

**WINDHAM CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION**

**WINDHAM TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2013 7:00 PM**

**Respectfully submitted by Jessica Niles Clerk of Charter Revision Commission**

Attendees: Douglas Lary, Dennis O'Brien, Barbara McGrath, Erika Haynes, Donna Nicolino, Priscilla Root, Jan-Maya Schold,

1. Call to order: Erika Haynes called the meeting to order at 7:03pm
2. Citizens and Delegations: Henry Crane: (Windham Street) He would like to see the committee consider switching to one police force.
3. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Minutes
  - a. 5-2-13- Dennis asked about section 8 regarding his comment about a leader who takes charge: Discussion was held. Barbara McGrath made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Priscilla Root; motion passed.
  - b. 5-23-13- a question was raised regarding James Flores comment about the diversity of the board; committee decided to change the sentence to read James raised concerns of lack of minority representation on this commission and in the town in general. The sentence stating Jan Maya-Schold asked once the board of finance is eliminated what will replace it and how will it work was taken out. Several grammatical items were fixed as well. Barbara McGrath made a motion to accept the minutes with the changes, seconded by Dennis O'Brien; motion passed.
4. Discussion and Possible Action to Establish Ground Rules
  - a. Chair's proposed ground rules: Chair's Proposed Ground Rules
    - **Meetings will run no longer than 9:00 pm without consensus. This need not be a formal vote, but the chair requesting consensus on the meeting timeline.**
    - Citizens and Delegations will be no longer than 3 minutes per citizen/delegation, held both at the beginning and the end of the meeting. Commissioners may dialogue with the individual speaking, but the chair

may determine that a lengthy dialogue must be moved to a regular meeting.

- Citizens and Delegations must be specific to the charter or to the work of the commission.

Dennis stated he would like the citizens and delegations section to allow for five minutes: three minutes can go very fast and some people cannot get their point across clearly in three minutes. Erika responded with: the latitude of the set up allows for it to go over three minutes. Barbara does not like the dialogue word but would rather see questions and answers or seeks clarification. It was determined to change it to read: **Citizens and Delegations will be no longer than 3 minutes per citizen/delegation, held both at the beginning and the end of the meeting. Commissioners may ask questions and seek clarification with the individual speaking, but the chair may determine that a lengthy interaction must be moved to a regular meeting.** It was determined that **the next agenda would be set at the previous meeting.** Jan would like the option to send an email out to have items added to an agenda before that meeting. Erika stated she would like to have a broad agenda which will allow them to be lead in different directions instead of a rigid agenda. Doug stated he would like have some agenda items figured out well in advance to give the public enough notice. Dennis stated he would like to allow the chair to come up with the agenda each meeting but allow us to stay fluid.

#### 5. Discussion and Possible Action Meeting Schedule and Charter Timeline

- a. Chair's draft meeting schedule and timeline attached "Attachment B"
  - b. Commissioners should identify any schedule conflicts: Barbara: July 25<sup>th</sup>, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Erika: August. Donna: Septembers 26<sup>th</sup>, October 24<sup>th</sup>. Doug: No known conflicts. Pricilla: Thanksgiving and Christmas. Dennis: No known conflicts.
  - c. Commissioners requested that a regular meeting that needed to be changed (e.g., Thanksgiving or the day after Christmas) be moved to the Thursday before.
6. Commissioners Discussion of Issues to be Addressed by Commission: In addition to the Town Council Charge. **Doug Lary:** stated after serving on the Ethic commission he noticed several areas where people serve on more than one area and this is a concern; in addition he has seen several times where a person should recuse themselves from a vote

