**CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

**Present:** Peter Cunningham, Chair; Rebecca Weksner, Vice Chair; Mark Haddad, Clerk; Brenden Mahoney; Bob Collins (attending Virtually); Michael Sulprizio

**Members Absent:** Kristen Frank

**Also Present:** Rebecca Pine, Select Board Member; Matt Pisani, Select Board Member; Brian Edmonds, Park Commission Member (attending virtually); Anna Eliot, Park Commission Member; Dawn Dunbar, Town Clerk; Melisa Doig, HR Director; Tom Delaney, DPW Director; Brian Callahan, DPW Director-In-Training; Judy Anderson

Chair Cunningham called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Chair Cunningham presented the Agenda for the meeting.

**Personnel Board Issue**

Chair Cunningham introduced the issue of whether or not to remove the Personnel Board from the Charter. Bud Robertson, current Personnel Board Member gave a history of the Personnel Board. He stated that the Personnel Board has run its course and is no longer being utilized. In addition, the HR Director is doing a good job managing the HR Function. He agreed that it should be removed from the Charter. Mr. Collins agreed and stated that it is superfluous given the fact that the Town has a full-time HR Director.

*Mr. Haddad moved to eliminate the Personnel Board from the Charter. Mr. Collins seconded the motion.* *Chair Cunningham called for a roll call vote: Sulprizio, aye; Weksner, aye; Cunningham, aye; Mahoney, aye; Haddad, aye; Collins aye; Unanimously passed.*

Park Commission Issue

Chair Cunningham introduced the issue of the Park Commission. He stated that he would like to finalize the recommendation on this issue at tonight’s meeting. He stated that there was information received from two of the Park Commissioners, Mary Jennings and Rob Foley. Brian Edmonds, Chair of the Park Commission, stated that the Park Commission voted, by a vote of 4-1, that the Commission should remain elected. Anna Eliot, Park Commission Member, stated that she did not attend the meeting to speak, but offered her opinion on why it should remain elected, including the importance of public service. She stated that the State Statute states that the Park Commission is elected. Becky Pine, a member of the Select Board, stated that she believes the Commission is functioning well and believes it should remain elected.

Mr. Haddad had submitted a proposal to eliminate the Park Commission and have the Select Board take over the role of Park Commissioners. Mr. Haddad presented a memo the Charter Review Committee outlining his recommendation. He stated that the Committee should have some time to review the memo and schedule this for a future meeting to discuss it so that the Committee will have time to review the Memo. That said, he stated that since it didn’t appear that the Select Board or Park Commission was in favor of this, maybe it should be withdrawn. The Committee debated the issue. They had determined that the issue should be divided into two issues, elected vs. appointed and whether the DPW should take over the maintenance of the Parks. It was determined that the current Charter already allows the DPW to maintain the parks and no further action needs to be taken. Mr. Sulprizio believes that the issue has been discussed enough and that the Charter Review Committee should decide on whether or not the Park Commission should be elected or appointed. Dr. Weksner stated that she has yet to hear a rationale on why the Park Commission should remain elected. She questioned why it was so important for them to remain elected. Elected or Appointed, they would still be responsible to the public.

Mr. Collins suggested that the Committee be deliberate on this issue so that it will not hurt the other work that the Committee has been working on. Dr. Weksner asked Ms. Eliot to explain what the difference would be if the Park Commission was appointed versus elected. She wanted clarification on how the work would be done regardless of whether or not the Park Commission was appointed versus elected. Ms. Eliot felt a review of the statute was necessary to understand the difference. Dr. Weksner does not believe whether or not the Commission is elected or appointed has any bearing on their work. Her reading of the Statute states that it’s what the Bylaw says, not how they get on the Committee.

*Mr. Haddad moved that the Park Commission remain elected. Mr. Collins seconded the motion. Chair Cunningham called for a roll call vote: Sulprizio, nay; Weksner, nay; Cunningham, aye; Mahoney, nay; Haddad, aye; Collins, aye; Vote Tied – Motion Defeated.*

The Charter Review Committee asked that this matter be brought back to the next meeting for a final determination.

Dr. Weksner stated that the Committee is working for the same goal, but the way things are being contorted is frustrating. She is concerned that people would come out to vote down the whole Charter over one issue. She hopes that the Town can see past small differences and see that the Committee is working in the best interest of the Town.

**Appointment of Police Chief, Fire Chief and Town Clerk**

Chair Cunningham introduced the issue of the appointment of the Police Chief, Fire Chief and Town Clerk. Mr. Haddad presented a Policy that the Select Board adopted on the appointment process. The Select Board was in favor of having the Town Manager appoint these positions subject to the Policy. Based on this, he believes the Committee is ready to decide.

*Mr. Haddad moved that the Charter be amended to have the Town Manager appoint the Police Chief, Fire Chief and Town Clerk. Mr. Sulprizio seconded the motion.* *Chair Cunningham called for a roll call vote: Sulprizio, aye; Weksner, aye; Cunningham; aye; Mahoney, aye; Haddad, aye; Collins aye; Unanimously passed.*

**Select Board Serving on More than One Elected Board**

Mr. Collins presented the Board with a memo on this issue. He spoke with the Ethics Commission and there is no rational reason as to why the last Charter Review Committee added this prohibition. He recommended that this provision be removed from the Charter. Mr. Sulprizio agreed. Mr. Collins also believes that a paid employee receiving benefits should not be prohibited from being on the Select Board. He would like both provisions removed from the Charter.

Ms. Pine was in favor of allowing the Select Board to serve on more than one elected Board but was not in favor of allowing benefited employees from serving on the Select Board. The Charter Review Committee asked that the two issues be voted on separately. Matt Pisani, a member of the Select Board, does not see this as an issue and sees no reason why an employee cannot serve on the Select Board. Mr. Collins stated that while there may be times when an employee would have to recuse themselves from issues (fi they served on the Select Board), there is no inherent conflict according to the Ethics Commission.

*Mr. Haddad moved that the provision in the Charter that prohibits a member of the Select Board from serving on another elected Board be removed. Mr. Collins seconded the motion. Chair Cunningham called for a roll call vote: Sulprizio, aye; Weksner, aye; Cunningham; aye; Mahoney, aye; Haddad, aye; Collins aye; Unanimously passed.*

*Mr. Haddad moved that the provision in the Charter that prohibits a paid town employee receiving benefits from serving on the Select Board be removed. Mr. Sulprizio seconded the motion. Chair Cunningham called for a roll call vote: Sulprizio, aye; Weksner, aye; Cunningham, nay; Mahoney, aye; Haddad, aye; Collins aye; Motioned passed 5 in Favor, 1 against.*

**Next Meetings**

The Committee determined that the next meeting will be held on March 6, 2025 and that the next Public Hearing will be held on March 27, 2025.

**Minutes**

*Mr. Haddad moved to approve the minutes from the January 16th. Dr. Weksner seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to approve the minutes. Chair Cunningham called for a roll call vote: Sulprizio, aye; Weksner, aye; Cunningham; aye; Mahoney, aye; Haddad, aye; Collins aye; Unanimously passed.*

Being no further business, Chair Cunningham adjourned the meeting at 5:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Haddad, Clerk