

Town of Webster Charter Review Committee  
Open Session Meeting Notes  
Wednesday, 24 August 2016 6:00 pm  
Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Hall, Webster, MA

In Attendance:

Earl Gabor  
Pamela Leduc  
Will Starzec  
John Zagrocki  
Lee Ann Majercik

Absent:

Ted Avlas  
Robert Craver  
Andrew Jolda  
Thomas Ralph

Chairman Earl Gabor called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

It was agreed to table the approval of the minutes from 10 August 2016 until the next Charter Review committee meeting.

The discussion and vote regarding electing versus appointing specific town officers was tabled until the full review committee membership is in attendance.

Discussion occurred regarding the email from Town Counsel Lauren F. Goldberg that provided the timeline and procedures to be followed for Charter amendments. This information from Town Counsel was requested and received by Chairman Gabor. During this discussion, it was suggested that should the modified Charter make it to the Town Meeting floor, it should be presented article by article for a vote on each article rather than the document as a whole. Ms. Leduc suggested informing voters ahead of Town Meeting of the proposed modifications with a document showing, section by section, the old text, new text, and what the changes actually mean.

The attendees of the meeting reviewed several previous Charter changes/edits as requested by Will Starzec for confirmation. Mr. Starzec is the scribe for editing the actual Charter document for the committee.

Charter review of Article 4 continued with section 4-2 - TA Powers and Duties.

- a) Paragraph (a) - no changes.
- b) Paragraph (b) - discussion regarding whether the 15 day waiting period should continue as written or should appointments be immediate. Suggestion that paragraphs (b) and (c) be combined. Decision made to leave them separate for now and have further discussion on written policies.

Last line of the paragraph regarding posting to a “town bulletin board” will be deleted due to it being obsolete.

- c) Paragraph (c) - change “personnel board” to “Personnel Advisory Board”.
- d) Paragraph (d) - include Finance Committee meetings to the Board of Selectmen meetings that the TA is required to attend. Motion made by Chairman Gabor and seconded by Ms. Majercik. Approved unanimously.
- e) Paragraph (e) - discussion on this paragraph will occur when the full committee is in attendance. Any possible modifications may hinge on whether town officers are elected or appointed.
- f) Paragraph (f) - no change.
- g) Paragraph (g) - Mr Starzec to change masculine pronouns on this and all other text to gender neutral language.
- h) Paragraph (h) - change verbiage from “capital outlay program” to “capital plan”. Mr. Gabor made the motion. Mr Starzec seconded. Unanimous vote approval.
- i) Paragraph (i) - include the phrase “excluding school property” regarding the inventory of the town. Mr. Starzec made the motion. Ms. Leduc seconded. Approved unanimously.
- j) Paragraph (j) - remove phrase “in conjunction with the Personnel Board” regarding their presence at negotiations. Ms Leduc made the motion. Mr. Gabor seconded. Approved unanimously.
- k) Paragraph (k) - remove specifics on school items and replace with “excluding schools.” All three sentences in (k) will have the phrase “excluding schools.” Ms. Leduc made the motion. Mr. Starzec seconded. Approved unanimously.
- l) Paragraph (l) - strike out “town by laws and other votes of the town meeting” from the paragraph. Mr. Starzec made the motion. Ms. Leduc seconded. Approved unanimously.
- m) Paragraph (m) - discussion as to the separation of this paragraph into two. Proposal is for one paragraph to address normal, day-to-day inquiries into job performance of town employees. The second paragraph would be created to address more serious issues of ethical or criminal conduct. Mr. Starzec will review other sections of the existing Town Charter to research what it states regarding investigative powers before the committee makes a decision.
- n) Paragraph (n) - change the verbiage to include that the questions to the TA will exclude citizens petitions for which he/she may have no direct knowledge. Also include that the TA can defer to department heads when questions by voters are better answered by those involved in the department of concern. Ms. Leduc made the motion. Mr. Starzec seconded. Approved unanimously.
- o) Paragraph (o) - refer to paragraph (b) discussion. Recommending that there should be written policies for the Board of Selectmen as they relate to this paragraph and paragraph (b). Further discussion by the Charter Review committee needed.
- p) Paragraph (p) - no changes.
- q) Paragraph (q) - no changes.

Motion was made to end discussion on Charter sections until the next meeting. Mr. Gabor made the motion. Seconded by Ms. Majercik. Unanimous approval.

Discussion on whether and when to invite department heads of the Department of Public Works and the Water and Sewer departments. Mr. Gabor asked Ms. Leduc who should extend the invitation. Ms. Leduc said she would do so.

The conversation regarding the Water/Sewer departments prompted Mr. Starzec to bring up the concept of having an elected Water/Sewer Commission that would have administrative powers rather than simply an advisory board. Currently the Board of Selectmen oversees these areas. Due to the complexity and technical expertise needed to supervise modern systems, a commission made up of those with technical knowledge is warranted. This idea has not been presented by any entity as of this writing but it was agreed that the concept had merit.

The question arose as to when the Board of Selectmen should be presented with the modified Charter. It was agreed that once there is a full first draft available that is approved by the full Charter Review committee, the BOS should receive it. Mr. Jolda, as a sitting member of the BOS, can act as liaison between the Charter Review Committee and the selectmen. He can present the agreed upon draft when it is ready.

Mr. Gabor made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Starzec seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Next meeting: 14 September 2016 at 6:00 pm.