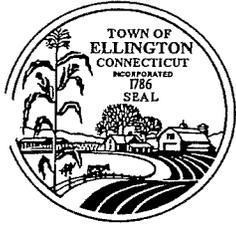


STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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LORI L. SPIELMAN
First Selectman

JAMES M. PRICHARD
Deputy First Selectman

MELINDA M. FERRY
A. LEO MILLER, JR.
DAVID E. STAVENS
RONALD F. STOMBERG
JOHN W. TURNER

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Monday June 6, 2016
Town Hall – Meeting Hall

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Lori L. Spielman, Melinda M. Ferry, James M. Prichard, David E. Stavens, Ronald F. Stomberg, John W. Turner

SELECTMEN ABSENT: A. Leo Miller

OTHERS PRESENT: Rich Malone, Liz Correia, Bill Correia, Allan Lawrence, Bruce Fader, Willi Frederich, Joan Randall, Matt Mullin, Maurice Blanchette, Tom Palshaw, James Close, John Rachek, Don Davis, Joann M. Opperman-Stone, Joe Burns, Janet Williczka, Sharon McLaughlin, Lynn Fahy, Tim Fahy, Jim Spielman, Betsy Spielman, Jon Cohen, Kathleen Insler, Rick Insler, Ellen O'Shaughnessy

PUBLIC HEARING: CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION REPORT

First Selectman Lori Spielman opened the public hearing at 7:00 p.m. and stated that written copies of the call of the hearing that appeared in the press were available to all attendees. Ms. Spielman asked Mr. Turner to read the Public Hearing Notice as published. Mr. Turner read the notice.

Ms. Spielman asked if there were any comments from the public.

Matt Mullin, 14 Maplewood Drive, thanked all of the volunteers who serve the Town of Ellington. Mr. Mullin read a statement reviewing the history of events that occurred in Town over the years. He said that he wrote an article that was published in the Journal Inquirer asking the following questions and making the following points: (1) is a Town Manager going to give the Town more of a voice in State politics? He thinks not. (2) The Town Manager cannot vote. What good is this person if he or she cannot vote? (3) The cost of bringing in a Town Manager could explode the Town budget. He estimated a cost of approximately \$250,000 for a Town Manager, including a staff assistant, office space and a vehicle. Mr. Mullin said that he feels this would affect the budget significantly; and (4) Why should the Board of Selectmen make the final decision on this issue? The Town's eligible voters should make the final decision on a change of government. Everyone should be able to weigh in on this very big issue.

Mr. Mullin said that the Town isn't going to be seeing many State grants in the future because the Federal and State governments are broke.

Mr. Mullin said that the revision that includes an increase in the monetary amount for competitive bidding creates a single source and he is opposed to this article in the revisions.

Mr. Mullin put out a plea to the Selectmen to please hear the comments put out tonight.

Bill Correia, 65 Cider Mill Road, said that he is on the "groom's side" and the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) is on the "bride's side". He said that the CRC did a lot of work and he really appreciates it. Mr. Correia said that his biggest concern is whether having a Town Manager is going to help the Town with securing State funds and other things that are not happening now due to the present form of government. Mr. Correia said that the current First Selectman is very professional; she has her own company and has run it well and people are happy because she creates jobs. He said that the CRC chose the wrong words when they said they have to hire a professional, because Lori Spielman is very professional and she knows exactly what she's doing. He said that he voted for the person he felt was going to be able to help Ellington and she is doing the job that he expects her to do. He added that he isn't concerned about what Ms. Spielman hasn't done yet; if a community organizer can be President of the United States, somebody like Lori Spielman or Maurice Blanchette certainly can be First Selectman of a farming town like Ellington, CT. Mr. Correia asked why the CRC is doing what they are doing. Are they trying to change the Town such as adding big business? He said he doesn't want that; he wants to open up the windows of his house and be able to smell Bahler Farms because that's real; it's people working hard for a living. He advised the Board of Selectmen to be careful of what they are looking for. Mr. Correia said that the reason people come to Ellington was because they want a certain type of life that this community provides. He thanked all of the Board of Selectmen for all that they do.

