

Town of Durham
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Minutes

July 8, 2006

1. Call to Order

The Charter Revision Commission (CRC) met at the Temporary Town Hall located at 350 Main Street on Saturday, July 8, 2006. Chairman McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Members Present: Carol Kleeman, Pat Murawski, John Corona, Alice Tucker, Betty Long, Mark McLaughlin, Martin French

Members Absent: Laura Francis, Ron Melnik

2. Public Comments. None.

3. Review of minutes.

Motion by Alice Tucker, seconded by John Corona to table review of minutes (June 12, 2006 regular meeting, June 19, 2006 Public Hearing, June 19, 2006 meeting) until the next CRC meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Discussion of Charter Revision draft re: Section 6.1 Board of Education .

Chairman McLaughlin reviewed letter from Atty. Michael J. Dorney (Tyler Cooper) dated July 3, 2006 relative to the review of language for Sections 2.1 and 6.1 of the Durham Charter. Atty. Dorney made one significant suggestion: to transition the election of members of the Board of Education so that three of the six members will be elected every two years.

Betty made the suggestion that the language not be specific to "6" members as this number may change in the future due to reapportionment. She suggested the wording "sufficient members" be substituted for "six members."

Discussion regarding specific transition language and whether or not to designate a particular member for the shortened term. Additionally, in order to effect the change to a November election, terms expiring in May would need to be extended to the respective November elections.

John asked, philosophically, how the terms would be extended. Does this need to be done via a separate vote at a town meeting? Betty queried, doesn't the transition language take care of this issue?

Chairman McLaughlin stated a vote to approve the charter revision would legitimate the extension of terms. The affected members can resign if they don't want their terms extended to November. Chairman McLaughlin continued, there are two ways to make this change in election happen, either 1) the CRC articulates the process and transition language, or 2) the Board of Selectmen creates the transition language. Some CRC members agreed that the Charter Revision Commission should define the transition language as was done in past charter revisions, i.e. Planning & Zoning, etc.

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Motion by John Corona, seconded by Martin French to accept transition language and comments regarding Section 6.1 Regional Board of Education as follows:

Section 6.1 Regional Board of Education

At each General Town Election there shall be elected sufficient members to maintain a full delegation to represent the Town of Durham on the Regional District 13 Board of Education. Terms of office shall be four (4) years beginning on the first Monday in December following said election, in accordance with Section 2.1 of this Charter except as provided in the following paragraph:

The transition and terms of office for the Durham members of the Regional District 13 Board of Education shall be accomplished as follows: Two (2) members, whose terms expire on June 30, 2007, shall have their terms extended until the General Town Election in November 2007. At that time two (2) members shall be elected for four-year terms. Three (3) members, whose terms expire on June 30, 2008, and one (1) member whose term expires on June 30, 2009, shall have their terms extended until the General Town Election in November 2009. At that time three (3) members shall be elected for four-year terms and one (1) member shall be elected for a two year term.

Comment: The CRC recommends that the Durham members of the Regional District 13 Board of Education be nominated and elected in the same manner as town officers at biennial general elections. It is our understanding that this option is afforded to municipalities participating in regional school districts by Section 10-46 (c) of the General Statutes. We offer this change in procedures to expand the opportunities for communication between current and prospective board members and the citizens of Durham. While the town meeting procedure has historically served the town and the board generally well, there appears to be widespread feeling that the board and the citizens of Durham could significantly benefit from the greater communication and informational opportunities afforded by the process of a general election, in particular the need for candidates to describe their positions and to hear and respond to citizens' views.

Counsel has advised that coordination is required with, among other entities, the State Board of Education, the State Elections Division, the Regional Board of Education, and the appropriate public officials in Middlefield. The CRC recommends that the Board of Selectmen and Durham Town Counsel begin that collaborative process forthwith in order to effect the change in the election procedure method. We've been advised by counsel that it would be expeditious to have the Board of Education members elected every two years for four year terms. The Durham membership is established by General Statutes.

Motion passed unanimously.

5. Other Items as Appropriate.

Brief discussion of Ron Melnik's email to CRC members dated 7-7-06.

The change in election of Board of Education members should also be reflected in Section 2.1 General Town Elections by adding subparagraph as follows:

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- 6) Sufficient members to maintain a full delegation to represent the Town of Durham on the Regional School District 13 Board of Education, for terms of four (4) years each.

Chairman McLaughlin will contact the Middlefield Charter Revision Commission regarding the changes in Section 6.1.

Chairman McLaughlin encouraged all members of the Charter Revision Commission to attend the Board of Selectmen Public Hearing scheduled for July 17th. CRC members may be a resource for points of clarification regarding charter revisions if needed by the BOS.

Chairman McLaughlin reviewed the process after the BOS holds their public hearing: the BOS submits changes, if any, to the CRC for final approval. The CRC then has 30 days to accept or reject BOS changes.

- 6. Adjourn.** Chairman McLaughlin adjourned the meeting at 10:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kimberly D. Garvis
Recording Secretary*

Tabled Items:

Review of meeting minutes: June 12, 2006 meeting
June 19, 2006 Public Hearing
June 19, 2006 meeting