

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
Town of Wallingford

Regular Meeting
October 14, 2008

A Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Charter Revision Commission was held on Tuesday, October 14, 2008, at the Wallingford Town Hall, Room 315, Wallingford, Connecticut.

Seated from the Commission was Jeffrey Knickerbocker – Chairman (arrived at 7:10), Suzanne Wright – Vice Chair, Debbie Gross, Kate Wall, Ray Lilley, Ray Rys, Robert Applegate, Vincent Cervoni, Hank Toman and Recording Secretary Sonja Vining.

Vice Chair Wright called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chairman Knickerbocker read into the record an email from Kathleen Pazutti and one from Jason Villani that were sent to wfdcharter@yahoo.com.

Robert Sheehan, 11 Cooper Avenue, stated that he would like to see something done with the position of Town Clerk. He suggested that perhaps it should be a civil service job.

Ken Dailey, 594 North Elm Street, feels that there is a disconnect between the Town Council and the Mayor's office. The delineation of responsibility between the Mayor and Town Council should be clearer. He feels that the bid process and the request for proposals system that the town currently uses should be examined closely. Mr. Dailey believes that not just the price should be looked at but also the quality of service and reputation. There should be measurable criteria developed for professional services.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

September 24, 2008 - Special Meeting

Mr. Rys made a motion to approve the Minutes of the September 24, 2008 – Special Meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Applegate and passed.

3. REVIEW PAGES 1-13:

The Commission discussed how language changes/syntax changes should be placed on the ballot. It was the general belief of the Commission that all language changes should be listed in one group on the ballot and all of the major changes would be listed item by item.

The Commission began reviewing the Charter chapter by chapter.

CHAPTER I INCORPORATION AND GENERAL POWERS**Section 1. Incorporation****Section 2. Rights and Obligations****Section 3. General Grant of Powers**

No changes were made at this time.

CHAPTER II OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS**Section 1. State and Federal Officers**

There was discussion regarding justices of the peace. There is an ordinance that governs that issue.

CERVONI: MOTION TO REVISE LINES 2 & 3 OF CHAPTER 11, SECTION 1 TO READ “AND REPRESENTATIVES, JUDGE OF PROBATE AND TWO REGISTRARS OF VOTERS SHALL BE CONDUCTED, AND THE REGISTRARS OF VOTERS SHALL”. (DELETING –“AND TWO JUSTICES OF THE PEACE”)

WRIGHT: SECOND

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Section 2. Municipal Elections

There was discussion about the existing two-year terms. The term of the Mayor, BOE and Town Council Members were all included. The pros and cons of a four-year term versus a two-year term were discussed and the issue of staggered terms was included in the conversation.

The issue of having Town Council Members be districted representatives versus at large was discussed. The possibility of increasing the number of Town Council Members from nine to eleven was brought up.

During the discussion it was suggested that at some point in the revision process the Mayor, Town Council Members, and department heads be invited to these meetings to express to the Committee what they would like to see revised or discussed.

After discussing this section in length Chairman Knickerbocker summarized the options. The system could be left as is. The Council could be revised to seven district representatives and two at large with no minority representation. It could be revised to nine district representatives and two at large with no minority representation. Term limits could be added. The terms could be changed from 2 years to 4 years. A 3-year term could be considered. A Town Manager position could be examined.

RYS: **MOTION TO REVISE CHAPTER II, SECTION 2, LINES 18 & 19 TO READ “FOR TERMS OF TWO YEARS. AT EACH SUCH ELECTION,” (DELETING – “EXCEPT THAT, AT THE 1991 ELECTION, THOSE MEMBERS SERVING A FOUR-YEAR TERM SHALL COMPLETE SAID TERMS”).**

CERVONI: **SECOND**

VOTE: **UNANIMOUS**

LILLEY: **MOTION TO DELETE LINES 22 & 23 OF CHAPTER II, SECTION 2. “THE NAMES OF ALL CANDIDATES DULY NOMINATED SHALL BE ARRANGED ON THE VOTING MACHINES AS PRESCRIBED BY STATE STATUTES.”**

APPLEGATE: **SECOND**

VOTE: **UNANIMOUS**

WRIGHT: **MOTION TO ADD TO THE END OF CHAPTER II, SECTION 2, LINE 35 “ELECTIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE STATUTE AS MAY BE AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME.”, OMIT CHAPTER II, SECTION 3, NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES, OMIT CHAPTER II, SECTION 4, BREAKING A TIE AND CONTESTED ELECTIONS.**

CERVONI: **SECOND**

VOTE: **UNANIMOUS**

Section 3. Nomination of Candidates

Omitted in the above motion

Section 4. Breaking a Tie and Contested Elections

Omitted in the above motion

Section 5. Eligibility

No changes were made at this time.

Section 6. Vacancies

No changes were made at this time.

Section 7. Voting Districts

After some discussion it was decided that the Commission would ask for input from the Wallingford Legal Department before making any changes to this section.

Section 8. Appointments

WRIGHT: MOTION TO REVISE CHAPTER II, SECTION 8, LINES 78 THRU 81 TO READ “ALL APPOINTMENTS MADE BY THE MAYOR THAT REQUIRE CONFIRMATION BY THE COUNCIL SHALL BE MADE BY THE MAYOR WITHIN 30 DAYS OF A POSITION BECOMING VACANT. IF THE COUNCIL TAKES NO ACTION WITHIN THIRTY DAYS OF WRITTEN NOTICE” (DELETING – “SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION. PENDING CONFIRMATION, ANY PERSON PRESENTLY HOLDING ANY SUCH OFFICE SHALL REMAIN IN OFFICE.”) LINES 85 THRU 87 TO READ “NOT, THEN SAID OFFICE SHALL BE FILLED BY A VOTE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL. IF THE MAYOR DOES NOT MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITHIN 30 DAYS THE TOWN COUNCIL WILL FILL THE VACANCY. ANY PERSON PRESENTLY HOLDING ANY SUCH OFFICE SHALL REMAIN IN OFFICE UNTIL THE APPOINTMENT IS MADE AND CONFIRMED.” (DELETING – “DECLARED VACANT, AND THE COUNCIL SHALL PROCEED TO FILL THE VACANCY IN THE MANNER PROVIDED BY CHAPTER II SECTION 6 OF THIS CHARTER.”)

TOMAN: SECOND

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Section 9. Removal of Elected and Appointed officials, Suspension

After some discussion it was decided that the Commission would ask for input from the Wallingford Legal Department before making any changes to this section. There was concern about labor laws and union contracts.

CHAPTER III THE TOWN COUNCIL

Section 1. The Council

The Commission decided to get input from the Wallingford Legal Department regarding lines 1 thru 5 of this section.

WRIGHT: **MOTION TO REVISE CHAPTER III, SECTION 1, LINES 6 THRU 8 TO READ “THE ANNUAL SALARY OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS SHALL BE SET BY BUDGET ORDINANCE, BUT ANY INCREASE SHALL NOT BECOME EFFECTIVE DURING THE CURRENT TERM OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS ENACTING SUCH ORDINANCE.” (DELETING – “COUNCILMEN” IN LINE 6 AND “COUNCILMEN” IN LINE 8)**

GROSS: **SECOND**

VOTE: **UNANIMOUS**

Section 2. Presiding Officer

There was discussion of how to make the section gender neutral.

No changes were made at this time.

Section 3. Clerk

No changes were made at this time.

Section 4. Procedure

No changes were made at this time.

The Commission decided to contact the Legal Department prior to the next meeting for its opinion on specific sections where the Commission had questions.

Chairman Knickerbocker suggested at the next meeting that the Commission be prepared to review pages 6-14 of the Charter.

4. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Applegate made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rys and passed. Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sonja Vining
Recording Secretary
Town of Wallingford
Charter Revision Commission
October 14, 2008