

Minutes of East Lyme Charter Revision Commission - 03/21/23

Date and time: 03/21/23 7:00 PM to: 03/21/23 7:30 PM

Present: Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary, Marc Salerno, Anna Johnson, Larry Fitzgerald, Wayne Blair , Vivek Purohit, Maryanna Stevens , Barry Sheckley, arrived at 7:30 p.m.,
Absent:, Jeffrey McNamara, Timothy Hagen , Jay Ginsberg

CC: Kevin Seery, First Selectman

Location: East Lyme Town Hall, Upper Conf. Room, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT

Link: <https://app.meetingking.com/meetings/394723>

Topics

1. Call to Order & Pledge

Note Chairman Salerno called the Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Charter Revision Commission to order at 7:04 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Note The Commission previously agreed that each subcommittee will approve their own set of meeting minutes.

2-1. March 7th, 2023, Charter Revision Meeting Minutes

Note see attached minutes.

 [Minutes of East Lyme Charter Revision Commission 03 07 23.pdf](#)

Note Mr. Salerno noted there is a small clerical error on this evening's agenda item 2-1: Approval of Meeting Minutes, has today's date, March 21st, 2023, when it should read March 7th, 2023.

Decision MOTION (1)

Mr. Blair moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of the March 7th, 2023, Charter Revision Commission as presented.

Mr. Purohit seconded the motion.


Motion carried, 6-0-0.

2-2. February 21st, 2023, Budget Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Note Ms. Stevens said she will forward the Budget Subcommittee meeting minutes to the Commission to review, and this item was tabled until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

2-3. February 21st, 2023, Town Commissions Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Note see attached minutes.

 [Charter-Revision-February-21-2023-Commissions-Subcommittee-Minutes.pdf](#)

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
EAST LYME, CT
2023 MAR 28 A 9:10
Cassidy M. Salerno
TOWN CLERK

Decision MOTION (2)

Mr. Blair moved to approve the February 21st, 2023, meeting minutes of the Charter Revision Town Commissions Subcommittee as presented.

Mr. Salerno seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 2-0-0.

Town Commissions Subcommittee Members in attendance: Marc Salerno & Wayne Blair.

2-4. February 21st, 2023, Town Structure Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Note see attached minutes.

 [Charter-Revision-Town-Structure-Subcommittee-February-21-2023-Minutes.pdf](#)

Note Only Mr. Fitzgerald was in attendance, so this item was tabled until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

3. Ex-Officio Comments

Note Mr. Seery had no comments.

4. New Business

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

Note Town Assessor Communication & Town Council Request Update.

Note Mr. Salerno said he received a communication from Town Attorney regarding the confusion with the Assessor. He suggested that Mr. O'Connell and Ms. Vitagliano attend the April 4th, 2023, meeting.

Note Mr. Seery said he believes they spoke, and the issue might be resolved now, but the invite can be extended in case it's needed.

Note Ms. Johnson said when she reviewed the Charter again, she noticed under Section 3.3., Board of Selectmen, General Powers, Duties and Procedures, item 3.3.1.5. reads:

"with Board of Finance approval, to purchase real estate, the price of which shall not exceed ten thousand dollars and accept gifts of real estate."

Task Ms. Johnson said since they're recommending changing the \$10,000 appropriation amount for town meetings, it might make sense to revise the \$10,000 in this instance as well.

Mr. Salerno said he will pass this item on to Town Council.

Owned by Marc Salerno due 03/22/23

Note Ms. Johnson said she also noticed a housekeeping item:
Section 6.2.2.,

"The Tax Collector shall then collect the tax in accordance with the General Statutes. The due date shall be July 15th unless otherwise provided by the town in accordance with the General Statutes."

Note Ms. Johnson said taxes are actually due July 1st, and Mr. Seery noted that the Town Attorney is able to fix an obvious error or typo like this, without Charter Revision.

Note Mr. Salerno said he will share this item with Mr. O'Connell as well and added that he would like to finish up the subcommittee work today, and each subcommittee can draft a report to share with the entire Commission at the next meeting; they can have a meeting of the whole, and from there once they come to a conclusion and resolve any issues, they can do a cleanup of the language- such as changing out constable for police.

