

**MINUTES
TOWN OF GROTON
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
June 30, 2008
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2**

1. Members Present: Frank "Mick" O'Beirne, Shirley Dunbar-Rose, Nancy Moffat, Richard Moravsik, Ed Stebbins, and John Wirzbicki
Members Absent: Robert Frink and Raymond Munn
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 Commissioner Stebbins, seconded by Commissioner Moravsik to approve the minutes of June 23, 2008. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Chairman: None
- b. Secretary: None
- c. Members: None

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Jack Sebastian, 4 East Shore Avenue, would like taxpayers to have a say regarding the budget, but would like to avoid the mindless gyrations that other towns are currently going through with their referendums. He would like to see measurable objectives given to officials and employees and if those objectives are not reached then the budget would go to referendum.

Chairman O'Beirne replied that the Charter is not final yet. The Commission will be having another public hearing and the Town Council will also be forwarding its comments after its public hearing. This Commission has looked at many sample processes and trigger points for instituting a referendum, and Chairman O'Beirne stated that if Mr. Sebastian wanted to develop a mechanical solution to the referendum process it would be taken into consideration, but so far this Commission has not found a viable solution.

5. OLD BUSINESS – Working from the Town Clerk's latest draft dated 6/26/08.

Chairman O'Beirne is compiling a list of items to be addressed by the Town Council regarding the Charter. Any comments that Commissioners would like incorporated should be emailed to him.

Members discussed the revised **DEFINITIONS** section.

a. *Elector*

- 1. When forwarding the Charter, the Town Council will be made aware of the requirements for allowing non-resident taxpayers to vote in a referendum.
- 2. Change the word "Constitution" to read "Connecticut Constitution".

b. *Representative Town Meeting* – Change the words "State Statutes" to read "CGS".

- c. *Town* – The Town Clerk will check whether this section should read "home association" or "homeowners association" and revise accordingly.

Members discussed *Comments/Concerns regarding Charter Revision Proposals* received from Doug Ackerman.

- a. *Sec. 4.1.3 – Relationship with Municipal or Administrative Employees* – In the second sentence change the word “informing” to read “discussions with”.
- b. *Sec. 4.6 – Power of Veto* – At the end of the first sentence before the last phrase, add the words “or Pension and Retirement Agreements or other Terms and Conditions of Employment”.
- c. *Sec. 5.6 – Investigation* – At the end of the first sentence after the word “subpoenas” add and “subpoenas duces tecum”.
- d. *Sec. 5.7 – Relative to Administrative Services* – In the fifth sentence change the word “informing” to read “discussions with”.

These changes passed unanimously.

6. NEW BUSINESS

General discussion of the revised draft **Charter** (dated June 26, 2008).

- a. *Sec. 3.5.3 – Conflict of interest*
 1. In first sentence delete the words “Board of Education (BOE) member,”.
 2. In both the third and fourth paragraph delete “BOE”. (2 places)
 3. In the fifth paragraph change “Ordinance” to read “by ordinance”.
- b. *Sec. 3.6.2 Vacancies in the RTM* – In the fourth sentence change the word “right” to read “rights”.
- c. *4.2.3 – Minority representation and majority limitation*
 1. Table
 - a) The party can nominate 2/3 and the electors can vote for all. The Town Clerk will update this information.
 - b) Delete the words “and to be elected” in the heading of the second column.
 2. In the paragraph following the table change the words “two thirds (2/3) regardless of fractions of the allotted number” to read “up to the allotted number”.
- d. *Sec. 8.1 – General* – After the word “committees,” add “hereinafter referred to as “ABC””.
- e. *Sec. 9.4 – Duties of the RTM on the Budget* – Delete the third paragraph, “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.”
- f. *Sec. 9.6 – Financial Powers of the RTM* – Delete the third paragraph, “The RTM may cut appropriations recommended in the Budget and may, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the RTM 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 Town Manager (including the BOE budget) or by the Council, whichever is greater.”

- g. *Sec. 9.7 – Emergency Appropriations* – In the last sentence of the first paragraph change the words “either the lives” to read “the lives or”.
- h. *Sec. 9.10.1 – General*
 - 1. In the first sentence change “agency, board, commission or committee” to “ABC”.
 - 2. In the first sentence delete the words “the Library Board”.
- i. *Sec. 11.4 – Existing Laws and Ordinances* – Per Mike Carey’s recommendation, the last sentence in old 10.4 will be put back into the Charter.

These sections passed unanimously.

Set a Public Hearing date for the *Draft Charter Revisions* (per CGS).

- a. *Draft Report* – Chairman O’Beirne will generate a *Draft Report* outlining the changes to the Charter.
- b. *Special Meeting* – By consensus there will be a Special Charter Revision Commission meeting on July 7, 2008.
- c. *Public Hearing Date* – A motion was made by Chairman O’Beirne, seconded by Commissioner Moffat, to set the date for a public hearing on July 14, 2008. The vote passed unanimously, and a notice will appear in the newspaper on July 8, 2008.

Chairman O’Beirne requested that any comments from Commissioners regarding the Draft Report be sent to him via email.

At the next meeting, the Commission will discuss any further changes to the *Charter* and then move on to the *Draft Report*.

7. ADJOURNMENT

By consensus the meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Shirley Dunbar-Rose
Secretary
Approved July 7, 2008