

Charter Study Committee

Special Meeting

August 4, 2011

Municipal Center - Room 302

Minutes

PRESENT: Robert Berube, Robert Cornish, Richard, Drezek, Stephen Martino, Scott Saunders, Thomas Warnat, Christopher Wazorko

ABSENT: none

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

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. Election of Officers

Motion to nominate Mr. Drezek as chairman: Mr. Warnat

Second by: Mr. Martino.

All those in favor 7, Opposed 0, Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made to nominate Mr. Warnat as Vice Chairman: Mr. Martino

Second by: Mr. Drezek

All those in favor 7, opposed 0, Motion passes unanimously.

3. Review of Materials

Mr. Lee distributed numerous documents to educate the Committee members regarding the charter revision process. These documents included:

- a. Memo from 2008 to the Town Council which showed that neither of the two petitions that were presented to the Council on July 21, 2008 contained enough qualified signatures to render them valid. The purpose of both petitions was to initiate charter review.
- b. A memo from the CT Conference of Municipalities (CCM) titled "Basic Steps for Revising or Developing a Municipal Charter."
- c. Information from the CT Office of Legislative Research on amending charters.

- d. CT Office of Legislative Research (OLR) document from 1999 which details the advantages and the disadvantages of adopting a charter.
- e. Mr. Lee stated that he had emailed a link to the Charter to all members before the meeting. Mr. Lee provided a memo addressing some ideas for changes to the charter that the Committee may want to consider.
- f. Mr. Lee also handed out the Farmington and Berlin Charters. Mr. Lee noted that Berlin charter has one vote then budget is approved and Farmington has 2 votes then the budget is approved. He asked why does it work there but not in Plainville?
- g. Mr. Lee also distributed the Town of Plainville twenty-five year budget history and pointed out that the increase in expenditures has only been \$750,000 over the past 3 years. He also pointed out that that puts Plainville 11th out of all the municipalities in CT as far as lowest effective tax increase. Mr. Lee pointed out that residents may be upset with reliance on property tax, but Plainville's effective tax rate is very low.

4. Discussion of Timetable and Plan of Action

Mr. Lee stated that the Town Council is looking for a report to the new Council in December. Mr. Wazorko stated that a Public Hearing should be scheduled. Mr. Warnat wants to know specifically what the public would like to see changed in the Charter, not just general ideas. Mr. Saunders stated that there are a number of good ideas in the packet of information provided by Mr. Lee.

Mr. Lee suggested that there be two goals: what changes need to be made? And, how immediately do these changes need to be made?

Mr. Wazorko suggested that we need a list with options that the Town Council can choose from. Mr. Saunders suggested we look at what other towns do.

Mr. Drezek stated that there is a statute that allows for a referendum question now. Mr. Lee and Mr. Saunders both pointed out that the statute is poorly written and wouldn't allow officials to get a clear picture of what voters really want.

5. Schedule of Future Meeting Date/locations/times

After discussion of possible meeting times the Committee proposed the following schedule:

Regular Meetings

- September 15 at 6:30 in Room 302
- September 29
- October 6
- October 20
- November 3

November 17

The committee will meet in Room 302 unless there is a conflict.

Public Hearing

- August 29, 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers

Motion made to set agenda: Mr. Cornish

Second by: Mr. Saunders

All those in favor 7, Opposed 0, Motion passed unanimously.

6. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn: Mr. Drezek

Second by: Mr. Saunders

All those in favor 7, all those opposed 0, Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

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Carol A. Shultz
TOWN CLERK