Charter Commission

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6470

MINUTES
CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2010 @ 7:00 PM
RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO CHAMBER
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

1. **ROLL CALL:** A regular meeting of the Charter Commission was called to order at 7:00pm, in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber, Administration Building. Present for the meeting were Commissioners Michael Donham, John A. Donohue, Dennis J. Duff, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Athelia Tilson and Chair Mark S. Sideris. Also present was Clerk Valerie Papas. Absent were Commissioners Stephen P. Corbett, Rhiana Kohl, John J. Lawn, Jr., Pamela Piantedosi and David Siegel.

2. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:** June 15, 2010 July 20, 2010 and related amendments to draft minutes. Commissioner Falkoff moved to accept the June 15th minutes as amended, seconded by Commissioner Duff and adopted by voice vote with Michael Donham, John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Athelia Tilson and Chair Mark S. Sideris in favor.

Commissioner Donham moved to accept the minutes of July 20th as amended, seconded by Commissioner Duff and adopted by voice vote with Michael Donham, John A. Donohue, Dennis J. Duff, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Athelia Tilson and Chair Mark S. Sideris in favor.

3. **DISCUSSION: On Article 4 as it pertains to the School Committee and Library Board of Trustees:**

a) The Chair recognized Mr. Anthony Paolillo, Chair of the School Committee who provided an overview of the school committee as it relates to the Charter, Article 4-1. There was a discussion on the Council President's position as the 7th member on the school committee. It was noted by Mr. Paolillo that the council president provides the necessary link in communicating with the town council, especially as it relates to budget issues. There was discussion on whether the council president could appoint a councilor to serve on the school committee in his/her place. Currently the Charter does not allow an appointment by the council president. There were pros and cons to this issue with Commissioner Lenk indicating that voters are clear when they cast a vote for a council president that he/she will serve as the 7th member of the school committee. Commissioner Duff concurred noting that the elected council president position was a compromise amongst Charter framers in the debate over a mayor form of government in 1980.

There was a brief discussion on having the schools and the town share janitorial/maintenance services. Mr. Paolillo indicated that he does not foresee an objection to consolidating these services with the town. He noted however, that there needs to be flexibility with the control piece as personnel matters are under the jurisdiction of the superintendent of schools.

There was additional discussion on composition and number of terms of office. Commissioners agreed that staggered terms were effective. Mr. Paolillo noted that the number of school committee members (7) have served the community well.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Paolillo for his presentation and input.

b) The Chair recognized Mr. Timothy Tracy, Library Board of Trustee who read a statement regarding special elections as it pertains to the Library Board of Trustee members. It was noted that the board is a six member committee with Ms. Raya Sterns, Library Board of Trustee member noting that the state mandates multiples of three to this board. The costs associated with a special election were discussed and approximated at $10,000.

Commissioner Piccirilli indicated that the Library Board of Trustees is the last board to remain an elected body. The Library Director is hired/fired by and reports directly to the board and not the Manager unlike other department heads; he asked if this still makes sense for Watertown. Commissioner Donohue noted that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commission recommends that the Library Director hires/fires staff.

Commissioner Falkoff stated that the director should do the hiring and that the Charter should further clarify the role of the director.

Anna Kuwabara, Library Board of Trustee member stated that having the members elected helps with the fundraising the component.

Commissioner Kounelis stated that having the board members elected provides them with more clout with state agencies and in seeking funds. She noted that the protocol for the director should remain as is.

Ms. Stern explained the role of the board of trustees with respect to fundraising for the library. She noted that an elected official is more effective than an appointed official in getting community support and monies.

Commissioner Donham indicated that section b (3) does not make sense and should be clarified.

Commissioner Lenk agreed noting that section 4.2 is a bit muddled in general. Commissioner Lenk stated that Article 4-2 (b) 2 & 3 should clarify the role of hiring and firing done by the director and not trustees; and the "rules and regulations" are more a matter of setting policy for the director and an area of confusion in the Charter. We want to make sure we follow rules set in place by the Massachusetts Board of Commission, she stated.

There was a brief discussion on the salary component with Commissioner Falkoff noting that if the trustees do not take a salary, perhaps the Charter should be amended to reflect that as well.

Commissioner Palomba suggested that Commissioners put their proposed changes in writing and forward them to the Clerk, with decisions and recommendations held off until the end of the Charter process; with a public notice in the local paper on the proposed changes and a hearing held for public comment prior to any changes voted on by the Commission.

The Chair indicated that the approach outlined by Commissioner Palomba is a prudent one.

4. **NEW BUSINESS –** The Chair stated that the Commission will meet on September 7th to discuss Article 3 as it relates to the Town Manager, providing the Manager is available.

The Chair recognized Pat Gold, Duff Street – spoke against having the Library Board of Trustees appointed rather than elected. She noted that the town has always had trouble filling vacant positions and that having the Library Board of Trustees appointed goes too far in removing the public from the process.

5. **ADJOURNMENT – 9:00 pm.** Commissioner Donham moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm, seconded by Commissioner Duff and adopted by voice vote with Michael Donham, John A. Donohue, Dennis J. Duff, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Athelia Tilson and Chair Mark S. Sideris in favor.

A dvd of the meeting is available upon request.

The minutes were adopted as written by voice vote on September 7, 2010 with Commissioners Michael Donham, Dennis J. Duff, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Athelia Tilson, Stephen P. Corbett, Rhiana Kohl, John J. Lawn, Jr., Pamela Piantedosi and David Siegel and Chair Mark S. Sideris in favor.