

Town Charter Revision Commission

Public Hearing

June 23rd 2016 7pm

1st floor conference room, Windham Town Hall

Attendees: Harry Carboni, Christel Donahue, Josh Eves, Dan Lein, Jeff Smith

1. Call to order: Harry Carboni called the meeting to order at 7pm. Harry Carboni introduced the members on the commission and talked about the charge they have been given.
2. Citizens and Delegations- Jean Chaine (Scotland RD, Windham Center)- submitted 3 pages of information and asked that it be included in the minutes (see addendum A)

Dawn Niles (North Windham) – Dawn Niles submitted language change for the commission to consider (see addendum B) the simplistic change is changing of dates, when in a short session the budget should be done in May, when in a long session it should be done by the 2nd week of June. Dawn spoke in response of Jean- the Windham Taxing District was added into the charter to make it better understood. People are confused when the service district meets. The Windham taxing district is a separate entity that is recognized by the state. The Windham Taxing District contacts out for services for a certain amount.

Murphy Sewall (Windham Center)-He would hate to see a referendum in the 2nd week of June- once school is out it is very hard to get the budget to pass. The Board of Finance needs to be given some flexibility to set a date. He stated if you skipped the town meeting part then you would be able to save a week. He also would like to see the town and the education budgets combined: you cannot set a mill rate until all of the budgets are passed. In addition, people do not understand the way the education budget is set up. Murphy also brought up there are non-resident voters that are voting down the budgets: they do not want to be taxed and their property is all of their concern where as they are not as invested in the town.

Henry Crane (Willimantic)- he likes the idea to make it more open ended. We could wait the state out first in order to hopefully get our money. He stated he thinks there are very few people who vote as property owners (30 or less). We need to get this done quick.

Laurie Jeffers (Willimantic)-

- We let the college kids vote and they do not live here so why shouldn't we let property owners vote.
- She thanked the committee for serving.
- She stated there is a problem with democratic control on passing budget.
- We should ask the 3 State Legislatures (Linda Orange, Mae Flexer and Susan Johnson for a uniform fiscal year.
- There is a problem with the democratic controlled Town Council- they like to pass it on, they give irresponsible budgets: they keep raising the budgets and taking away things that people really want.

- She spoke in regards to the publishing of the Town Charter in the newspaper each time we change something. Approx. 27,000-30,000. But the chronicle gave it cheaper this last time (15,000).
- She does not want the Town Council to select the Mayor.
- She would like to see the government convert back to the old ways- 1st selectman, etc.
- The Board of Education and the Board of Finance should be reduced to 7 member boards.
- There should be no overlapping boards and all should be 2 years (she went through who sits on the boards currently)
- The chair of the Board of Education and Board of Finance should be elected- all should be ½ plus 1.
- Both taxing districts should be taken out and a provision out in.
- Positions should not be paid they should be volunteers
- Out of town employees should have to pay for their children to attend school in the district.
- Any time a budget goes down 3x it should be adopted with 10% less.

Meeting adjourned at 7:28pm