

**MINUTES
TOWN OF GROTON
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
March 10, 2008
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2**

1. Members Present: Frank "Mick" O'Beirne, Shirley Dunbar-Rose, Stan Dziurzynski, Nancy Moffat, Richard Moravsik, Raymond Munn, Ed Stebbins, and John Wirzbicki
Members Absent: Robert Frink
Also Present: Office Assistant Lori Watrous

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. A motion was made by Commissioner Stebbins, seconded by Commissioner Moffat to approve the minutes of February 25, 2008. The motion passed unanimously.
3. COMMUNICATIONS
 - a. Chairman: No report.
 - b. Secretary: No report.
 - c. Members: No reports.
4. CITIZEN COMMENTS
None
5. OLD BUSINESS

Members continued discussion of the **DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY SERVICES** section as restructured by Commissioner Moffat.

The Library Director, Alan Benkert, and Chairman of the Library Board, Marie Shaw, were in attendance.

Mr. Benkert remarked that the current Charter is out-of-date and that references to the CGS do not reflect current practices. Attempts have been made to amend the CGS to reflect the way that libraries actually run, but the statutes have not been changed thus far. He was concerned about the misconception that the Library Board is more than an advisory board; as their function is not to oversee or make decisions. He further stated that he does not work for the Library Board, but for the Town Manager.

Ms. Shaw agreed with Mr. Benkert that the Library Board functions in an advisory capacity, as they don't have fiscal responsibility. Their current role is to represent citizens, and be a sounding board regarding technology plans.

Chairman O'Beirne suggested that, as with other departments, we omit a specific section on the Library Department. Commissioner Moffat disagreed, and stated that a section regarding the hiring of the library director should remain in the Charter.

A recess was taken from 7:47 to 7:53 p.m., at which time Alan Benkert and Marie Shaw left the meeting.

A motion was made by Secretary Dunbar-Rose and seconded by Commissioner Moffat that we postpone this discussion until the Town Manager and Town Attorney have had time to

determine how much of the Library Department section is needed in the Charter and the implications, if any, of not having this section at all. The motion passed unanimously.

Members continued discussion of the **OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS** section as restructured by Commissioner Dunbar-Rose.

- a. Sec. __.7.3 – *Conflict of Interest*
 1. In the first sentence change “Any” to “No”.
 2. In the first sentence change “may not” to “shall”.
 3. In the second paragraph, second sentence change “rescue” to “recuse”.
 4. In the fifth paragraph change “shall be” to “consisting of at least five members,”.
 5. A motion was made by Chairman O’Beirne and seconded by Commissioner Stebbins to delete paragraphs six and seven. The motion passed with 6 in favor, 2 abstain (Secretary Dunbar-Rose and Commissioner Wirzbicki).

A motion was made by Secretary Dunbar-Rose and seconded by Chairman O’Beirne to accept the proposed changes to the *Conflict of Interest* section. The motion passed unanimously.

Members discussed the **PREAMBLE** section.

Discussion ensued as to whether to modify the preamble drafted by Commissioner Moffat or adopt a preamble fashioned like that of the Town of Madison.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wirzbicki and seconded by Commissioner Moravsik to approve a preamble patterned after Madison’s, except change the word “organic” to “fundamental”. The motion passed 7 In Favor, 1 Opposed (Commissioner Moffat). The **PREAMBLE** will therefore read:

PREAMBLE

- A. *This Charter is the fundamental law of the Town of Groton (hereinafter referred to as the “Town”) providing for the administration of its local affairs.*
- B. *Matters of administration of local affairs not provided for by this Charter, or by lawful ordinance, shall be governed by the General Statutes including the Home Rule Statute and any Special Acts of the State of Connecticut applicable to the Town.*

Members continued discussion of the **INCORPORATION AND POWERS** section as restructured by Commissioner Moffat.

- a. CHAPTER I – INCORPORATION OR POWERS – Change “OR” to “AND”.

Commissioner Wirzbicki would like the Town Attorney to review this section to make sure that we have, in fact, reserved our specific powers. The Town Clerk will forward a copy to the attorney.

The **REFERENDUM** section, as restructured by Commissioner Moravsik, will be discussed after completion of the **BUDGET** and **FINANCE** sections.

Members continued discussion of the **ANNUAL BUDGET PROCESS** section as restructured by Chairman O’Beirne.

- a. Sec. __.1 – *Annual Budget Preparation* – no changes
- b. Sec. __.1.1 – no changes

- c. Sec. __.1.2 – In the second sentence, delete the words “the Board of Education or”.
- d. Sec. __.1.3 – *Proposed Capital Projects* – In the first sentence change “CGS. concerning” to “CGS concerning”.
- e. Sec. __.1.4 – *Fiscal Year* – no changes

6. NEW BUSINESS
None

Chairman O'Beirne indicated that at the next meeting, the commission will continue with the **ANNUAL BUDGET PROCESS** section and then continue on with the **FINANCE** section.

7. ADJOURNMENT
By consensus the meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Shirley Dunbar-Rose
Secretary
Approved March 24, 2008