five the sub-heading referencing "Section 910" of the Charter should be a reference to "Chapter 9"; on page six the second-to-last paragraph change the words "Mr. Daigle" to "It was".

MOVED (JOYSE), SECONDED (FADER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 13, 2016 CRC MEETING MINUTES AS CORRECTED.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Consider Changes to Town Charter

- Regarding Section 823: delete the Senior Center Endowment Fund Committee and replace it with a permanent Senior Center Advisory Board.

Mrs. O'Shaughnessy and Mr. Stupinski reported that they had met with Doris Crayton, Director of Human Services, regarding the Senior Center Endowment Fund Committee (SCEFC). Mr. Stupinski noted that the SCEFC no longer handled any funds except for some funding for a scholarship for students studying gerontology. He reported that the idea on the part of the Senior Center was for the remaining function of the SCEFC to be put into a new Senior Center Advisory Board (SCAB).

Mr. Fader was concerned that the SCAB would not be accountable to anyone. Mr. Stupinski said the SCAB would only be advisable. Mr. Fader countered that in that case the SCAB does not need to be so formally established.

The CRC discussed the benefits and drawbacks of recommending the creation of the SCAB. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy suggested it could serve as a legal entity to receive money left to the Senior Center. Mr. Fader suggested that the Town could create a temporary entity for that purpose.

Mr. Fader suggested eliminating the SCEFC without creating the SCAB.

The CRC decided to recommend the removal of the SCEFC from the Town Charter but did not agree to recommend a new SCAB.

MOVED (JOYSE), SECONDED (DAIGLE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO RECOMMEND THE REMOVAL OF CHARTER SECTION 823: SENIOR CENTER ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE IN THE CRC'S DRAFT REPORT TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN.

- Regarding Chapter 9: include wording in Section 901 adding the position of a Town Administrator (or Town Manager). Add a new section, numbered 924, after Section 923 delineating the duties of the new administrative officer.

The debate centered on the discussion of whether to recommend the hiring of a Town Manager or Town Administrator. The Chair stated that possible elimination of the Board of Finance would not be discussed at that time.

Mrs. O'Shaughnessy presented two documents (attached) created by the working group. One document argued in favor of hiring a Town Manager while the other document argued in favor of hiring a Town Administrator.

Mr. Roberson compared the Town Manager to the Superintendent of Schools and requested that any professional manager hired have at least a master's degree.

Mrs. O'Shaughnessy stated that towns have been most successful in transitioning to a professional manager were the towns that had supportive legislatures.

Mr. Fader spoke in favor of recommending the hiring of a Town Administrator. He described Ellington as a grassroots town that would not accept an unelected chief executive officer.

Mr. Daigle expressed a desire to recommend the hiring of a Town Manager noting that a Town Manager can take over a lot of the executive responsibilities.

Mr. Joyse stated that he would vote to recommend the hiring of a Town Manager. He said that the Town does not get as much benefit from a Town Administrator. He realized that the Town might not be ready for a Town Manager but he wanted to make the recommendation he thought to be right.

Mr. Fader asked if Mr. Joyse saw a difference in the competency between a Town Manager and a Town Administrator. Mr. Joyse responded that the quality of candidates is higher for Town Manager candidates.

Mr. Fader asked what a Town Manager does to add to the quality of municipal government. Mr. Joyse responded that Town Managers have more contacts, more experience, and make better business decisions.

Mrs. O'Shaughnessy suggested that the Town Administrator model creates an ambiguity amongst the municipal staff unless lines of authority are very clearly demarcated. She added that the town needs a chief executive that can be unencumbered by elections – she reminded the CRC that the Town Manager can always be removed by the elected Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Fader contended that the some of the things the Town Manager can do are already competently performed by the First Selectman.

Mr. Stupinski stated that he was very impressed with Town Managers and less impressed with Town Administrators. He stated a preference for recommending the hiring of a Town Manager.

Mr. Roberson believed that a Town Administrator was much more marketable to the Town. He stated a strong personal preference for recommending the hiring of a Town Administrator. He went further saying that he did not believe the Board of Selectmen would approve the Town Manager concept. He also compared the Town Manager to a strong Superintendent of Schools and expressed worry that the Board of Selectmen would become a rubber-stamp board for the Town Manager.

Mr. Joyse stated that the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen are made up of strong personalities and dismissed the concern that the boards would become a rubber-stamp for a Town Manager.

Mrs. O'Shaughnessy decided to abstain from voting for the recommendation of a Town Manager or a Town Administrator. The Chair called for a motion and a vote.

