

**WINDHAM CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
WINDHAM TOWN HALL  
979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT  
THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2014 7:00 PM**

**Respectfully submitted by Janet Laukaitis, Clerk of the Charter Revision Commission**

**Attendees:** Members Dennis O'Brien, Doug Lary, Victor Rayhall, Chuck Pennewill, Priscilla Root, and Pamela Shorey. Other attendees: Richard Bloomer.

1. Call to order: Chairman O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:00.
2. Citizens and Delegations (3 minutes, related to Charter, Commissioners may ask questions or seek clarification): None
3. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Minutes for May 1, 2014: Correct minutes of May 1, 2014 minutes with regard to Section I-1 – to provide that a natural person need not be a citizen of the United States to be a "voter" qualified to vote in the annual budget referendum. That initiative was supported by a 4 to 3 vote of the Commission. Thereafter, it was moved by Vice Chairman Lary and Seconded by Commissioner Shorey to approve minutes of May 1, 2014 meeting, with amendment. Motion carried.
4. Chairman's Report: Chairman O'Brien stated he believed a May 15 meeting of the commission will likely be necessary for the CRC to complete its work on time.
5. Commissioner Discussion and possible action related to Draft Charter prepared by Commission Chairman, beginning with a quick review of Chapters I to VII-2, then going forward from Chapter VII-2, to the end (Chapter XIII). Copies of the Draft Charter as revised were available for review at this Meeting: Commissioners reviewed the draft as follows.

**Page 2, Paragraph 3:** In Section I-1, ("Definitions") Commissioners discussed voting rights of non- U.S. citizen property owners. It was agreed to delete the phrase "citizen of the United States and", in the first sentence and allow any qualified natural person to be a "voter."

**Page 4, Chapter III-2:** It was agreed that the change made by the Chairman to add a second paragraph regarding which electors and voters must vote in which voting districts should remain as is.

**Pages 6-7, Chapter IV-3:** It was agreed that if a public official is to be elected at-large it should be specified in this Chapter in each appropriate subsection.

**Page 18, VII-10 – Other Appointive Boards:** It was agreed to amend the first sentence to permit the abolition or change "other appointive boards" by ordinance or resolution adopted by the Town Council. Also changing VII-10 (8) to Conservation, Open Space and Agriculture Commission, and substituting "Willimantic Switchboard Fire Chiefs Association" for "Police and Fire Pension Commission" in subsection VII-10(3) were approved by consensus..

**Page 21, Chapter IX. – SERVICE DISTRICTS:** After discussion, it was agreed to Change ~~Service Districts~~ to Taxing Districts in all of Chapter IX.

**Page 22, IX-2 – Paragraph continued from page 21:** It was agreed the first line should read "Directors of the Willimantic Taxing District shall adopt bylaws, shall elect from among themselves, a president, vice-president,..."

**Page 23, IX-7 – Additional appropriations:** The spending limit before a vote is required was discussed. It was agreed to remove the dollar amount and have additional appropriations determined by bylaws of any Taxing District. Chairman O'Brien will re-write this section, with this change.

**Page 24, X-2 – Department of Finance:** Commissioners discussion the wording of this section and Chairman O'Brien stated the text was taken directly from the MOU.

**Page 25, X-6 – Duties of Board of Finance:** It was agreed to change the second sentence to "At any time prior to or following public hearing, the Board of Finance may revise the annual sum total of estimated itemized costs in the proposed budget of The Board of Education and of each other Town department as it deems desirable and shall recommend such revised budget to the annual budget meeting of the Town." This is to emphasize that the budgets of all town departments are to be treated like the education budget is treated by state law, with the Board of Finance only having the authority to change the bottom line appropriation of each department, rather than each line item in the budget of any department of the Town.

**Page 26, X-7 – Annual budget meeting.** It was agreed that the second sentence of the second paragraph shall be changed to: "No referendum on the annual budget nor any subsequent budget shall be held on a public holiday or a Friday, Saturday or Sunday."

**Page 26, X-8 – Expenditures and accounting.** Commissioner Pennewill suggested removing the Taxing District from the first sentence and making it apply only to the Town of Windham. Commissioner Lary said the Taxing Districts should have control of themselves. Chairman O'Brien will research this and make any necessary changes to best ensure Taxing District autonomy..

**Page 27, X-9 – Borrowing:** Commissioner Pennewill suggested the following change to this section and the commission agreed: The Town shall have the power to incur indebtedness for the Town or either Taxing District, by issuing its bonds or notes as provided by the General Statutes or as otherwise provided herein. Any such indebtedness shall be incurred at expense of the district.

**Page 29 XI-3 When action by town meeting required. (d):** It was agreed to remove the phrase "or Service District" from the first line, and to change the dollar amount in the second sentence from \$40,000. to \$100,000.

Commissioners reviewed the questions put forth by the Town Manager. Answers to his questions were discussed and no further amendments or changes to the Charter were deemed necessary as a result. Chairman O'Brien said that the input received from the Town Manager and President of the First Taxing District had been very helpful to him in redrafting certain sections of the draft Charter.

Commissioner Shorey suggested there should be a summary of the Charter that describes what is different and what's not – and why. Commissioner Lary agreed to write a short summary.

Chairman O'Brien suggested that at some point the commission should propose wording for the Charter changes, for the ballot.

The next meeting of this commission will be 8:00 pm, May 15, 2015 at the Town Hall.

6. Citizens and Delegations 3 minutes, related to Charter, Commissioners may ask questions or seek clarification): None.
7. Adjournment: Moved by Commissioner Root, seconded by Commissioner Shorey, to adjourn the meeting at 8:55. Motion Carried.

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*Patricia C. Spruance*  
WINDHAM TOWN CLERK