

Minutes of East Lyme Charter Revision Commission - 01/17/23

Date and time: 01/17/23 07:00 pm to: 01/17/23 7:21 pm
Present: Brooke Stevens, Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary, Marc Salerno, Anna Johnson, Vivek Puohit, Maryanna Stevens, Jeffrey McNamara, Timothy Hagen, Wayne Blair, Absent:, Barry Sheckley, Jay Ginsberg, Larry Fitzgerald
Location: East Lyme Town Hall, Upper Conf. Room, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT

Topics


1. Call to Order & Pledge

Note Mr. Salerno called the Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Charter Revision Commission to order at 7:03 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Note The Commission briefly discussed how each member will rsvp to each meeting upon receiving the agenda, to ensure that each member did in fact receive it.

2. Approval of Minutes

Note See attached minutes.

 [Minutes of East Lyme Charter Revision Commission 01 03 23.pdf](#)

2-1. Charter Revision January 3rd, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes

Decision MOTION (1)

Mr. McNamara moved to approve the Charter Revision Regular Meeting Minutes of January 3rd, 2023, as presented.

Ms. Stevens seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 7-0-0.

Note The Town Budget, Town Commissions, and Town Structure Subcommittee Meeting Minutes will be approved at the February 7th, 2023, Charter Revision Meeting.

3. Ex-Officio Comments

Note No Ex-Officio was in attendance.

4. New Business

4-1. Open Discussion on Charter Topics Not Covered by Subcommittees

Note Ms. Stevens noted they've been discussing not having the Tax Collector and Town Clerk be elected positions, and she asked about the Town Treasurer. She said right now they have a great Treasurer, but it's an elected position which doesn't require qualifications or experience.

Note Mr. Salerno said the Board of Selectmen didn't bring this position up in their charge, and he thinks it's an elected position as opposed to an employee position, which allows for additional objective oversight.

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EAST LYME, CT
2023 JAN 23 A 9:29
Cassidy M. Stevens
TOWN CLERK

Note Ms. Stevens said she brings this up because it's an important position and expertise and experience is beneficial.

Note Mr. McNamara said some of the following:

He's had discussions with Town Clerks and being an appointed official has its drawbacks just as being an elected official does.

The idea of moving away from an elected position is to ensure qualifications while removing politics from the position.

Making a position appointed could result in making the position even more political.

You may not want to differentiate between elected and appointed but elected and hired.

If you're appointed, you're appointed by the Board of Selectmen and may not be reappointed when that two-year Selectman term ends.

Note Ms. Johnson said this defeats this purpose of changing these positions from being elected positions in the first place; it also could result in even shorter terms for positions that currently have four-year terms.

Note Mr. Salerno said to feel free to bring this item up with his subcommittee and Ms. Stevens said she brought up the Treasurer position now since she's part of the Town Budget Subcommittee.

Note Mr. McNamara said the intent of the charge may be to investigate changing these positions to hired, and not appointed.

Note Ms. Johnson discussed how the Building Official and Fire Marshal are hired positions yet there is a process where the Board of Selectmen also appoints them.

Note Mr. Hagen said they approve the contracts and Mr. Salerno said if that's the case, the appointment is almost ceremonial.

Note Ms. Johnson noted she has never seen anyone get unappointed; since the knowledge and special requirements are needed, people are generally reappointed.

Note Mr. McNamara said if you get hired, from an administrator point of view, you have a hire date without an end date.

Note Mr. Salerno said unless it's a contractual position such as the Superintendent.

Note Mr. McNamara said they can bring these issues up during the Town Structure Subcommittee meeting.

Note Mr. Salerno said going back to the position of Treasurer, it's supposed to be a position that offers oversight, so it shouldn't be someone who works for the finance structure. Ms. Stevens replied that it could be a position that reports to the First Selectman.

Note Mr. Salerno said he received correspondence from Town Council, which he read into the record. The correspondence was from Attorney Ed O'Connell and discussed how tax appeals to the Supreme Court are handled by the Tax Assessor, but that procedure is not specifically authorized by the Charter.

Note In his correspondence Attorney O'Connell states the better course is to specify the circumstances when the Tax Assessor is authorized to act in property tax appeals against the Town.

Mr. Salerno said he will forward the correspondence on to the Commission Members for review and noted that Mr. O'Connell is willing to attend a future meeting to discuss this matter.

Note: Mr. Salerno detailed how he will be creating a spreadsheet with their 13 actions and anything they've added. He will forward it to the Subcommittee Chairs so that they can include decisions, rationale, and research.

Note: Ms. Stevens discussed how Mr. Sheckley brought up the idea of a budget presentation which would include the objective of the Department for each line item. She believes this is more of a policy and doesn't fit within discussions about the Charter but wanted to get input from the other Members as well.

Note: The rest of the Commission agreed that this is a policy matter which could be imparted to the First Selectman if Mr. Sheckley so desires.

5. Old Business

5-1. Town Commissions

Note: Mr. Salerno said that his subcommittee doesn't feel the combining of the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission is a good idea; both Commissions are too busy as it is.

Note: Mr. Salerno said they're still reviewing the initial separation of the Conservation Commission and Inland Wetlands Agency and have received some information from Ms. Hardy as to why this separation was done.

Note: Mr. Salerno said if anyone has questions or research requests of Sam Geary, they can send those to him, and he will pass them on to Mr. Geary.

5-2. Town Structure

Note: The Town Structure Subcommittee had nothing to report at this time.

5-3. Town Budget

Note: The Town Budget Subcommittee had nothing to report at this time.

6. Public Delegations

Note: No members of the Public were in attendance.

7. Adjournment

Decision: MOTION (2)

Mr. McNamara moved to adjourn the January 17th, 2023, Charter Revision Commission meeting at 7:21 p.m.

Mr. Blair seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 7-0-0.

Note: A Town Commissions Subcommittee meeting, Town Structure Subcommittee meeting, and Town Budget Subcommittee meeting immediately followed.

Note: Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary