

MINUTES
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING
September 7, 2016

PRESENT: Chairman James Staunton, Commissioners Karen Marsden, Lynn Hidek, Art Kuever, Brad Sullivan (left at 7:51 pm), Eric Bergman, Dennis Donovan, Gary Bousquet

Absent: Peter Nye

Guests: Anthony Genovese, Woodbridge Town Administrator and Mike Milone, Cheshire Town Manager

The public hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Commission introductions were made explaining this commission is made up of nine volunteer members appointed by the Board of Selectmen. They have set a deadline of January, 2017 to make charter revisions.

This public hearing is being held to gather information and answer questions regarding a Town Manager form of government. Prior to this public hearing, the commissioners contacted other municipalities to gather Town Manager information.

Cheshire Town Manager Mike Milone and Woodbridge Town Administrator Anthony Genovese were introduced.

Chairman J. Staunton announced the rules for the public hearing.

The presentation included a handout and a power point presentation. The following points were made:

- The Board of Selectmen form of government includes:
 - The entire Board is elected by the voters and makes all the decisions
 - The First Selectman is the chief elected official
 - The First Selectman runs the day to day operations
 - He appoints and removes department managers
 - He has the responsibility for all functions within the municipal government
 - Handles human resources
 - Negotiates contracts
 - Maintains all town buildings
 - Oversees all boards/commissions/ committees
- Town Meetings are held and those people attending serve as the town's legislative body
- The Selectmen and a number of elected boards and commissions have various powers and responsibilities depending upon the charter
- The Town Manager type of government includes:
 - He would be hired by the Town Council and run the day to day operations of the municipal government (acting as the town's chief supervisor who reports to the Boards of Selectmen and Finance)
 - He would be accountable to the Town Council carries out the policies, implement the administrative responsibilities, gives guidance and has overall responsibility for all functions within the municipal government
 - The Town Manager hires and appoints all department managers and they report to him/her
 - He prepares the budget for the council's consideration, recruits, hires, terminates and supervises government staff and serves as the council's chief advisor
- The Town Council:
 - Would be elected and be the policy making body
 - They focus on the community's goals, major projects and long term considerations as community growth, land use development, capital improvement and financing and strategic planning
 - Establish policies that affect the overall operation of the town and are responsive to the residents' needs

The public hearing was open to the residents to ask their questions and voice their concerns with answers given by both Mike Milone and Anthony Genovese as follows:

- Do the members of the Town Council continue to receive their stipend?
- It is getting harder to find someone with the requirements to fill the position of First Selectmen
- An escape clause should be in the Town Manager's contract
- The Board of Selectmen form of government has been around forever and it is getting harder to fill this position
- Only some individuals have the time or qualifications to run for these positions
- The Town Council should be at least 7 to 9 members
- The First Selectman's position should be stronger, while the Board of Selectmen should become advisory
- The fear of going from our current form of government to a Town Manager includes: 1) Fear of the unknown, 2) it will take power away from the people (though the Town Manager is under the direction of the Board of Selectmen), 3) fear of losing power – people don't want to let go, 4) we could hire a Town Manager that was not a good fit for the town – however we could also elect a bad First Selectman
- This is the Town Manager's career and he is a professional
- 60% of the town's budget is for the Board of Education and the First Selectmen has no control over that budget
- Commissions are responsible for their departments
- The Charter Revision Commission explained that they focused on towns similar to Clinton when researching the Town Manager form of government – there is a link from Simsbury of their commission gathering information about the Town Manager form of government
 - The Town Council would be elected, however not sure of the number of members
 - A Town Manager is similar to the Board of Education's Superintendent – the Superintendent carries out the policies set by the BoE
 - The Board of Selectmen (Town Council) would be the administration and legislative branch
 - The Town Manager would be the Chief Executive
 - In some Town Council/Town Manager governments there is no Board of Finance
 - When there is no Board of Finance the Town Council makes the final recommendations on the budget
 - The budget can go to a referendum by a petition of the voters
 - This is a no town meeting form of voting
 - A hybrid form of Town Manager is a Town Administrator – the budget is prepared, goes to the Board of Selectmen for their recommendations, to the Board of Finance and then to a town meeting and if the set attendance quorum is not met it goes back to the Board of Finance as a final budget.
 - In the Town Manager's 3 year contract you can stipulate that there will be reviews of his goals and objectives
 - These goals and objectives become a blueprint which is given to the department heads
 - The fear of the unknown can be controlled by how the Charter is written – it can be varied or modified to give the residents some power
 - Reiterated the Town Council makes the policies
 - The Town Manager is the executor and carries out the policies, there is no intrusion on the Town Council
 - A Town Manager form of government is professional management of organization
 - He does good governance with the politics removed, the Town Council does the politics
 - Town Manager provides continuity with projects and government, while a First Selectman's term is 2 years (and is considered a part time professional)
 - Without continuity initiating projects could potentially lose momentum
 - The Town Manager manages and approves contracts for the town, controls the departments and has institutional knowledge and professionalism
 - He would be the liaison between the employees and politics
- Is the Town Council the same as a Board of Selectmen

- What is the salary of a Town Manager
 - A figure of \$130,000 with benefits and retirement package was given
 - Town Managers seem to stay in the position providing continuity with long term projects and cohesive management for projects
 - 35 towns have a Town Manager form of government out of the 169 CT towns
 - Some residents questioned the towns Clinton was compared to – told to look at Killingly as they are very similar in demographics to Clinton
 - Most towns don't change to a Town Manager because they feel if it ain't broke don't fix it
 - By going to a Town Manager form of government it is not the intention to take away the people's rights. The Charter can be written to keep the referendum and the protections you want
 - The Town Managers have a tight professional network, he belongs to various organizations from which to draw information and assistance from others
- How are special appropriations handled with a Town Manager form of government
 - Only emergency, underfunded or natural disasters are considered for appropriations
- Who handles Economic Development
 - He appoints an Economic Development director
 - He works with the First Selectman and accesses his professional network and gets assistance from bigger towns
 - A plan or philosophy is put into place and he gets input from boards and commissions
- What is the next step
 - Recommendations will be given to the Board of Selectmen for their approval or revisions and then it goes to a vote
- The letter from John Allen was read into the record

A motion was made by A. Kuever, seconded by L. Hidek to adjourn the public hearing at 8:35 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy McDermott
Clerk