

Minutes of East Lyme Charter Revision Town Structure Subcommittee - 02/21/23

Date and time: 02/21/23 7:04 PM to: 02/21/23 7:54 PM
Present: Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary, will not be attending Subcommittee Sessions, Jeffrey McNamara, Timothy Hagen, Larry Fitzgerald
Location: East Lyme Town Hall, Upper Conf. Room, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT
Link: <https://app.meetingking.com/meetings/392916>

Topics

1. Call to Order

Note: Immediately following a meeting of the Charter Revision Committee, the Town Structure Subcommittee met.

2. Subcommittee Work Discussion

Note: The Town Structure Subcommittee will focus on items #4, #5, & #10- Consider possible removal of Town Clerk and Tax Collector from elective offices and add said offices to administrative offices. Consider the possible exemption from the residency requirement set forth in Section 4.1.2, certain appointive offices, such as Director of Emergency Management, Dog Warden, etc., and the offices described in Sections 5.3- 5.7. Consider the possible addition of an appointive officer named the "Operations Officer" to assist the First Selectman in the performance of his or her administrative duties. This group will also look into the concept of a town manager government system, and the cleanup of appointed Board(s) language. Housekeeping item- Relegation of Tax Appeals to the Town Assessor.

Note: The Subcommittee came to a general consensus on item #4, #5, & #10:

1. The removal of Town Clerk and Tax Collector from elective offices and add said offices to administrative hired offices is recommended; this change will help assure stability and continuity of positions with highly qualified persons.
2. The exemption from the residency requirement for town offices is recommended; exemption increases available talent pool- they could consider residency as a factor for final candidate selection.
3. The addition of an appointive "Operations Officer" is not recommended; the position should be an HR decision and not part of the Charter.

More discussion is needed regarding the relegation of Tax Appeals to the Town Assessor.

3. Adjournment

Note: The Town Structure Subcommittee adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Note: Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary

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BROOKE STEVENS
TOWN CLERK

Table 1

Item	Subcommittee	Chair	Status	Rational
1. Consider possible elimination of automatic budget referendum provision in Section 7.3 of the Charter.	Budget	MaryAnna Stevens	In consideration	Looking for research to make change. Consider adding a tripwire
2. Consider possible merger of the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission.	Town commissions	Jay Ginsberg	Not Recommended	The consensus from those on both committees is that there is too much work to combine
3. Consider possible amendment of Section 2.7 to provide four year terms of Selectmen and two or four year terms of First Selectman.	Town Commissions	Jay Ginsberg	In consideration	
4. Consider possible removal of Town Clerk and Tax Collector from elective offices and add said offices to administrative offices.	Town structure	Jeff McNamara	Recommend	help assure stability and continuity of positions with highly qualified persons
5. Consider the possible exemption from the residency requirement set forth in Section 4.1.2 certain appointive offices, such as Director of Emergency Management, Dog Warden, etc., and the offices described in Sections 5.3-5.7.	Town structure	Jeff McNamara	Recommend	exemption increases available talent pool; could consider residency as a factor for final candidate selection
6. Eliminate references to constables and special constables in the existing charter.	General	N/A	Recommend	General Consensus
7. Consider the possible amendment of Section 6.3.4 to provide that if the Board of Finance does not act on requests for special appropriations or transfers of funds within specified time, the result is an automatic approval.	Budget	MaryAnna Stevens	Possible modification to change	Considering of adding language to say need to act without any delay.
8. Consider the possible amendment of Section 6.3 to provide that projects funded entirely by grants from the State of Connecticut which do not require an appropriation of town funds need not be approved by the Board of Finance or a Town Meeting.	Budget	MaryAnna Stevens	Recommend with modification	Possible of setting a dollar limit on it, but waiting for some research to justify decision and other modification to change. What if Monday comes with conditions which now doesn't have oversight (provided all provisions)
9. Consider the possible amendment of Section 6.3.1 to provide that the current dollar threshold of \$10,000 for special town meetings be raised.	Budget	MaryAnna Stevens	Recommend with modification	Waiting for research information on how much (or percent of budget)
10. Consider the possible addition of an appointive officer named the "Operations Officer" to assist the First Selectman in the performance of his or her administrative duties.	Town structure	Jeff McNamara	Not Recommended	the position should be an HR decision not part of the charter
11. Consider the possible amendment of Section 3.4.3 to eliminate newspaper publication when allowed by law and substitute electronic and website notice.	General	N/A	Recommend	General Consensus
12. Consider the possible amendment of Section 2.5.4 to provide that an appointee to a vacancy in an elective office shall serve the remainder of the term that was filled.	Town commissions	Jay Ginsberg	Recommend	This change would make East Lyme more consistant with other towns and prevent confusion as to who was serving in a position
13. Consider reinstating the Conservation Commission which will be comprised of members from both the Inland Wetlands Agency and the Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources.	Town commissions	Jay Ginsberg	In consideration	

OTHER					
A. To institute, Prosecute, defend or compromise any legal action or proceeding by or against the town: <u>provided that the assessor is authorized to defend or compromise any tax assessment appeal resulting in a payment to the taxpayer of \$40,000 or less</u>	General	N/A	Needs discussion		
B. Consider if full time elected officials work schedule be structured same as other town officials (limited paid time off)	Town structure	Jeff McNamara	In consideration		
C. Other Charter clean up including looking at gender neutral language.	General	N/A	Needs discussion		
D. Consider charter review occur a minimum of every 10 years, but could occur more frequently if selectmen desire.	General	N/A	Needs Discussion	As East Lyme grows and state regulations evolve the Charter should be reviewed on a regular basis	
E. Term limits on elected and appointed officials.					
F. Cleanup of Appointive Boards				Any required boards should be charter	
G. Clean up requirement 6.15 to make it electronic and available on town website					

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