

**TOWN COUNCIL
ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
SUB-COMMITTEE
WINDHAM TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM
FEBRUARY 9, 2011
MINUTES**

In attendance: Christel Donahue, Kevin Donohue, Erika Haynes, Mike Lessard

Staff in attendance: Neal Beets, Town Manager

Guest speaker in attendance: Kessenia Gagnon, Ethics Committee Chair

Absent: Joe Underwood

1. **Call to order** – meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.
2. **Citizens and delegations** – no one spoke.
3. **Approval of the minutes of the January 5, 2011 meeting**

Haynes moved, Donohue seconded to approve the minutes of 1/5/11.

MOTION PASSED, with all in favor but Donahue, who abstained.

** Donahue MOVED, Haynes seconded to move item 5c, New ethics ordinance (Kessenia Gagnon, Ethics Commission Chair) to next on agenda.

MOTION PASSED unanimously.

New ethics ordinance (Kessenia Gagnon, Ethics Commission Chair)

Gagnon identified concerns that as different stakeholders have requested changes with the ethics ordinance, the town manager's recommendations for changes to the ordinance makes the recommended ordinance so watered down as to not be effective.

The sub-committee requested that Beets provide both the sub-committee and ethics commission the final draft of the ethics ordinance with changes from current ordinance identified, as well as Don Muirhead's memo of understanding with any labor groups regarding the Ethics Ordinance. The sub-committee also

requested that Gagnon identify the commission's concerns with Beets' draft, and Beets identify reasons changes are necessary. This item will be on the next agenda.

4. Old Business

a. Outside organization grants review (Haynes)

Haynes noted that 22 outside agencies applied for town funding, including one organization never previously funded and one organization previously funded but not in the most recent fiscal year. The review committee was required to maintain level grant funding (0% increase), and to include in-kind services such as police and public works.

Haynes reviewed the attached spreadsheet with all recommendations.

Donohue MOVED, Donahue seconded, to recommend the grant funding, as presented by the review committee, to the town council for inclusion in the budget.

MOTION PASSED, with all in favor except Haynes, who abstained.

b. Status of Charter Reform and Consolidation (Beets)

Beets outlined the town charter revision process using the attached memo as a guide. Key points Beets identified:

- 8 votes of the council are required to create a Charter Commission (2/3)
- Town Council appoints 5 – 15 members to the commission, no more than 1/3 of appointed members may hold other town offices.
- The council may specify issues the commission must then consider, but the commission may also consider issues on its own.
- 16 months after creation, there must be a final report.
- Council can choose to accept any part of the reform recommendations to send to voters
- The council can present the voters with either a series of questions or a single question.
- Cost is estimated at \$20,000

The sub-committee requested that Beets determine how frequently charter reform is mandated, as well as whether there is money in the current budget allocated for this process. This item will be on the next agenda.

Beets next spoke to the issue of consolidation, first by identifying the following as challenges faced by having a service district within the town:

Problem applying for grants

Problem with splits in cost allocations (e.g., service district fire department going on ambulance calls in the Windhams)

Economic development issues: there is a 10 mil difference to develop downtown vs. the route 6 corridor.

Leads to inefficiency in processing public business with 2 councils

Beets then identified obstacles to fixing these issues, which include managing the tax rate difference and public concerns.

The sub-committee agreed that prior to exploring consolidation, a process must be identified as to how we would explore the issue. Haynes & Lessard will work with Beets to identify a process. This item will be on the next agenda. At this time, the sub-committee is not exploring consolidation.

c. Tax alternatives (Donahue)

Donahue has been exploring tax alternatives. Working with Joan Paskewich, the town assessor, she identified that if all were equalized, there would be a 3 mil increase for the Windhams. Paula Stahl, chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, suggested exploring a "North Windham shopping district". Donahue also researched Land Value Taxing (LVT), noting that New Haven and New London are other Connecticut cities exploring this option. Art Costa, an expert in LVT, will speak to the sub-committee about this concept at the next meeting.

5. New business

a. Chief Lisa and the ATV ordinance

The Chief was unable to attend the meeting, and will speak at the next sub-committee meeting.

b. Senior center and larger issue of Town space (general discussion)

The sub-committee requested that Beets explore the issue of facility space (available and needed), and to include the Board of Education, Town and meeting space needs and current usage. This item will be on the next agenda.

6. Citizens and delegations

Kit Eves, Willimantic – would like to remind the sub-committee of the senior center feasibility study currently underway, as the committee reviews space and needs.

Doug Lary, Willimantic, and Vice-Chair of Ethics Commission – if charter reform becomes a reality, he encourages including the need for alternates on all commissions. He also recommends collecting taxes on out-of-state vehicles that have a 12-month lease in town. The ethics commission does not feel confident in the town attorney, and perhaps through charter reform we can consider more than one town attorney, or reconsider the process of selecting the town attorney..

7. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 8:53.

MEMO



To: Town Council Subcommittee on Administration, Finance,
Health, and Human Services

From: Neal Beets, Town Manager

Date: Wednesday, February 9, 2011

Re: Town Charter Revision Process

You have asked about the process to revise the Town Charter. The best summary of that process is a report from the Connecticut Office of Legislative Research, OLR Report 2005-R-0199, dated February 14, 2005. A copy is attached. However, the ultimate authority governing this process is state law found at CGS sections 7-187 through 7-201.

Understanding that the ultimate authority is state law, here are some highlights of the process:

1. The Town Council adopts a Resolution creating the Charter Commission. To approve this Resolution, the vote must include at least 2/3's of the Town Council.
2. Within a month of creating the Charter Commission, the Town Council appoints from 5 to 15 Members of the Charter Commission. Membership

must comply with Connecticut's minority representation requirements, and no more than 1/3 of Commission members may hold other Town offices.

3. The Town Council may specify issues it wants the Charter Commission to consider and the Charter Commission is required to consider them. However, the Charter Commission may consider other issues on its own initiative.

4. The Town Council must set a deadline for the Commission's final recommendation report; that deadline can be no later than 16 months after the Commission is created.

5. Following a statutory schedule of public hearings, the Charter Commission produces a final report to the Town Council.

6. By majority vote, the Town Council may accept or reject, in whole or part, the final report of the Charter Commission. What the Town Council accepts is then referred to the voters at a regular or special election.

7. The Town Council must decide whether the voters will be asked to accept or reject the proposed Charter changes as a single question or as multiple questions.

Finally, based upon the Town's actual expenditures in the past, I estimate the out-of-pocket cost of the Charter amendment process to be approximately \$20,000. This includes \$10,000 for advertising public hearings and publishing Charter amendments, and \$10,000 for an attorney to advise the Charter Commission and to draft Charter amendments as well as other Charter-related legal documents and notices.

Attachment 2

Agency	Score	Recommendation	\$329,926.00	Increase/Decrease in current funding	Comments
Companions & Homemakers	25	fund at requested level	\$5,000.00	\$-	
Holy Family Home and Shelter, Inc.	25	fund at requested level	\$3,000.00	\$245.00	agency request was less than last year's funding amount honors Windham fee waivers
TVCCA - Senior Meals Program	25	fund at requested level	\$13,895.70	\$(791.30)	
Willimantic Little League	25	fund at current level plus \$500	\$1,500.00	\$500.00	
Willimantic Renaissance Inc. / 3rd Thursday	25	no cost - requesting in-kind only	\$6,500.00	\$6,500.00	no funding request - in- kind only program operating in deficit; needed service
Windham Hospital Paramedics WRTD / Windham Region Transit District - ADA	25	fund at 3% increase of current level	\$51,500.00	\$1,500.00	funds to match grant
WRTD / Windham Region Transit District - Dial- A-Ride	25	fund at requested level	\$48,462.00	\$-	funds to match grant
WRTD / Windham Region Transit District - Fixed Route Service	25	fund at requested level	\$23,922.00	\$-	funds to match grant
Sexual Assault Crisis Center	24	fund at current level	\$5,000.00	\$-	
Willimantic Victorian Association	21	no funding - requesting in-kind only	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	no funding request - in- kind only New law - increase in juveniles being served
WRCC - Juvenile Review Board	21	fund @ current level plus \$1,000	\$2,500.00	\$1,000.00	
WRCC - Youth Services Bureau	21	fund at current level	\$25,000.00	\$-	

NECASA	20	fund at requested level	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00	did not fund last year increase equals in-kind for 2 parades: Veteran's Day and Memorial Day
WRCC - Veteran's Willimantic Renaissance Inc. / Art Fiesta Windham Area Arts Collaborative, Inc	20	fund @ current level of \$44,600 plus in-kind	\$47,200.00	\$2,600.00	no funding request - in-kind only
	19	no funding - requesting in-kind only	\$-	\$-	
	19	fund at current level	\$1,000.00	\$-	funds to match grant reimbursable expense for bike parts-funds in Recreation Dept. budget funding earmarked for dental program funding for roof repair decrease in funding
Little Angels Program	18	fund @ 50% of request	\$500.00	\$-	
Mc Sweeney Center	18	fund @ FY2009 level	\$40,850.00	\$(2,150.00)	
Mc Sweeney Center		roof repair	\$21,336.30	\$21,336.30	
Windham Free Library	14	fund @ 10% of operational budget	\$5,469.00	\$(2,531.00)	
Guilford Smith Library	13	fund @ 10% of operational budget	\$5,675.00	\$(2,325.00)	
Windham Bigg Play	13	funding not recommended	\$-	\$(1,000.00)	
		Recommended funding / sub-total	\$329,926.00		
		Balance remaining	\$-		