

MINUTES

SPECIAL TELECONFERENCE

MEETING OF THE

WINDHAM TOWN COUNCIL

**Windham Town Hall Bellingham Auditorium, 2nd Floor
Tuesday, August 19, 2014 - 7:00 P.M.**

1. Call to Order.

Mayor Eldridge called the Town of Windham Special Teleconference Town Council meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Town Council members present: Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge, Charles Krich, Tony Fantoli, Tom DeVivo, Joseph Underwood, Mark Doyle, Michael Lessard, James Flores, Christel Donahue and Charlotte Patros

Lorraine McDevitt was in attendance via telephone.

Town Manager Neal Beets was also in attendance.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Eldridge led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment.

Joe Marsalisi, Willimantic, noted he had issues with a number of changes being proposed in the Charter however the main one is changing the Willimantic Service District to the Willimantic Taxing District. Mr. Marsalisi stated he thinks there are liability issues with Police and Fire contracts and pensions and he believes the Town will have no control at all if this is done. He cited Chapter 105 from an article written by an Attorney.

Henry Crane, Willimantic, suggested the Town Council move forward with the proposed Charter questions. He also stated he believes there is language addressing the issues mentioned by Mr. Marsalisi.

Dennis O'Brien provided the Council with a copy of CGS 7-191 and explained the highlighted areas in subsection (d) and (e). Mr. O'Brien noted he disagreed with Mr. Marsalisi and does not believe there is any legal issue with the question. He also addressed the questions from the last conference regarding Police services outside the city limits and noted new language was added to Section IX-2 to clarify the issue. He

thanked the Council and hopes they will approve the Charter as written and to send it to the people of the Town.

Dennis Cronin, 247 North Street, Willimantic, hopes the Town Council endorses the recommendations made by the Charter Revision Commission. He also spoke about the three failed budgets and requested the Town Council look at ways to solve this problem. Mr. Cronin also gave examples of ways other Town address this issue.

4. Town Council Comment.

Mayor Eldridge stated there is little time left to meet with regards to the Charter. He noted it must be completed by September 4th to be put on the November ballot and he encouraged the Council to move forward tonight regardless of the direction they go in.

James Flores stated he agrees with the Mayor and noted after 3 years we should be ready to move forward. He stated he believes in the people of this Town and would like to move forward.

Tom DeVivo stated the Willimantic Service District will meet on September 9th. He also noted he would like to hold a Community Parking meeting prior to the Willimantic Service District Meeting and he asked that the Town Manager advertize the meeting so people can attend because the Service District has been challenged with parking issues. Mr. DeVivo also noted his concerns regarding the sound in the room and the accessibility of the room for residents who want to attend the meetings.

5. Resolutions.

Discuss and possibly move to approve the Charter proposed by the Charter Revision Commission and adopt a resolution or resolutions that set forth the Charter revision questions that the Town Council wants to place on the ballot at the General Election on Tuesday, November 4, 2014.

DeVivo read the Resolution and moved for its adoption.

DeVivo MOVED, Patros seconded, to approve Resolution #2646 setting forth the Charter revision questions that the Town Council wants to place on the ballot at the General Election on Tuesday, November 4, 2014 with the addition of a sixth question. All were in favor except Doyle and Fantoli who opposed.

Krich read the question to be added to the resolution.

Shall the Charter of the Town of Windham be revised to permit the authority of any police department to extend beyond the boundaries of its respective taxing district, if and when its services are retained by one or the other of the taxing districts by way of a written agreement duly approved by the proper authorities of each taxing district?

Flores MOVED, Underwood seconded, to move the question. All were in favor except Eldridge and Doyle who opposed. MOTION PASSED.

**A Resolution of the Windham Town Council Referring
Charter Revision Questions to the General Election Ballot on
Tuesday, November 4, 2014**

WHEREAS, the Windham Charter Revision Commission has submitted its final report to the Town Council; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council is empowered to decide which, if any, Charter revision questions it wishes to send to the voters for their consideration;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Windham Town Council hereby resolves that the following Charter revision questions are referred to the voters for their approval or disapproval at the General Election on Tuesday, November 4, 2014:

1. Shall the Charter of the Town of Windham be revised to confirm a Department of Finance, as established by the Town Council and Board of Education, responsible for implementing budgets for general government, education, the Water Department and the Water Pollution Control Authority?
2. Shall the Charter of the Town of Windham be revised to officially recognize the First Taxing District, and to rename and change the Willimantic Service District to a more self governing Willimantic Taxing District?
3. Shall the Charter of the Town of Windham be revised to permit any property owner liable to pay taxes on an assessment of \$1,000 or more to vote in the annual budget referendum regardless of residency or citizenship, while ensuring that no more than one joint owner of any such property who is not a Windham elector may vote?
4. Shall the Charter of the Town of Windham be revised to enable electors to vote for the total number of candidates to be elected to the Board of Education, and to ensure minority party representation on the board to the same extent as for all other elected boards and commissions of the town?
5. Shall the Charter of the Town of Windham be revised to permit the authority of any police department to extend beyond the boundaries of its respective taxing district, if and when its services are retained by one or the other of the taxing districts by way of a written agreement duly approved by the proper authorities of each taxing district?
6. Shall the additional revisions to the Charter of the Town of Windham recommended by the Charter Revision Commission be adopted, including changes that confirm the present type of government to the intent of the voters who established it by clarifying the authority of the Town Manager, Council, Mayor, Board of Finance and Town Meeting?

MOTION PASSED

DeVivo MOVED, Flores seconded, to approve the Charter as presented by the Charter Revision Commission. All were in favor except Doyle and Fantoli who opposed.
MOTION PASSED.

6. Citizens and Delegations: Public Comment.

Joe Marsalisi questioned why the Chair of the Charter Revision Commission was able to speak and answer questions from the Council during a Special Meeting.

James Flores thanked the Council for recognizing the job of the Charter Revision Commission. He believes the Commission did an excellent job and the best way to pay them back is to support the new Charter. He also encouraged the Council to campaign for the Charter and educate the people on it. In addition, Mr. Flores thanked everyone, with special thanks to Mark Doyle for making the motion regarding the backpack project. He noted 200 backpacks have been donated and there are more kids coming. He also stated a group was going to meet with the new Superintendent on Sunday, August 25th from 12:00 to 3:00 in the Kramer Building and he invited all to attend. He also noted supplies were still needed to fill the backpacks.

Dennis O'Brien, 120 Bolivia Street, Willimantic, thanked the Council on behalf of himself and the Charter Revision Commission members who worked so hard for so long, for honoring the effort put into the Charter by its member and moving it forward to the voters.

Charles Krich sincerely thanked each and every member of the Charter Revision Commission for preserving and getting through sometimes what may have seemed to be a thankless project.

Henry Crane, Willimantic, thanked Mayor Eldridge for attending the ribbon cutting for the homeless shelter and for supporting its efforts.

7. Adjournment

DeVivo MOVED, Underwood seconded, to adjourn the Town of Windham Special Teleconference Town Council meeting at 7:52 P.M. All were in favor. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Submitted By:

Barbara J. McKinney
Clerk of the Town Council