

**MINUTES  
TOWN OF GROTON  
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION  
April 14, 2008  
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2**

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. A motion was made by Chairman O'Beirne, seconded by Commissioner Moffat to approve the minutes of March 24, 2008. The minutes were unanimously approved.
3. COMMUNICATIONS
  - a. Chairman: Chairman O'Beirne reported that Lee Vincent is concerned with Section 9.3 in regards to employee political activity, and the legality of town employees to make contributions to national and local campaigns. Chairman O'Beirne suggested that when the Commission discusses Section 9.3 that perhaps a statement referencing the CGS replace the detailed wording currently found in that section.
  - b. Secretary: None
  - c. Members: None
4. CITIZEN COMMENTS  
None
5. OLD BUSINESS

Members continued discussion of the **FINANCE** section as restructured by Commissioner Wirzbicki.

- a. Sec. \_ .9.2.1 (new) – *Restrictions on purchasing* – Revise this section to read:  
"Purchases shall be made under such rules and regulations as may be established by the town council, subject to the provisions of the CGS."

A motion was made by Commissioner Wirzbicki and seconded by Commissioner Moffat to amend Section \_ .9.2.1 as above. The motion passed unanimously.

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 – no changes
- d. Sec. \_ .1.3 – *Proposed Capital Projects* – Append two sentences to the end of this section as follows: "All proposed capital projects, regardless of the proposed method or source of funding, shall be included in the budget. No capital project, regardless of the method or source of funding, shall be undertaken until it has been approved by a majority vote of the RTM."

- e. Sec. \_\_.1.4 – *Fiscal Year* – no comments
- f. Sec. \_\_.2 – *Duties of the Town Manager on the Budget* – no changes
- g. Sec. \_\_.2.1 – *Budget Estimates* – no changes
- h. Sec. \_\_.2.1.1 – no changes
- i. Sec. \_\_.2.1.2 – no changes
- j. Sec. \_\_.2.1.3 – no changes
- k. Sec. \_\_.2.2 – no changes
- l. Sec. \_\_.3 – *Duties of the Council on the Budget* – no changes
- m. Sec. \_\_.3.1 – *General* – In the second sentence after the words “Town Clerk” add “; shall cause a copy of said estimates to be made available for download via the internet;”.
- n. Sec. \_\_.3.2 – *Tax Rate* – no changes
- o. Sec. \_\_.4 – *Duties of the RTM on the Budget* – no changes
- p. Sec. \_\_.4.1 – *General* – This section will be split into two paragraphs without additional paragraph numbering as follows:

“Following receipt of the Budget approved by the Council, the RTM shall meet as directed by the Council for the consideration of the Budget. This meeting shall be held on or before May 3<sup>rd</sup> at such hour and at such place as the Council shall direct. It may be adjourned from time-to-time provided that final action be taken on the Budget not later than May 25<sup>th</sup>.

The RTM shall not act upon any proposal for the sale or purchase of real estate or other borrowing except upon recommendation of the council nor act upon any appropriation which has not been acted upon by the council. The RTM may cut appropriations recommended in the budget and may, by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, restore cuts made in a department appropriation by the council; provided, that in no case can the final total of the budget or of any bond issue be greater than that proposed by the manager (including the board of education budget) or by the town council, whichever is greater. The RTM shall return the approved Budget to the Council.”

- q. Sec. \_\_.5 – *Failure to adopt Budget* – no changes
- r. Sec. \_\_.5.1 – *Council fails to adopt Budget* – no changes
- s. Sec. \_\_.5.2 – *RTM fails to adopt Budget* – no changes
- t. Sec. \_\_.5.3 – *Both Council and RTM fail to adopt Budget* – no changes

Chairman O’Beirne made a motion to approve the above changes and modifications. The vote passed unanimously.

A recess was taken from 8:00 to 8:10 p.m.

Upon further contemplation, Commissioner Wirzbicki stated that he did not think that if the Council and the RTM fail to adopt a proposed budget that the budget should revert to the last

approved budget. This zero increase would not account for contractual salary increases, rising heating and electricity costs, etc.

Discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of reverting to the current year's budget or the Town Manager/BOE proposed budget in the event of a failure to adopt the budget by both the Council and RTM.

Chairman O'Beirne requested that the vote be retaken pertaining to Sec. \_ .5.3 regarding the following: if there is a failure to adopt a new budget by both the Council and RTM then the budget will revert to the current year's approved budget (a zero increase). This motion passed with 4 In Favor, 3 Opposed (Opposed – Secretary Dunbar-Rose, Commissioner Moffat, and Commissioner Wirzbicki).

Members continued discussion of the **REFERENDUM** section as restructured by Chairman O'Beirne.

- a. The question was broached whether to have a budget referendum; and if so, should the question be split so that citizens can pass either the referendum or the proposed Charter. Chairman O'Beirne stated that currently we are no longer operating in accordance with the Charter, and we should consider if we are willing to risk its approval by not having a referendum. Commissioner Wirzbicki requested that a decision not be made on this until he returns, as he will not be at the next Charter Revision meeting. Discussion on this item will resume on May 12, 2008.

#### 6. NEW BUSINESS None

At the next meeting the Commission will evaluate where we are on completed sections of the Charter and items yet to be done, then continue on with the **MERIT SYSTEM** section, and then move on to discussion of the memorandum from the Town Attorney dated April 14, 2008.

#### 7. ADJOURNMENT By consensus the meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

---

Shirley Dunbar-Rose  
Secretary  
Approved April 28, 2008