Note Mr. Salerno said his goal is to have everything wrapped up by the first week in June, to send off to the Board of Selectmen for review.

Note Mr. Salerno said he also has some of the language Mr. Sheckley has been suggesting regarding values and objectives, but since he's not yet in attendance, they can table that discussion for the next meeting as well.

5. Old Business

Note Subcommittee reports & discussions- this meeting is for general discussions. The Commission will break into their Subcommittee working groups immediately following this meeting.

Note Mr. Salerno asked that the subcommittees impart their work on a spreadsheet for the next meeting, so that it may be shared with the entire Commission. He noted that this language can be used to draft their report for the Board of Selectmen.

5-1. Town Structure

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.

Note Mr. Fitzgerald said his subcommittee has one item left to talk through before their work is complete, the limited paid time off item that was added to their charge.

Note Mr. Salerno noted Mr. Hagen is still on vacation, and if Mr. Fitzgerald doesn't have the opportunity to meet with Mr. McNamara, they can discuss this item at the meeting of the whole.

Task Mr. Salerno said he's curious if other towns handle time off for elected officials differently and Mr. Seery said he will have Ally Christensen research this item since Mr. Geary is no longer available to provide assistance.

Owned by Kevin Seery, First Selectman due 03/22/23

5-2. Town Commissions

Note The Town Commissions Subcommittee will focus on items #2, #3, #12 & #13- Consider possible merger of the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission. Consider possible amendment of Section 2.7 to provide four-year terms of Selectmen and two- or four-year terms of First Selectman. Consider the possible amendment of Section 2.5.41 to provide that an appointee to a vacancy in an elective office shall serve the remainder of the term that was filled. 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.

Note Mr. Salerno said they're just buttoning up such language on the Conservation Commission item.

5-3. Town Budget

Note The focus of the Town Budget Subcommittee are items #1, #7, #8, & #9- Consider possible elimination of automatic budget referendum provision in Section 7.3 of the Charter. 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. 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 at a Town Meeting. 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.

Note Item added by Subcommittee:
Housekeeping item- Publication of the annual budget on the website and elimination of hard copies.

Task Ms. Stevens said her subcommittee still has an open item and Mr. Seery asked her to send the information to him, and he will pass it on to Ms. Christensen, and she will complete the research.

Owned by Kevin Seery, First Selectman due 03/22/23

Note Mr. Salerno asked that the Budget Subcommittee work on composing the rest of their report, and the open item can be added later, once it's completed.

Note Mr. Salerno said he will update his spreadsheet and make note of what has been discussed and any new items that have come up. He added that they can revisit these items under new business at either the next meeting, or the following meeting.

6. Public Delegations

6-1. Pat Larkin of 14 Oak Hill Drive

Note Mr. Larkin said some of the following:
At the Charter Revision kickoff meeting one of the items brought up was whether we have the correct talent structure with a Selectman versus a Town Manager. He sees discussion in the meeting minutes about changing Selectmen terms but didn't see discussion related to a Town Manager system.

Note Mr. Salerno replied that the Subcommittee did discuss this item and it will likely be elaborated on more at the next meeting.

Note Mr. Sheckley arrived at 7:30 p.m.

7. Adjournment

Task Mr. Salerno asked the Recording Secretary to review past minutes and formulate a list of any new items that were brought up outside of the initial charge of the Charter Revision Commission.

Owned by Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary due 04/04/23

Note The next Regular Meeting of the Charter Revision Commission is scheduled for April 4th, 2023.

Decision MOTION (3)

Mr. Salerno moved to adjourn the March 21st, 2023, meeting of the Charter Revision Commission at 7:30 p.m.
Ms. Johnson seconded the motion.
Motion carried, 6-0-0.

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

Note Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary

Task Summary

New Tasks

Task Ms. Johnson said since they're recommending changing the \$10,000 appropriation amount for town meetings, it might make sense to revise the \$10,000 in this instance as well.

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