

WINDHAM CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

**WINDHAM HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER
355 High Street, Willimantic, CT**

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2014 7:00 PM

Respectfully submitted by Jessica Niles, Clerk of the Charter Revision Commission

Attendees: Doug Lary, Jan-Maya Schold, Victor Rayhall, Chuck Pennewill, Pam Shorey, Dennis O'Brien

1. Call to order: Dennis O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7pm
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 January 9, 2014: Chuck Pennewill made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Jan-Maya Schold- Two changes to be made, Motion passed (unanimous).
4. Chairman's Report: Dennis O'Brien stated he will take this position seriously. He has noticed some issues with some Town Council meetings, especially people talking over one another; therefore he would like everyone to raise their hands and be called on before speaking and he would like each person to keep their speeches to 5 minutes. O'Brien noted that the Council Resolution 2596 provides that our draft report is due on June 1st 2014. He would like to shoot for the draft being done a few weeks in advance of our due date as sometimes the report gets sent back and another Council Resolution provides that our commission is to be terminated on June 30, 2014.
5. Jan-Maya Schold made a motion to reopen public comment, seconded by Chuck Pennewill: motion passed. Dawn Niles (North Windham) Dawn Niles congratulated both Pam Shorey and Victor Rayhall on filling the vacancies on this board. Dawn Niles requested that the commissioners take a look at the work the 1st Charter Commission did- there is a lot of clean up language that was done. Dawn Niles would like the Commissioners to look closely at who can serve on boards and commissions, maybe including non-residents on appointed authorities (dispatch is an example) also look at filling vacancies (based on party affiliation).
6. Commissioner Discussion and possible action related to Items 1-7, Resolution 2595. Number four on the resolution pertains to term limits and was crossed off by the Council

before being handed to the Charter Commission, so that's out and we are left with six items to address. Our former chair Erika Haynes joined the group for the discussion. She said that the issue of appointed versus elected board of education members is becoming more of a trend especially common in larger cities. You could do a hybrid board or a fully appointed board. One of the main reasons appointing people is a good option is that you tap into people who are able to bring specific/relevant skills and can create a balance. Jan-Maya Schold questioned if you appointed people would they be limited by geography? Erika Haynes responded by saying the members do not need to come from the town- you could set it up however you want in the charter: the State has offered to assist with finding those people. Jan-Maya Schold stated that we have a mayor or receives a stipend and has questionable duties and it does not seem fair to make the mayor responsible for this task. Erika Haynes mentioned that you could put the responsibilities into anyone's hands: Town Council, president of the Town Council, Board of Education, etc. The issue was also brought up by Dr. Adamowski: there is a noticeable lack of communication between the Education Department and the town government. Chuck Pennewell stated that there are some pieces starting to come around with the new treasurer and finance director. Erika Haynes stated that you could have someone with expertise (knowledge of: education system as a whole, requirements, bargaining units, business and finance) running the schools in a much more effective way. Discussion took place regarding the types of people who would be wanted for this position. Erika Haynes stated you would want to look for diversity that would strengthen the board: what is the trajectory of the school system, what skills do they need to complete their 10 year plan, etc. She is in favor of appointments but also believes the appointees should be involved in the community. Discussion took place regarding the issues raised by Erika Haynes including concerns about who would appoint these people.

7. Commissioners moved on to Jan-Maya Schold's packet presentation which, among other things, addresses items 6 and 7 on the Council's list of things for the CRC to do..

III-2: Language needs to be softer said Ms. Schold. Discussion took place regarding how this section only refers to November elections. It was determined the language is not

specific enough and must clarify that this section is limited to election of public officials.

III-6: Jan-Maya Schold questioned why resignation of elected officials is treated differently than for appointed officials when the process is the same. Pam Shorey stated the Town Clerk is in charge of elections. Dennis O'Brien mentioned that the Chief Executive Officer is in charge of day to day operations. Chuck Pennewill mentioned the Mayor should be notified as well. Jan-Maya Schold agreed due to the fact that the Mayor has to get started working on the next appointment.

III-7: Changed official responsible for notifying town committees of a vacancy from Mayor to Town Clerk. Most seemed to agree. Discussion took place regarding party affiliation. Chuck Pennewill questioned what is $\frac{3}{4}$ of Town Council? The first line says $\frac{3}{4}$ but everything after that says majority.

IV-3(a): Definition of Mayor is scattered said Doug Lary who suggested there be a section which lists the officials.

IV-3(b): Jan-Maya Schold's proposal to delete archaic startup language was accepted by all.

V-1: Discussion took place regarding replacing the word "stipend" with "compensation." Brief discussion was held regarding changing the language to read "presiding officer" versus "mayor," but no determination was made.

8. Citizens and Delegations (3 minutes, related to Charter, Commissioners may ask questions or seek clarification)-none
9. Adjournment: Pam Shorey made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Victor Rayhall: motion passed. (1 opposed: Jan-Maya Schold)
Meeting adjourned at 9pm