MOVED (DAIGLE), SECONDED (STUPINSKI) AND PASSED (YAY: DAIGLE, JOYSE, STUPINSKI; NAY: FADER, ROBERSON; ABSTAINED: O'SHAUGHNESSY) TO RECOMMEND THE HIRING OF A TOWN MANAGER AND INCLUDE WORDING IN SECTION 901 OF THE CHARTER ADDING THE POSITION OF A TOWN MANAGER AND ADD A NEW SECTION, NUMBERED 924, AFTER SECTION 923 DELINEATING THE DUTIES OF THE TOWN MANAGER IN THE CRC'S DRAFT REPORT TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Palshaw requested the attachment of the two documents advocating for Town Manager and Town Administrator to the minutes.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED (JOYSE), SECONDED (DAIGLE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING OF THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION AT 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph Tarzi
Recording Secretary

RECOMMENDATION TO ELLINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
RE: TOWN MANAGER

Based on exhaustive study and research, the Charter Revision Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen consider adding the position of Town Manager to the present group of administrative officers. We make this recommendation for the following reasons:

1. Under the current system, the First Selectman is the Chief Executive and the Chief Administrative Officer, with myriad responsibilities for overseeing all facets of the government and its departments, and yet there are no qualifications for holding this position other than being an elector in the town. Furthermore, the First Selectman faces the need to be re-elected every two years, resulting in a potentially unstable management situation. Additionally, the person running for this office has often run unopposed, especially in recent years, a situation that effectively minimizes the voters' choice of their Chief Executive Officer. This negates the idea that an appointed chief executive would be less responsible to the people he or she represents, given that he or she would be appointed by the people who are elected by the voters, namely, the Board of Selectmen. Finally, despite the fact that the town population has continually increased, there has been a declining interest among the electorate to run for First Selectman, resulting in a diminishing pool of candidates willing to run for a full-time job that keeps getting bigger and more complex every year. This situation can only get worse, unless the town seriously considers adding someone to the administration with the qualifications, expertise and career motivation to oversee the day-to-day operations of the government. Having such an employee would free up the First Selectman to concentrate more on policies and long-term vision for the town.
2. In order to address this situation, the Charter Revision Commission recommends adding a Town Manager position to the present Town Charter, to include a statement of the position, including such items as how chosen, length of time in service, duties, and removal, among other things.
3. A Town Manager would be the Chief Executive Officer, and would be directly responsible to the Board of Selectmen. The Manager's duties would be specified by the Board and the Charter. The Manager would have a Bachelor's or Master's degree in public administration, business administration or a related field, and would demonstrate extensive knowledge of public administration practices, municipal finance, risk management, municipal law, human resources, collective bargaining, and municipal infrastructure, among other things. The Manager would

be responsible to the Board for the administration of all departments, agencies, offices and persons appointed by the Manager, and would supervise and direct all such appointments. Further, the Manager would make periodic reports to the Board and shall attend its meetings with full right of participation but without the right to vote. The Manager would also work with the Finance Officer to keep the Board fully advised as to the financial condition of the Town and prepare and submit with the Finance Officer an annual Town budget. Other duties could be added by the Board as desirable. Since some of these duties are presently listed in Chapter VII as being those of the First Selectman, this chapter should be amended to eliminate those duties assigned to the Manager.

Drafted by Ellen O'Shaughnessy, John Daigle, and Michael Stupinski
January 25, 2016
Subject to additions and corrections

Revised February 8, 2016

RECOMMENDATION TO ELLINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
RE: TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Based on exhaustive study and research, the Charter Revision Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen consider adding the position of Town Administrator to the present group of administrative officers. We make this recommendation for the following reasons:

1. Under the current system, the First Selectman is the Chief Executive and the Chief Administrative Officer, with myriad responsibilities for overseeing all facets of the government and its departments, and yet there are no qualifications for holding this position other than being an elector in the town. Furthermore, the First Selectman faces the need to be re-elected every two years, resulting in a potentially unstable management situation. Additionally, the person running for this office has often run unopposed, especially in recent years, a situation that effectively minimizes the voters' choice of their Chief Executive Officer. This negates the idea that an appointed chief administrator would be less responsible to the people he or she represents, given that he or she would be appointed by the people who are elected by the voters, namely, the Board of Selectmen . Finally, despite the fact that the town population has continually increased, there has been a declining interest among the electorate to run for First Selectman, resulting in a diminishing pool of candidates willing to run for a full-time job that keeps getting bigger and more complex every year. This situation can only get worse, unless the town seriously considers adding someone to the administration with the education, qualifications, and expertise to oversee the day-to-day operations of the government. Having such an employee would free up the First Selectman and the Board of Selectmen to concentrate more on policies and long-term vision for the town.
2. In order to address this situation, the Charter Revision Commission recommends adding a Town Administrator position to the present Town Charter, to include a statement of the position, including such items as how chosen, length of time in service, duties, and removal, among other things.
3. A Town Administrator would be the Chief Administrative Officer, and would be directly responsible to the First Selectman as the Chief Executive Officer. The Administrator's duties would be specified by the Board and the Charter. The Administrator would have a Bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration or a related field, and would demonstrate extensive knowledge of public administration practices, municipal finance, risk management, municipal

law, human resources, collective bargaining, and municipal infrastructure, among other things. The Administrator would work under the direction of the First Selectman in supervising all departments, agencies, offices and departments in the town government, and would supervise and direct all such personnel appointments as made by the First Selectman. Further, the Administrator would assist the First Selectman in making periodic reports to the Board, assist in the review and preparation of the annual budget, and make recommendations for improvement in Town policies, procedures and/or programs. The Administrator would also prepare and present reports on behalf of the First Selectman and the Board of Selectmen to Town boards and commissions as required, and keep the Board fully advised as to the financial condition of the Town. Other duties could be added by the Board and the First Selectman from time to time as desirable.

Drafted by Ellen O'Shaughnessy, with Michael Stupinski
February 8, 2016
Subject to additions and corrections

Revised February 8, 2016