

Regular Meeting Minutes March 23, 2009
East Lyme Charter Revision Commission

Members Present: Len Goldberg
 Steven McCue
 Tony Attanasio
 Michael Foley
 James Andersen
 Carole Green
 Lawrence White
 Greg Massad

Also Present: Robert Gadbois
 Barbara White

I. Call to Order. Chairman Goldberg called the March 23, 2009 East Lyme Charter Revision Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance. The Pledge of Allegiance was observed.

III. Approval of Minutes of February 9, 2009. Chairman Goldberg asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the February 9, 2009 Charter Revision Commission Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: Mr. White moved to approve the February 9, 2009 Charter Revision Commission Meeting Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Mr. Attanasio. Messrs. White and Massad abstained from voting. (5-0-2) Motion carried.

IV. Delegations. Mr. Gadbois of 358 Boston Post Road, East Lyme stated he still feels separating the Board of Education and Town budgets should be brought forward to the voters. He feels residents should have the right to vote separately on each budget. He did not want to wait until another Charter Revision Commission is formed.

V. Old Business

a. Discussion of issues raised at Public Hearing of 3/9/09. Ms. Green felt the three speakers at the Public Hearing spoke about bifurcation of the budget. Mr. White stated he felt this was an important issue, and that there is movement in that direction.

Mr. Andersen stated he is in favor of bifurcation of the budget to allow the voters to control it. He also felt there would be opposition to it, and it may nullify the major work this Commission has done. He felt this subject should be brought up by the next Charter Revision Commission.

Commission member Steven McCue arrived.

Mr. White felt this is a critical time in our country, and that this is an important change.

Mr. Massad stated he is strongly in favor of bifurcation of the budget.

Ms. Green felt the voters who come to the Annual Town Meeting are basically voting for the Board of Education budget.

Mr. Attanasio was concerned that voters who are against bifurcation of the budget would also vote against the automatic referendum.

Mr. Foley stated he had no problem with revising the report but felt this Commission has gone out of its way not to make political decisions. In principal he agreed with letting the voters have an opportunity to vote on each budget, but practically did not feel bifurcation belongs in the Charter. He felt the Board of Selectmen should take this matter up.

Mr. Attanasio stated the Town Charter is part of the political process. This Commission has worked hard to try to get an automatic referendum.

Mr. McCue, as the sole member who voted against the referendum, would also be against bifurcation of the budget. He felt both budgets are too closely aligned to make it worthwhile.

Mr. Massad felt it was important to know where voters want the budget trimmed.

Mr. White felt the majority of the Commission sees a need for bifurcation of the budget, and that it should allow the Board of Selectmen to make a decision on whether or not to bring it forward.

Mr. Andersen felt the electorate and government agencies need a few years of experience before a decision is made on bifurcation of the budget.

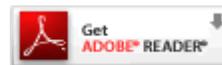
Mr. Goldberg stated this Commission came here to try to address a number of issues. An unruly meeting brought this Commission forward. As much as many of us would like to see bifurcation of the budget, it may overwhelm some of the other issues we tried to accomplish. He strongly suggested that this issue be revisited at another time.

Mr. White felt the Selectmen can make that choice. He felt the majority of this Commission would like to see bifurcation of the budget.

Mr. Foley felt it may be possible for residents to petition to have bifurcation of the budget. Ms. Green stated last year the Selectmen decided to take the budget to referendum. Possibly bifurcation could be handled the same way. Mr. Andersen did not feel the Charter can be revised at a Town Meeting. Mr. White suggested researching this matter.

Mr. Andersen reported state statutes with respect to the budget presume the entire town budget is one. It can be done differently if the Charter states it can.

b. Approval of Final Report. [Link to Report \(draft\) .pdf format](#)



MOTION: Mr. Andersen moved to approve the final report, as written. Seconded by Mr. Foley.
 In Favor: Foley, Andersen, Goldberg, Green and Attanasio. In Opposition: White, Massad.
 Abstained: McCue. (5-2-1) Motion carried.

Mr. Massad did not feel the Selectmen will bring any items to the voters that this Commission did not include. Mr. White felt bifurcation should be included to give the Selectmen a choice to bring it before the voters.

VI. Public Comments. Robert Gadbois, 358 Boston Post Road, East Lyme, stated he was very disappointed in this Commission's opinion on splitting the budget. He feels the residents of East Lyme are very intelligent, and this Commission is depriving them of a choice to vote on this matter. The board of education's budgets in many towns are running rampant. Possibly this would teach them a lesson to save and conserve.

MOTION: Mr. Andersen moved to add approval of March 9, 2009 Public Hearing Minutes to this evening's Agenda. Seconded by Mr. McCue. (8-0) Unanimous

MOTION: Mr. McCue moved to approve the March 9, 2009 Public Hearing Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Green. Messrs. Foley, Attanasio, Andersen and McCue abstained from voting. (4-0-4) Motion carried.

VII. Preparation of Agenda for 4/13/09 Meeting if necessary. Commission members felt it was not necessary to meet on April 13.

VIII. Adjournment.

MOTION: Mr. Foley moved to adjourn the March 23, 2009 East Lyme Charter Revision Commission Meeting

at 7:45 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Andersen. (8-0)
Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Ghersi, Recording Secretary