



## Charter Commission

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

### MINUTES

Commissioners:

Mark S. Sideris,  
Chair

Stephen P. Corbett  
Michael Donham  
John A. Donohue  
Dennis J. Duff  
Susan G. Falkoff  
Anthony Palomba  
Rhiana Kohl  
Angeline B. Kounelis  
Cecilia Lenk  
Pamela Piantedosi  
Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.  
John J. Lawn, Jr.  
David Siegel  
Athelia Tilson

### CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 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 7:00 pm. Present for the meeting were Commissioners Stephen P. Corbett, Michael Donham, John A. Donohue, Dennis J. Duff, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Rhiana Kohl, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Pamela Piantedosi, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., David Siegel and Mark S. Sideris. Commissioner Lawn arrived shortly after the call of the roll and Commissioner Tilson was absent.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: [October 19<sup>th</sup>](#). Commissioner Donham moved the minutes of October 19<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Commissioner Duff and adopted by unanimous voice vote with Commissioners Stephen P. Corbett, Michael Donham, John A. Donohue, Dennis J. Duff, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Rhiana Kohl, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Pamela Piantedosi, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., David Siegel, John J. Lawn, Jr., and Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

3. Continue the review of Article 2 as it relates to the Legislative Branch.

#### 2-2 Council President:

Commissioner Falkoff stated that she would like to see the Vice President chosen by a vote of at large councilors.

Councilor Kounelis stated that the Vice President should be chosen by a vote of all councilors.

Councilor Duff concurred with Councilor Kounelis.

Regarding the filling of a vacancy of the Council President, Commissioner Siegel asked that language be added to clarify and distinguish the term "vacancy" between a disability and an illness that would make a Council President ineligible to serve versus a vacancy.

## **2-3 Conflicts Of Interest:**

The Chair noted that he will refer Article 2-3 Conflict of Interest to Attorney Reich for his review as it relates to any new laws that have been enacted.

James Scafidi, Franklin Street – stated that he would forward the standard federal model that he received from a Conflict of Interest training packet from the US Census Department.

Paul Fahey provided an explanation of a 1985 change in the Conflict of Interest laws with respect to Watertown teachers elected to the Town Council.

## **2-4 Compensation, Expenses:**

Commissioner Donham spoke in favor of an automatic cost of living increase for councilors. Several commissioners spoke against this and noted that they view the council as an honorarium and any raises should be voted and not be automatic in nature.

There was a discussion on adding language defining the standard for reimbursable expenses related to travel, mileage, etc.

Commissioner Piccirilli stated that the Charter should not contain that level of administrative detail and that language can be incorporated into the Council Rules.

Commissioner Donham requested language that adds a layer of protection by adding language “standards set by the town auditor” to Section Compensation/Expenses (b) to 2-4.

The Chair stated that any proposed language be forwarded at the end of this process to the Clerk.

**2-5 General Powers:** No significant comments noted.

## **2-6 Exercise of Powers: Quorums; Rules:**

Commissioner Piantedosi requested that Section 2-6 © (ii) and (iv) be referred to Attorney Reich for his review and comment due to new Conflict of Interest laws.

## **2-7 Access to Information:**

There was discussion and a consensus by Commissioners that Section 2-7 Access to Information was an important and relevant power of the council and while some felt that it was too broad a policy Commissioner

Siegel noted that subsection (d) sets the limits and overall it is a fail- safe provision.

Commissioner Piccirilli indicated that it demonstrates the balance of power between the Administrative Branch and the Legislative Branch and provides the checks and balance to our form of government.

#### **2-8 Officers appointed by the Council or Council President:**

Commissioner Falkoff noted a typo and suggested that 2-8 (b) be changed to 2-8 (i).

#### **2-9 Ordinance and Other Measures:**

Commissioner Piantedosi requested section 2-9 © be referred to Attorney Reich for his review and comment.

#### **2-10 Filling of Vacancies:**

There was a discussion of the filling of a vacancy in the office and whether that vacancy should be the person next in line chosen by the voters or whether the person shall be appointed by the council from a pool of applicants.

The Chair stated that it is wise to be consistent across the board in all sections.

Commissioners were in general agreement that the vacancy should be chosen by the Town Council from a pool of applicants thereby avoiding the cost and disinterest by the electorate of a special election process.

Commissioner Palomba stated that he would be hard pressed to agree on bypassing a special election based on low voter turnout.

Commissioner Falkoff noted that a special election for this purpose is not a good use of town resources.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS:**

The Chair stated that the Town Council voted to change their December meeting from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> and indicated that the change in the meeting date will affect the Charter Commission's plans to meet on that date. Commissioner Donohue moved to reschedule the Charter Commission meeting from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Commissioner Duff and adopted by voice vote with Commissioners Stephen P. Corbett, Michael Donham, John A. Donohue, Dennis J. Duff, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Rhiana Kohl, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk,

Pamela Piantedosi, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., David Siegel, John J. Lawn, Jr., and Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

The Chair requested that any commissioner not being able to attend the December 21<sup>st</sup> meeting should relay their absence as soon as possible to the Council Clerk so that a quorum can be assured in advance of the meeting. Commissioners Kounelis and Piantedosi stated that they would not be able to attend the December 21<sup>st</sup> meeting due to holiday commitments.

Commissioner Palomba read a draft [memorandum](#) of a timeline and proposal to complete the Charter review.

The Chair suggested that if any commissioner has comments or changes to the timeline or process that they forward them to the Council Clerk.

**5. ADJOURNMENT – 9:00 pm.** There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Duff moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Palomba and adopted by voice vote with Commissioners Stephen P. Corbett, Michael Donham, John A. Donohue, Dennis J. Duff, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Rhiana Kohl, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Pamela Piantedosi, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., David Siegel, John J. Lawn, Jr., and Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

At a regular meeting of the Charter Commission, the above minutes were adopted by unanimous voice vote on November 30, 2010.

Mark S. Sideris, Chair