but do not because it would cause the vote to be lost. He suggested looking at putting in alternates on boards/commission to help with this. Another topic is the rank choice voting or instant run off voting. **Jan-Maya Schold:** stated the charter needs to become a document which allows people to look at and be guided. It needs a lot of clarity, definitions and obligations. The charter needs to show responsibilities and obligations: there needs to be accountability. The standing rules for the Town Council are in conflict with charter, the charter is not a strong enough document. **Pricilla Root:** she thanked Erika for sending out the previous charter commission minutes. Pricilla would like to set priorities because there are several issues that come up repeatedly: Board of Finance, one police department, consolidation of Finance, vote of corporate world. These issues appear to be important to the people. **Dennis O'Brien:** he would like to see the Town Council issues addressed, Board of Finance (elimination or consolidation: this may be happening already), vacancies on boards, housekeeping changes (see previous commissions suggestions), voting by wards and the Town Manager system as well as Mayor terms. Dennis feels that for years is way too long. He would like to see two year terms and have one set person in charge. **Barbara McGrath:** she agrees with what everyone else has said. She would like to address the Town Council charges first, the memo from Rich Cody, voter definition (go through entire document and make sure it makes sense). **Donna Nicolino:** she would like to look at the previous commission's work, Town Council charge, Attorney Cody recommendation, police (she did not have an opinion at first but is now a stronger proponent of that), instant run off voting and voting by districts. **Erika Haynes:** Town Council charge, Attorney Cody recommendations, Board of Education. The previous commission's list of issues to address was three pages long - this commission charge from the Town Council is a lot shorter. Erika stated we should start with the Town Council charge and Rich Cody recommendations and this will start to link into some of the technical issues. We need to get a history of the Town Finance Department (ask Kevin Donohue about this: it may be being addressed). Discussion was held regarding what the previous charter commission had wanted to do.

7. Future Agenda Items: June 27<sup>th</sup> meeting: the meeting would be a work session with a lot of information gathering. Need to discuss what comes back from Kevin Donohue or a Town Council member in regards to items #1 and 2. Maybe ask Attorney Cody to speak

about his recommendations (any questions you have get them to Erika in advance). Everyone is asked to do an internal look at the technical issues of the charter. Look at the May 6<sup>th</sup> memo from Neida. Also maybe have Dr. Adomowski come to talk about the Board of Education. Discussion too place on the taxing districts. Jan-Maya asked for more clarity. Barbara stated the charter needs to be guiding: look at where it evolved from and examine if it is working as intended. Jan-Maya stated we do not want to be in conflict with the taxing district and would like more information.

- look at the charter through a technical lens
- look at the role of the mayor (throughout the whole document)
- ask Cody for information regarding different types of districts.
- what we see now and what is in the future (start formulating ideas)
- look at Town Manager (where the power lies)
- resignation of people (discussion was held on clerical issues)

8. Citizens and Delegations: Richard Bloomer (Prospect St, Willimantic): He has been involved in the education budgets in the past, he would like to see the fat looked at and have it skimmed down. He feels there needs to be a way in to the budgets; if you buy in volume then money will be saved overall. Pricilla Root stated the relationship between the Board of Finance, Board of Education and superintendent needs to be positive and then you will see positive results in addition the political climate has a large effect.
9. Adjournment: Pricilla Root made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Barbara McGrath; motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm

Respectfully Submitted: Jessica Niles, Clerk of the Charter Commission

# WINDHAM CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

## Attachment B

### Meeting Schedule and Charter Timeline

Regularly Scheduled Meetings of the Charter Commission are on the second Thursday of the month in the Town Hall Meeting Room, and the fourth Thursday of the month at the High School Media Center, at 7:00 pm.

Charter Commission was appointed on April 16, 2013, and all work must be done no later than 16 months after the date of appointment (August 16, 2014). The 2014 election day is November 4. After we give our report to Town Council, they have 45 days to hold a public hearing on it, and 15 days after the public hearing to make recommendations and return the report back to us. We would then have 30 days to issue a final report, and council would then have 15 days to act on it. In total, 105 days. We will find out from the Registrar of Voters the timeline needed to get the questions on the ballot. In short, work should be done no later than June, 2014 as a rough estimate.

### Regular Meeting Schedule

June 13 & 27, 2013

July 11 & 18, 2013

August 8 & 22, 2013

September 12 & 26, 2013

October 10 & 24, 2013

November 14 & 28, 2013

December 12 & 26, 2013

January 9 & 23, 2014

February 13 & 27, 2014

March 13 & 27, 2014

April 10 & 24, 2014

May 8 & 22, 2014