

Charter Study Committee
Public Hearing
August 29, 2011, 7:00pm
Municipal Center – Council Chambers

Minutes

PRESENT: Robert Berube, Robert Cornish, Richard, Drezek, Thomas Warnat, Christopher Wazorko

ABSENT: Stephen Martino, Scott Saunders

STAFF: Robert E. Lee, Town Manager, Daniel Grasso, Intern

1. Call to Order

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairman Drezek. He announced that Mr. Mr. Martino was absent and that Mr. Saunders was absent due to a Board of Education meeting conflict.

2. Public Comment

Francesca Heap, 25 Florence Lane provided a written handout to the committee. She suggested specific changes to Chapter VII, Section 6, paragraph 2 of the Charter. Among the changes she recommended were, requiring the Town Council to change the budget between votes, rather than just allowing changes to be made. She also suggested that when advisory opinions are included with the budget vote that the Council must make changes in accordance with the outcome of the vote on the advisory questions.

Theresa Harper, 245 Farmington Avenue would like to see Chapter VII, Section 6 changed so that if the budget referendum fails and advisory questions are included, the Council must follow the follows the voters' wishes. She would also like to see unlimited budget vote attempts.

John Kisluk, 65 Forestville Avenue asked how people who missed this hearing should get their ideas to the Committee. Chairman Drezek told him anyone who missed this public hearing could contact the Charter Study Committee with written recommendations through the Town Manager's Office.

Mr. Kisluk stated that the Town should create a Board of Finance, and should explore the possibility of having a recall provision, if CT state law allows for such a thing. Mr. Kisluk also stated that the Council should have 6 year term limits. Finally, he stated that changing the 3rd vote is the most important thing that the Committee could accomplish.

John Gasparini, 19 Orchard Lane suggested the Charter be changed to disallow two people from the same family from serving on any one Board, Council, or Committee. Mr. Gasparini also stated that wasting taxpayer money voting the budget at 3 referendums was a bad idea, and that they should go back to the old way and vote all in one night.

David Spencer, 127 Milford Street Ext. said that the reason for low voter turnout is because people don't believe the 3 votes mean anything. He also stated that if there was a way of changing the Charter that would force the Board of Education and the Town Council to work together that he would be in favor of it

Charlotte Politis, 74 Tomlinson Avenue, provided a written response to the Committee. She stated that the Town Council should be the one to set the budget and if the voters don't approve, they can vote the Council members out at the next election. It is simple and cheaper.

3. Question and Answer

Mr. Lee reminded the audience that when the Council has recommended new budgets they have all been reduced after each referendum failure. He also pointed out that due to previous state law there was no way to reduce the Board of Education budget to less than previous years. Mr. Lee also pointed out that in towns such as Avon, Berlin, and Farmington there are fewer budget votes allowed by Charter than in Plainville, and then the council can set the budget as they see fit, yet these towns all have higher voter participation than Plainville. So if their votes also don't count then why do they have greater turnout?

Mr. Warnat stated that he wanted to know "what is the result that you want to get to with the Charter changes?" What ends are you trying to get to?

Mr. Kizluk also stated that he wants to have a Board of Finance like Southington does. Mr. Lee pointed out that people are not allowed to vote on the budget in Southington because the Council approves it with no referendum. He asked Mr. Kizluk if he was also looking to have the Council vote on the budget in Plainville. Mr. Kizluk clarified that he wants a Board of Finance and he wants to vote on the budgets.

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Mr. Drezek

Second by: Mr. Saunders

All those in favor 5, all those opposed 0, Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Submitted by,

Daniel Grasso, Intern