

**MINUTES PUBLIC HEARING
PROPOSED TOWN CHARTER CHANGES HEARING #2
5:30 P.M. Thursday, November 18, 2021
HARDWICK MEMORIAL BUILDING
3RD FLOOR MEETING ROOM AND VIA ZOOM**

Select Board

Eric Remick, Chair
Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Dow
Shari Cornish
Michael Deering - *absent*

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Casey Rowell, Business Manager
Tonia Chase, Assistant Town Clerk
Alberta Miller, Town Clerk (via phone)
Orise Ainsworth
Raymond Bellavance
Aaron Cochran, Police Chief

Others Present

Paul Fixx
David Gross

5:31 P.M. Select Board Chair, Eric Remick, called the Proposed Charter Changes Public Hearing to order.

5:31 P.M. Eric summarized the changes with the most significant changes which include the following:

- The word “Selectmen” throughout the document will be changed to “Selectboard or Selectperson.”
- Combining the Town Clerk/Treasurer into one position. That position and the Assistant Town Clerk would become appointed positions, rather than elected.
- The positions of Listers, Fence Viewers, and Auditors will be removed.

See attachments to the minutes for the proposed changes and the document Elizabeth Dow made to better explain the changes in terms that are easier to understand than the actual charter language.

Paul Fixx found a spot in the proposed Charter where it says, “the Board” and he thinks it should be changed to Selectboard for consistency. There are some other instances in the document.

Orise urged the Selectboard to postpone the vote because she doesn’t feel that the proposed changes are being presented in a manner that the voters can understand, and she also thinks that there are errors in the ballot. She questioned the timing of the amendment to separate the articles and that the Town wouldn’t have the required 20 days’ notice prior to the vote. Tonia double checked and December 9 would be the 21st day, so if the amendment is posted tomorrow, November 19, the Town ~~w~~e would still be on track for the vote on December 9.

Paul Fixx agreed with Orise’s interpretation about the ballot. There was back and forth discussion about the proposed changes and the Select Board assured the audience that these changes have been approved by the Secretary of State and the Town attorney.

Tonia was able to reach Alberta via phone so she could weigh in on the discussion. One clarification was that if one of the articles does not pass, then the draft charter would be adjusted before it's sent to the State for final approval.

Elizabeth will edit her "explanation of charter changes" document to clarify what each article is about so voters can understand what they are voting on. This explanation will be posted alongside the amended warning tomorrow, November 19.

Paul asked about the cost to the Town by eliminating the Lister position. Eric explained the background of the lister's leaving at year end and that no one else wants to do the position, so we are transitioning to using the Assessor for all the services that lister's performed. We are already paying the Assessor for some services, but for them to take over all the duties of the listers would be roughly an additional \$23,000.

David shared an email from Holly Putvain Williams. She is in support of the Clerk being an appointed position.

Eric shared an email from Gary Michaels. He is also in support of the changes.

Orise thanked the Board for their time and courtesy.

6:08 P.M. Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, adjourned the Public Hearing.

Minutes taken by: _____
Casey Rowell, Business Manager

Minutes approved by: _____
Eric Remick, Select Board Chair