

EAST LYME BOARD OF SELECTMEN
PUBLIC HEARING RE: CHARTER REVISION REPORT OF JUNE 3, 2009
MINUTES

PRESENT: Paul Formica, Robert Kleinhans, Pam Rowe, Rob Wilson, Rose Ann Hardy.

EXCUSED: Jack Hogan.

ALSO PRESENT: Attorney O'Connell.

Mr. Formica called the Public Hearing regarding the Draft Report of the Charter Revision Commission to order at 7:01 p.m. and led the Pledge. He introduced Vice Chair Bob Tobin and Tony Attanasio of the Charter Revision Commission and asked that they summarize their report.

Mr. Tobin commented that the Commission had been appointed in April of 2008 and since that time, held several meetings and public hearings and had received a great deal of support from the First Selectman. He added that the most significant change was sending the budget to automatic referendum after an annual budget meeting. He added that other changes were amending the language to reflect a health district, changing the time period to within 30 days of taking office, the Board of Selectmen shall appoint the members of all Boards and Commissions, changing the present name of the Board of Tax Review to Board of Assessment Appeals and increasing the \$1000 limit on real estate purchases by the Board of Selectmen to \$10,000.

He said that many other ideas were considered such as the bifurcation of the budget and this was not endorsed since they believed we were one town and we should consider the budget as one unit. He said discussions regarding the potential of a 4-year term for the First Selectman had not been endorsed since they believed the town has been well served by the two-year term and that this should continue. They also discussed the town manager form of government but believed that what we now have has worked well. He added that Town Attorney had some language revisions to Section 7.3 of the Charter (identified as Attachment A).

Mr. Formica thanked all of the Charter Revision members for their hard work.

Karen Rak of 27 Black Point Road stated she would like the Board of Selectmen to review the bifurcation of the budget noted that the Board of Education submits their budget separately and that the question of bifurcation should be put to the voters.

Carol Marelli of 74 Ancient Highway requested if an actual date for automatic referendum could be put in the language in the Charter. She added that she had contacted the State this morning on this question but had not received an answer as yet. She said that there was a three-week window that was necessary to mail out absentee ballots. She requested the Selectmen hold the report until an answer is received from the State.

Bob Gadbois of 358 Boston Post Road said he would like to see the budget split. He said it is the people's Charter, let the people decide.

Ron Rando of 194 Boston Post Road noted he was on the Charter Revision Commission for a while, but stopped going to the meetings when he saw the direction it was going in. He said that the Board of Education is arrogant and that the budget should be split. He added he did not believe that this Commission had done a very good job.

Rose Ann Hardy noted that the amendment to 7.3.1 removes the ability of the townspeople to decrease the budget. She added that the Charter Revision Commission proposed to call the meeting the Annual Budget Meeting and this would prohibit other items from being on the agenda if it were restricted only to a budget meeting.

There was more discussion about how the date would be set for an automatic referendum.

Ms. Hardy inquired if the Commission would discuss putting a date in the Charter for the referendum?

Mr. Wilson noted he had no issue if a calendar date was used for the referendum and listed in the Charter. He asked if it would be cleaner to have a set date each year for the referendum?

Mr. Tobin responded that he had no problem or objection to reviewing and proposing that.

Ms. Hardy inquired if the Commission had discussed a trigger reference point in the budget and if it went above a certain amount it would go to referendum.

Mr. Tobin responded that they were proposing sending the annual budget to referendum, and no trigger point was included.

Hearing no further comment, Mr. Formica closed the public hearing at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene C. Stevens, Recording Secretary