Joe Burns, 228 Windsorville Road, said that his feeling about a Town Manager is that it will be a paid position and the person to fill it will be chosen by the Selectmen; he doesn't feel that the few should make the decision for the many. He added that he doesn't see a manager being paid and a First Selectman being paid because it is a duplication and a waste of money. He said that he has had his words with previous First Selectmen many times. He said he cannot say anything bad about First Selectman Lori Spielman. He said that she did something in this Town this year that no Selectman has ever done; she got together with the Superintendent of Schools and had a meeting at the Senior Center and explained how the budget system works. She provided more understanding of how the budget works than anyone ever has before. Mr. Burns said that his opinion is to not waste the money, Ms. Spielman is in place and the Charter is set up to address the possibility that the First Selectman doesn't work out.

Rich Malone, 5 Middle Road, said that there should be an open public input meeting like there is on the budget for the Town of Ellington where residents to be able to speak and have their say. Ms. Spielman noted that this is the Public Hearing for that purpose. She added that it was well-advertised and the people in the Meeting Hall are the only ones who came to be heard. She said if there was a larger number of attendees, the Public Hearing would have been moved to the school, but there were plenty of seats available.

Rhonda Villanova, 34 Buff Cap Road, expressed concerns about the proposed change in the competitive bidding increase in the amount. She also said that she wished more people came to the Public Hearing. She said it's always a small group of dedicated people who attend things. Ms. Villanova said that after going to the Town Budget Meeting and listening to the speeches about why the Town should have full-day kindergarten, the responses from the few people that were there were all about saving money on their daycare costs and because South Windsor has it. She said that people say they come to Ellington for the education and then they come here and want to change it. She said she doesn't understand why Ellington has to try to be like other towns. She

asked why the Town can't keep the First Selectman form of government; in this day with the federal and state governments are broke, let's do what's best for Ellington and not try to keep up with other Towns.

Willi Fredrich, 1 Willi Lane, said his feeling is that there are too many friends in this Town such as Friends of the Pinney House and all of these friends are costing the Town a lot of money. He said the latest is the friends of the all-day kindergarten which has not been proven to be even effective. Now we have the friends of redoing the Charter to include all kinds of proposals. He added that he is completely against adding a Town Manager and he suggests that the Board of Selectmen should forget about it. He does not see any benefit at all in adding a Town Manager; it will just cost more money. Everything in this town and the state and the federal government is always costing more money and it never stops. Mr. Fredrich said he waiting, maybe in vain, for someone to come along and say we are not going to spend more than we have to. But for some reason government has an ability to over spend other people's money. Mr. Fredrich said he feels like someone always has their hands in his pocket.

Tom Palshaw, 120 Pinney Street, noted that in reviewing the existing Charter, he asks what the controlling document for the Senior Center is and what the controlling document is for the Library. He does not see where that is covered in the Charter or in the revisions. Ms. Ferry and Ms. Spielman noted that the Senior Center falls under Human Services. Mr. Palshaw said that is not indicated in the Charter. Mr. Palshaw said the Board of Selectmen should consider these open questions.

Maurice Blanchette, 12 Lanz Lane, thanked the CRC for the work they have done. He said he has a problem with item number four in the CRC's final report suggesting the removal of the 15% requirement of qualified electors to overrule Town Meeting actions. He said this leaves the opportunity for actions to be repealed by a very small number of dedicated people who have an opposite view. It's a valid thing that is in the existing Charter and he doesn't believe it should be changed.

Allan Lawrence, 1 Hatheway Road, pointed out what he believes is a clerical error involving section 917 Fire Marshal. The opening statement removes the 30 day requirement under question 9; but does not remove it in question 10. Fire Marshal Lawrence said that this should rightly be removed in both places. This should be corrected prior to issuing the final document.

Bruce Fader, 11 Windmar Circle, noted that he is a member of the CRC. He said that the prior Board of Selectmen felt it was necessary for this Town to take a look at its form of government. He said that the CRC brought in to play an objective way of looking at a way measuring performance. He added that even though CRC was put together by a prior Board of Selectmen, maybe those members thought there may be was a need for change.

