

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE VOTED MINUTES

Monday, March 11, 2019 – 4:00 p.m.

Old Water Department Meeting Room -- Town Hall

Members Present: Peter Clark, Chairman; Judith Fenwick, Vice Chairman;

H. Carter Hunt; David Garrison;

Charles McCaffrey; Frank Duffy, Esq., ex-officio

Members Absent: Daniel H. Shearer; Flannery du Rivage Rogers

Also Present: Michael Palmer

A. Open Meeting

At 4:00 Peter Clark called the meeting to order.

B. Hear General Public Comment

None offered.

C. Discuss and Act on Minutes from February 26, 2019

Judy Fenwick moved to approve with correction. Carter Hunt seconded. All in favor; motion passed.

D. Review New Committee Emails and Documents

Peter Clark noted the addition of an email regarding gendered language.

E. Discuss and Act on the Term “Chair” in the Charter

A discussion included the following:

- The language needs to be consistent throughout the Charter.
- Can any of the language changes be handled by editing?
- Frank Duffy explained that things such as a change in name could be done through definitions. A term could also be clarified by noting that whenever it appears it means whatever the term was defined as. There have been occasions where a scrivener’s error was corrected without a town meeting process.
- The extensive process for approving this change makes one less enthusiastic for changing considering the likely minimal effects of any change. The debate could be out of proportion to the importance of the issue.
- The chair could bring all propositions up for a vote.
- Some Plymouth Charter changes were grouped together and passed in a blanket vote. This should be reviewed as an example of how things could work. (Available in documents sent by Judy Fenwick)
- No action was taken.

F. Discuss Value of Spring Town Meeting Report, Forum and Survey

A discussion included the following:

- Peter Clark summarized that the committee last agreed that a report could be of value if it could promote citizen participation.
- A survey may not be a good use of time.
- Regarding a forum, the committee may need to work out details rather than seek input at this time.
- What's at issue is the integrity of the process. If the committee just passes all the work to the Board of Selectmen is it ducking issues? Should there be a more public process before handing over to the Board of Selectmen?
- The committee may feel it hasn't done its job if a public hearing was not held about its recommendations.
- The committee should complete more work before presenting to the public and seek more public input before presenting to the Board of Selectmen.
- A public meeting with invitations to those that have appeared before the committee should be held.
- A public meeting will be scheduled for the first week of June.
- In person contact was seen as more useful than surveys.
- The Board of Selectmen is required to hold hearings on recommendations. The CRC will remain in existence until after the November town meeting.
- Peter Clark will give a brief report at town meeting identifying areas of study and a timeline of events.

G. Discuss New Business

None.

H. Discuss Committee Procedures; including Town Counsel on Work Groups

Frank Duffy said that he is happy to meet with the working groups but to avoid conflict with open meeting laws he requested that just the chair of the group meet with him. Sub committees fall under the open meeting law.

I. Work Session A:

- **Executive Authority and Committee Effectiveness:** The committee divided into 2 work groups for 28 minutes to continue studying these areas

Work Session B:

- **Planning and Terminology:** The committee spent 22 minutes working in 2 subgroups on these two study areas.

J. Work Session B: Deferred.

- Executive Authority Area; Committee Effectiveness Area

K. Work Session C: Differed.

- Planning Area; Stand-alone Items Area

L. Report Progress, including Reactions to Process: The committee debriefed the work sessions, with each person assessing progress in his/her area of study. Initial dates were set to have whole-committee discussion of the planning and executive authority areas. The discussion indicated willingness to proceed with the current process bringing all eight areas to the whole committee as ready before the end of May. The need for adding meeting times was discussed and deferred.

At 6:00 PM Carter Hunt moved to adjourn. Charles McCaffrey seconded.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, March 25, 2019; 4:00 PM
Old Water Department Meeting Room - Town Hall