

Town of Hartford, Vermont

4th Charter Review Commission

Minutes of 14 Nov 2016

Present: Simon Dennis, Chair; Gayle Ottman, Vice Chair; F. X. Flinn, Clerk; Scott Johnson; Russell North; Eric Michaels; Nancy Russell

Simon Dennis called to order 7:06pm

Agenda reviewed, no changes.

1. Committee members caught up on their current activities.
2. Discussed problem with current charter that theoretically would allow a Selectboard meeting with 4 members to decide a matter 2 aye -1 nay -1 abstention by changing the language as follows: "The presence of four or more members shall constitute a quorum for the purposes of holding a meeting. The affirmative vote of a ~~simple~~ majority of the members present ~~and voting~~ at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be necessary to adopt any matter before the Selectboard." Dennis moved, Ottmann second, unanimous.
3. Decided to retain the list of town manager duties on motion by Flinn, seconded by North, 5 yes, 2 abstain. Principal reason was to give town the flexibility of having it in the charter and not be subject to state listing – it would be easier for us to change charter than to get state law changed. Some concerns about what town manager contract might contain that differed, as the contract with the prior manager did.
4. Decided to retain the list of powers of the town on motion by Flinn, seconded by Michaels, unanimous. Principal reason was that although these powers are available to town under state law, they are scattered throughout and having them in one place makes it a good guideline for citizens and town staff.
5. Defeated a motion by Michaels, seconded by Johnson, to remove the reference to town manager as chief executive officer 1 – 6.
6. Decided on motion by Flinn, Russell seconded to add 'all public questions' to that which is subject to Australian ballot so it reads: *All Public Questions and all matters relating to the adoption of the Town and School District budgets shall be considered by Australian ballot.* The idea being that we don't want to ever be in a situation where a matter gets decided by traditional town meeting, i.e., you have to be in the room when the question comes to a vote. Unanimous
7. Decided by consensus to move the Floor Meeting to Community Day and call it Town & School Meeting Day, combining the Public Hearing purpose of Community Day with the receiving of reports, setting of elected official pay, reviewing warrants, and other business (such as recognitions and proclamations). Luncheon and candidate roundtable can follow as in recent years. Town and School sections will be separate as at Floor Meeting. Will seek language around voting on elected pay that will obviate need for tabulator programming, voting booths, etc. All this will be drafted up and discussed with attorney before getting committee's final approval.
8. Developed a plan for moving ahead: Flinn to put together draft of charter with notes on what committee is trying to accomplish. Will send out by Wed 11/16. Committee members will send

him comments or suggestions. He will incorporate these and get the draft to Giuliani and Pullar by the end of the day Thurs 11/17. Meeting with Giuliani 11/21 to go over draft charter.

Meeting adjourned 8:40 pm on motion of Dennis, Ottmann seconding, unanimous.