

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

Charter Review Committee

Dennis C. Gallagher, Chair

Carlton Hunt
Stephanie Ryan
Erick Lynch
Aisha Losche
Eric Desrochers



Patti Paccia, Secretary
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Academy Building - 66 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324

Bridgewater Charter Review Committee Minutes for the Charter Review Meeting that Convened on Wednesday, December 10, 2014

Meeting called to order as formal session by Dennis C. Gallagher (Chairman of the Committee) in accordance with rules governing meetings and quorum filled. Meeting starts at 7:10 PM.

Members in Attendance: *Dennis C. Gallagher, Carlton Hunt, Aisha Losche, Erick Lynch and Stephanie Ryan*

Members Not in Attendance: *Eric Desrochers*

Approval of Agenda: *The Committee accepts the agenda of the current meeting.*

Approval of Meeting Minutes: *The Committee considers minutes from December 3, 2014. A motion is made by Mr. Hunt to accept the formal minutes of December 3, 2014, seconded by Ms. Losche. With a vote of 5 yea, 0 nay, the minutes are approved.*

Public Comments: *There are no public comments for the current meeting.*

Announcements: *The next meeting will be held Wednesday, December 17, 2014 at the Memorial Building at 7:00p.m. As the Secretary will not be in attendance, the Chair will take the minutes at that meeting.*

Committee Meeting Schedule: *The Chair and Committee discuss their upcoming schedule of meetings and potential for topics of conversation in those meetings. The Committee considers the following dates: December 17, 2014 and January 7, 2015. The Committee will continue to follow pending topics from the previous agenda:*

- *Should the Town Clerk be elected or appointed*
- *Explore possibility of merging representation of certain districts – Mr. Hunt to speak with Marilyn Contreas of the Department of Housing and Community Development*
- *Review Town Charter Issue Tracking Table; discuss provisional votes and areas of suggested changes; create a list of outstanding items; vote to make recommendations to Town Council*
- *Create a track change document of the Charter clearly indicating Committee's recommendations*
- *Discuss what the Charter Review Recommendations Report should look like*

Additional Items

The Chair will prepare a brief update of the Committee's progress for posting on the Town Website.

Town Council President Wood, upon reviewing the transcription of his responses to the Committee's questions presented to him at the meeting on December 3, 2014, has submitted two additional comments for consideration by the Committee:

- *The 30 day rule. It makes perfect sense for a 30 day delay with Ordinances, but for Resolutions and Orders, immediate action might be required and no delay should be imposed. The charter speaks about measures in general and doesn't define them specifically like this, making the 30 day rule confusing in the first couple of years.*

- Advertising. The requirement to advertise in a local paper has good intentions, but the fact is that things have shifted quickly over the past few years and printed papers are becoming fewer and fewer. There might be consideration to say that if a supermajority supports a specific item to be posted to the town web site instead of "a paper of general circulation", a huge cost savings could be realized without a loss of communication.

The Committee engages in discussion of agenda topics.

Consider make-up of Town Council; discuss compensation for Town Council and what that might look like

- The Committee engages in discussion around the number and make-up of TC members and the advantages or disadvantages of various options; i.e. 9 vs. 7; disadvantage of 9 is needing more members for quorum and votes; 7 might work with 7 precincts and no at large; TGSC did a lot of research to reach the conclusion of 9; all at large is probably not the way to go; having districts makes more sense. **A motion is made by Mr. Hunt to retain 9 Councilors, seconded by Ms. Losche.** With a vote of 5 yeah, 0 nay, the formal vote is approved.
 - Discussion concerning combining representation for the College and Prison has been deferred until Mr. Hunt has an opportunity to speak with Marilyn Contreas of the Department of Housing and Community Development.
- The Committee engages in discussion around the compensation of TC members; i.e. currently minimal expenses may be submitted; should there be a stipend to assist with other expenses involved but have exclusions around health and other benefits; would need to have a Home Rule Petition as a separate action attached to the Charter to clarify non-eligibility for health benefits; if stipend under \$5,000 per year, benefits question would not be an issue; how much might town members be willing to accept; a stipend might attract more people to run. **A motion is made by Mr. Hunt to under Section 2-13, which deals with compensation for the TC, be modified to allow the TC to receive compensation via a stipend with no other benefits, seconded by Ms. Losche.** With a vote of 5 yeah, 0 nay, the formal vote is approved. **A further motion is made by Mr. Lynch to clarify that the stipend for each TC member shall be \$3,000 gross per year, which shall be reviewed at each Charter Review Committee cycle, seconded by Ms. Ryan.** With a vote of 5 yeah, 0 nay, the formal vote is approved.