Mr. Fader said that now there is true recognition that the Town now has a First Selectman who all agree is extremely competent; and the Board of Selectmen compliment Ms. Spielman with some very well-seasoned Selectmen. He said he asks the question "what do we do with a situation when there is a CRC trying to take a look at performance of government that is being led by a very popular and very competent leader?" He admits that it took him a long time to come to a stance where we do need a change, because up until a few months ago, he questioned if there is a compelling reason as to why there should be a change. He contacted several people to gather legitimate information and he finds that maybe there is a need to have professional management to compliment the First Selectman. Mr. Fader said that he recognizes that maybe Ms. Spielman, and these seasoned selectmen may not be here in another five or ten years. He believes it is in the Town's best interest to think about what can be done to improve performance. He heard

repeatedly tonight that it will cost more money; there has to be innovation and strategic planning or else the Town is not going to be what it should be in the future. That is the perspective that the CRC undertook. Mr. Fader said some of the things to be open-minded about include the Town's bond rating. If the Town doesn't have an excellent bond rating, it will cost the Town money. Mr. Fader said that the amount of income generated from investments in years' past was a couple hundred thousand dollars. If you look at it now, it is zilch. It's nothing. Why is that? How can this be improved? Ms. Spielman said that she would have like to have seen the CRC work with the Finance Officer throughout this process. Mr. Fader said that certain people were invited to attend the meetings. He said he has worked with Mr. DiCorleto through the years and finds him extremely competent, but again, it is always appropriate to have a new way of looking at things. He said that the CRC didn't come up with their recommendation to cast any aspersions on those presently serving, but rather with a look to the future.

Mr. Mullin said that by having a Town Manager, we're growing government. He added that President Ronald Reagan said it best when he said shrink the government down. Mr. Mullin stressed that there is no need for big government in Town with only 15, 000 in population. The Town is very effective and everyone is doing a great job in running the Town the way it is going. If a Town Manager is hired, there is a benefit package and when his staff person is hired, there will be another benefit package. There's a vehicle. There's more offices. It expands things too far.

Mr. Fader said that the CRC is looking for ways to improve government. One of the ways is to try to find sources of revenue that weren't there before or make it less costly for government to run. Sometimes you need to spend money to improve efficiency. The CRC took a look at a list published by the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and it is quite obvious that the towns that have better credit ratings have town managers or administrators. One of those jobs would be to improve the town's bond rating. If the Town hires someone who is educated, has the experience and has the know-how to be able to improve the bond rating; that is how the CRC advocated for adding a professional administrator.

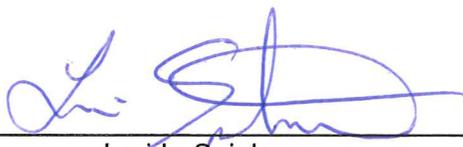
Don Davis, 11 Lee Lane, said that consideration should be given to the length of term of First Selectman going to four years. He said it is awful hard for anyone to get into the First Selectman's job and learn it all. If that First Selectman's term is at four years, then the person can get into a groove that moves along. Mr. Davis said that the population has doubled since he moved in to Town and the more people you have the more resources are needed.

Janet Insler, 1 Ellsworth Lane, said she raised her family here and she works in Tolland. She said there is a Town Manager there and she is not a fan. The role of government is to put the best people in place in the Town agencies. She said the Town has a great library, great senior center, great public schools and public works. These people know what they are doing. She said we already have good people in place and a great First Selectman. She said she doesn't want to think about the expense of a town manager and having someone in there meddling with all the good stuff we already have in Town.

Ms. Villanova said that when people are replaced, the salary increases, so every time a new person comes in, they go the next step up. If the Town brings in a Town manager, the salary will go up and up. She said the new superintendent wants to create another layer of bureaucracy between himself and his departments. The Town already have enough layers of bureaucracy and don't need any more.

Mr. Fader said that the recommendation wasn't made in a vacuum. He said the CRC was sensitive to the knowledge that in this town citizens want to be close to the decisions that are made. As a result, there was not a recommended change to the Board of Finance. In this town, the Board of Finance plays a significant role, as does the budget process.

Hearing no further comments, Ms. Spielman thanked everyone for coming and closed the public hearing at 7:48 p.m.

Submitted by  Approved by 
LouAnn Cannella Lori L. Spielman