

# Minutes of Charter Revision Commission Regular Meeting - 06/06/23

**Date and time:** 06/06/23 07:04 pm to: 06/06/23 08:04 pm

**Present:** Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary, Marc Salerno, Larry Fitzgerald, Wayne Blair , Maryanna Stevens , Barry Sheckley, Jeffrey McNamara, Timothy Hagen , Jay Ginsberg, Anna Johnson, Vivek Purohit

**CC:** Tracy Collins, Town Attorney, Kevin Seery, First Selectman, Anne Santoro, Board of Selectmen Member

**Location:** East Lyme Middle School, 31 Society Road, Niantic, CT, 06357

## Topics


### 1. Call to Order

**Note** Chairman Salerno called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:43 p.m.

### 2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

#### 2-1. May 23rd, 2023, Meeting Minutes

**Note** see attached meeting minutes.

 [Charter Revision May 23 2023 Minutes.pdf](#)

**Decision** MOTION (1)

Mr. McNamara moved to approve the meeting minutes of May 23rd, 2023, as presented.

Mr. Hagen seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 10-0-0.

### 3. Ex-Officio Comments

**Note** Mr. Seery had no comments.

### 4. Discussion of Public Hearing Feedback & Possible Action

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
EAST LYME, CT  
2023 JUN 13 A 7:54  
*Cassidy M. McMillan*  
TOWN CLERK

**Note** The Commission discussed the Public Hearing feedback and some of the following was said:

Ms. Stevens said in regard to grants, there are reporting requirements.

Mr. Fitzgerald said the oversight is the State.

Mr. Ginsberg asked if they should add something about transparency to their rationale?

Ms. Stevens suggested adding that "transparency is already ensured. The town is subject to an annual audit in which a state and federal compliance report is issued, listing all grants, in addition, the grants awarded contain specific expenditure requirements."

Ms. Collins noted there's no discretion with how a grant is spent, it's contained within.

Mr. Sheckley said they're more concerned with efficiency is governance than saving pennies.

Mr. McNamara said he believes there was some misconceptions, they're making recommendations, not adding positions, and Mr. Blair asked if that should be clarified in their rationale?

Mr. McNamara said hiring a Town Manager contradicts the argument against extending the Selectmen terms, since you can't vote for a Town Manager.

Mr. Hagen said the use of a Town Manager is more bureaucratic and Mr. Fitzgerald said only 33 towns in Connecticut utilize a Town Manager.

Mr. Fitzgerald said in terms of a Town Manager there may be a lack of available talent, and it falls into the bucket "if it's not broke, don't fix it."

Mr. Salerno said he understands the sentiment about the budget referendum, which is why they tried to set a threshold.

Mr. McNamara said there still is an avenue to go to referendum, and the comments made are not enough to change his mindset; the Board of Selectmen will consider their rationale.

Mr. Hagen and Ms. Stevens wondered if the threshold should be lowered, and Mr. McNamara suggested letting the Board of Selectmen determine this.

Mr. Sheckley suggested having a motion that they're not recommending eliminating the budget referendum.

Mr. McNamara said the Board of Selectmen may determine that 4% or 3% is a better percentage to work from.

Mr. Hagen said it might have a better chance of passing if the percentage is lower.

Mr. Blair said he thinks the Public will be focused more on the monetary amount than the percentage.

Mr. Blair said the governing bodies monitor the requirements of budget cost increases and this is reflected in their deliberations.

Mr. Hagen suggested adding language that conveys that it's the responsibility of the town governing bodies to prepare and justify the overall budget in accordance with the needs of the community and overall cost increase.

Mr. Sheckley said he will work on crafting some language.

Mr. McNamara said this will be tweaking the language and not their rationale, so he has no objection to this being done outside of this meeting.

Mr. Salerno suggested repeating how there's still an avenue for the Public to petition for a referendum.

Mr. Ginsberg asked about the 4-year terms and Mr. Salerno said he sees no right answer here.

Mr. McNamara said he can see how a 2-year term would be more appealing to some but can also see how a 4-year term would be more appealing to others; he can see how 4-year and 2-year terms could each lead to a pool of people with more qualifications.

Ms. Johnson said given the time needed for acclamation, 4 years makes sense.

Mr. Purohit said 4 years could be problematic if you don't have a competent person.

Mr. Blair noted it's the only board in town without 4-year terms.

Mr. Seery said most towns don't pay their first selectman a lot of money, so the pay isn't going to entice a candidate midcareer for 2 years.

Mr. Salerno suggested adding the rationale "as all other boards and commissions have 4-year terms."

**Note** The Board further discussed tweaking the rationale.

**Decision** MOTION (2)

Mr. Hagen moved to give Mr. Sheckley the authority to further draft rationale language and Mr. Salerno the authority to approve the language and draft report.

Ms. Stevens seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 10-0-0.

**Decision** MOTION (3)

Mr. McNamara resolved that the East Lyme Charter Revision Commission submit its draft report as amended and approved on June 6th, 2023, including the proposed Charter amendments to the East Lyme Town Clerk for transmittal by the Town Clerk, to the East Lyme Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Ginsberg seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 10-0-0.

**Note** Ms. Collins reviewed the procedures going forward and how the Board of Selectmen will schedule a public hearing for June 21st, 2023. She advised the Commission to schedule a meeting immediately following the Board of Selectmen Public Hearing, and to post an additional agenda, so that the entire Charter Revision Commission can attend the Board of Selectmen meeting can confer if necessary.

## 5. Public Delegations

**Note** There were none.

## 6. Adjournment

**Decision** MOTION (4)

Mr. McNamara moved to adjourn the June 6th, 2023, Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Charter Revision Commission at 8:53 p.m.

Mr. Hagen seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 10-0-0.

**Note** Respectfully Submitted,  
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary