

CALL TO ORDER

Director of Administrative Services Thomas Cooke called the regular meeting of the Simsbury Charter Revision Commission to order at 5:38 p.m. on Monday, August 31, 2015. The meeting was held in the main meeting room of the Simsbury Town Offices located at 933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT. In attendance were the following commission members: Thomas G. Benneche, Robert K. Crowther, Mary Glassman, Paul W. Henault, Anita L. Mielert, Melissa Osborne, Edward J. Pabich, James A. Ray, Hadley C. Rose, Lydia A. Tedone and Jeffrey E. Tindall. Staff included Town Attorney Robert DeCrescenzo.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Joan Coe, a candidate for First Selectmen and a 40-year-resident of Simsbury, said she is a proponent of a town manager form of government for the town. She said this issue has been discussed and studied before but was not implemented. She said she hopes that this time commission members, particularly those that expressed favor for a town manager form of government in the past, see the issue through. She said there is a 30-minute video on YouTube about the progression to professional management that she encouraged residents and commission members to watch. She suggested the commission look at charters of surrounding towns as well.

Dr. Michael Rinaldi said he is not a proponent for any particular type of management for the town. However, he said he does believe whoever runs for First Selectman and loses, should not be put on the Board of Selectmen. He said the person is not running for the board but for the First Selectman position. He would like to see it put in the charter that the person does not get a seat on the board due to their vote count. He also said that board of education members should run on a platform. He said he has no idea what their positions are on issues, or why he or she wants to be on the board. Each candidate should get in front of people and give a presentation as to why they want to be on the board, where they stand in terms of spending and what they want to accomplish. He said per pupil costs have gone up in town and, despite having a great school system, the school system affects the cost of living in town.

ACTION ITEMS

a. Election of Chair and Secretary

Mr. Cooke, acting as chair, asked for nominations for chair of the commission. Mr. Benneche nominated Mr. Henault and Ms. Tedone seconded.

Ms. Glassman suggested nominating an unaffiliated voter and Mr. Rose volunteered. Ms. Glassman nominated him and Ms. Osborne seconded.

Mr. Rose was elected chair of the commission after the vote.

As for the secretary position, Ms. Glassman again asked for an unaffiliated voter who might be interested in serving. After some discussion on the position, including wanting a recording clerk at each meeting, Ms. Osborne volunteered. Ms. Mielert nominated Ms. Osborne and Mr. Henault seconded.

All voted in favor and Ms. Osborne was elected secretary.

Mr. Pabich suggested that each member of the commission write up a paragraph about his or herself for everyone to read to get to know one another a bit better.

b. Approval of Schedule of Meetings

There was some discussion about meeting time and how often the commission should meet. It was decided to wait to schedule a regular set of meetings and plan a few ahead to start. The next meeting will be Sept. 21 at 5:30 p.m., room to be determined. There needs to be a public hearing before any substantive work or decisions can be made by the commission.

The commission said it would run its meeting using Robert's Rules of Order as a guide, but not a controlling guide.

c. Scheduling of Public Hearing

The date of Oct. 1, 2015 at 7 p.m. was selected as the date and time for the public hearing, room to be determined.

d. Request to Town Department Heads for Proposed Additional Changes to Existing Charter

Mr. Cooke said there has been some feedback from an earlier request, but he will send out another email. Mr. DeCrescenzo said previous commissions invited department heads, commission and board members to make presentations. Mr. Hadley said he would make the invite. Written responses can also be given.

e. Agenda Items for Next Scheduled Meeting

Robert's Rules will be added to the next agenda.

Mr. Tindall asked Mr. DeCrescenzo to talk about potential topics. Mr. DeCrescenzo said the commission could discuss the direction it wants to go in, process, scope, etc. There was also discussion on emails and communication and what is allowed and what is not using email.

Ms. Glassman said it would be helpful if the commission could look at charters of similar towns, with similar populations that are Aaa bond rated towns. Other suggestions included towns that are Aaa rated without a town manager and with, and towns that have done away with a town manager form of government. Mr. DeCrescenzo said a sample could be compiled. He suggested starting with Avon, Farmington and Canton. Mr. Pabich suggested Glastonbury as well. Mr. DeCrescenzo said he can also compile the information from the two previous charter revision commissions.

ADJOURN

Ms. Tedone moved to end the meeting. Mr. Crowther seconded. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephanie Riefe