What do other Town Councils include in their recall provisions

- The Committee engages in discussion around whether the Charter should have specific language that would trigger a recall; i.e. do we want to try to limit recalls in some way so recalls are not open to interpretation; Chapter 251 Act for Providing for Recalls was reviewed; 100 signatures are needed to submit an affidavit; the Town Clerk would need to certify signatures and the language of cause before proceeding with recall; this Committee could not possibly foresee all the potential reasons for someone to pursue a recall. **There is a consensus of the Committee to strike adding specific criteria for recall rationale and leave the language as it currently stands in the Charter.**

Does town government need a Finance Committee; what do other towns have for Finance Committees

- **A motion is made by Mr. Hunt that Section 6.9a, which deals with the Finance Committee (FinCom), be retained in the charter but this Committee redefine its role, seconded by Mr. Lynch.** With a vote of 5 yeah, 0 nay, the formal vote is approved.
- The Committee engages in discussion around areas of expertise required to help determine how many members are needed on FinCom. The roles decided upon are: financial planning, financial modeling, public finance, private finance and strategic planning. **A motion is made by Mr. Lynch to reduce the number of FinCom members to 5, seconded by Ms. Losche.** With a vote of 5 yeah, 0 nay, the formal vote is approved.
- The Committee engages in discussion around the appointment of FinCom. Currently there are 3 members from Town Manager, 3 members from Town Council and 3 members from Town Clerk. **A motion is made by Mr. Hunt that appointments to the FinCom be 3 by Town Council and 2 by Town Manager with a 3-year term, seconded by Ms. Losche.** With a vote of 5 yeah, 0 nay, the formal vote is approved.

Should the Q&A previously presented to Town Council President be sent to all members of Town Council

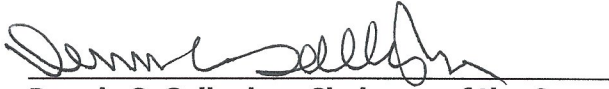
- Mr. Hunt suggests that the questions which were provided to Town Council President Wood also be sent to each Town Council member to afford them the opportunity to submit their comments. Committee Secretary will send an email to Town Council members requesting that if they would like to respond to the Q&A either by attending a meeting or by submitting in writing, they should contact Chair Gallagher no later than January 16, 2015.

With informal discussion concluded, a request is made to adjourn: By unanimous consensus of the Committee, the meeting is hereby adjourned. The next meeting will be December 17, 2014.

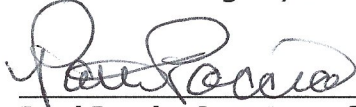
Meeting is hereby adjourned by unanimous consensus of the members in attendance in accordance with rules governing meetings. Meeting adjourns at 9:02 PM.

I hereby affix my hand to this document that the minutes of this meeting are true and accurate to the best of my ability, note-taking, and penmanship as so ordered by the Chair of the Committee this tenth Day of December, Two Thousand and Fourteen.

A True Copy Attest,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis C. Gallagher", written over a horizontal line.

Dennis C. Gallagher, Chairman of the Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patti Paccia", written over a horizontal line.

Patti Paccia, Secretary of the Committee