

**Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes
Second Floor Conference Room, Town Hall
Wednesday, April 30, 2014, 7:30 p.m.**

PRESENT: Betsey Anderson, Anne Bickford, Steve Hagan, Polly Herz, Amy Lloyd, Joanna Nickerson, Ed Pierce, Michael Rosenberg, and Jan Shepard

ALSO PRESENT: Town Manager Richard T. Reed; Human Resources/Management Analyst Sarah Buhler; and Volunteer Coordinating Committee member Carol Amick

Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Introduction of Members

Ms. Anderson asked each member of the committee to briefly introduce themselves, describing their past involvement in Town government, how long they have lived in Bedford, and what drove them to become involved in the Charter Review Committee.

2. Charge to the Committee - Rick Reed

Town Manager Richard T. Reed provided the committee with a brief history of the Charter and Bylaw Review Committee noting that there are provisions in the Town Bylaw that require a comprehensive review of the Charter every 5 years and the Bylaws, every 10 years.

Ms. Lloyd inquired as to what governed the Town of Bedford prior to the existence of the Town's Charter and Bylaws. Mr. Reed explained that prior to the Charter and Bylaws, regulations governing the Town of Bedford were established through state law. Mr. Reed noted that the Charter is like The Constitution as it pertains to local government. Town Meeting must first approve any changes suggested by the Charter Review Committee and then the changes must be voted on at the Annual Town Election.

At this time, the Committee asked if Volunteer Coordinating Committee (VCC) member Carol Amick would like to present any proposed changes. Ms. Amick distributed two memos. The first memo was from the members of the VCC requesting the reference to the 30-day deadline to provide names to the Selectmen to fill vacancies in Section 3-5 be deleted.

The second memo was solely from Ms. Amick and requested the following changes:

- Section 2-7, proposed increase to the number of signatures required for an article by petition to be inserted in the warrant.
- Section 3-3, proposed increase to the number of committee members on the VCC.
- Section 9-5, amendment to the language pertaining to voting of Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

3. Organization - Election of Chair and Clerk

The committee opted to select a Chair and Clerk at the end of the meeting.

4. Discussion of approach to undertake the review

Ms. Anderson circulated a memorandum that was used in previous years to elicit comments from departments, board, and committees pertaining to any potential Charter changes they would like to suggest. Ms. Anderson indicated that a similar memorandum will be sent out prior the Committee's next meeting if the Charter Review Committee did not have any amendments.

Another document was circulated which stated the purpose of the Charter and Bylaw Review Committee and summarized highlights of process that was conducted when the Charter was last reviewed in 2009.

5. Begin review of Charter

The Committee reviewed the Charter starting with Section 1-1. It was suggested that as the Committee reads through the Charter, members can identify elements that could be changed, but that voting on changes would occur at later meetings.

Potential amendments identified included the following:

- Section 2-3, changing the name of Special Town Meeting to Fall Town Meeting.
- Section 2-5, adding reference to the appointment of a Deputy or Assistant Moderator.

Ms. Shepard noted that the number of signatures needed for a petitioner's article as referenced in Section 2-7 might be tied to a regulation in State Law and therefore might be an item that cannot be changed.

6. Open discussion

There were no additional items to discuss.

7. Scheduling of Next Meetings

The Committee agreed to schedule meetings on May 19th, June 11th, and June 25th. It was suggested that the time of these meetings be moved to 7:00 PM rather than 7:30 PM.

3. Organization - Election of Chair and Clerk

Ms. Nickerson made a motion to elect Betsey Anderson as Chair of the Charter Review Committee. Ms. Lloyd seconded the motion.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

Ms. Herz made a motion to elect Jan Shepard as Clerk of the Charter Review Committee. Ms. Lloyd seconded the motion.

The motion passed 9-0-0.

A brief discussion then occurred regarding the optimal number of VCC committee members. Mr. Hagan suggested 7 members would allow for more resident outreach. Ms. Anderson noted that 7 members seems like an awfully large number and it might prove difficult to gather that many people together for meetings.

Ms. Bickford made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Lloyd seconded the motion.

The motion passed 9-0-0.