

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hadley Rose called the Special Meeting of the Simsbury Charter Revision Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 3, 2015. The meeting was held in the Board of Education Conference Room of the Simsbury Town Offices located at 933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT. In attendance were the following commission members: Paul Henault, Mary Glassman, Anita Mielert, Melissa Osborne, Thomas Benneche, James Ray, Edward Pabich and Robert Crowther. Staff included Tom Cooke, Director of Administrative Services and Sean Kimball, Deputy Director of Administrative Services.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

Joan Coe of 26 Whitcomb Drive said that she hoped the members of the Commission had a chance to review the YouTube documentary The Council-Manager form of local government. The documentary shows the value of making the transition from an elected First Selectman to a professional Town Manager. Ms. Coe added that a Town Manager offers management with cost effective controls -- taxes are spent judiciously and other towns with a Town Manager have a lower Mill Rate. She urged the Commission to institute a Town Manager.

ACTION ITEMS

b: Review of letter from Counsel and possible action on scope and content of budget

Mr. Cooke answered Commissioner Mielert’s question that the budget can be posted on the website the same day as it is filed with the town.

Commissioner Henault moved to approve the proposed revision of Section 808 regarding the duties of the Board of Finance on the budget addressed in a letter from Robert DeCrescenzo, Town Attorney dated December 3, 2015. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mielert and was unanimously approved.

a. Review of Minutes – Regular Meeting of November 5, 2015.

Page 2, Item D, Line 3: Remove the following text: “they requested reducing its five-year term.” Replace with the following: “one of the things discussed by the EDTF was the length of term of EDC members.”

The minutes were unanimously approved with changes as submitted.

c. Presentation on Town Manager form of government and discussion

Mr. Matt Hart, Town Manager of the Town of Mansfield gave a presentation titled “Council Manager Form of Government.” Mr. Hart has served as Town Manager for the past nine years and has 20 years of experience in the field. There are 26,000 residents in Mansfield including students at UCONN -- year round, there are 12,000 – 13,000 residents. The annual budget is \$49 million with two school districts. Mansfield implemented a Town Manager form of government in the early 1970s. He is the third Town Manager since its inception. Mr. Hart is a member of the International City Management Association (ICMA) and Connecticut Town and City Management Association (CTCMA)

Mr. Hart explained in detail the following processes:

- How does a Council-Manager government work?
- Roles of the Council, Chair and Town Manager
- Duties of the appointed Town Manager
- Town Manager training and qualifications
- Benefits of a Council-Manager government
- Values a professional manager contributes to the community

Mr. Hart answered questions from the Commissioners. He cautioned against listing municipal departments in the Charter because flexibility in the future is important. Mr. Hart added that the goal of the council is to actively engage the public either in person or electronically.

The Commissioners discussed at length changing to a Town Manager form of government. Comments included that the Charter doesn’t reflect the current job descriptions of some professionals. Also, questions regarding the First Selectman’s responsibilities and personnel decisions were discussed.

d: Agenda items for next scheduled meeting

Commissioner Rose stated that the Commission will have a full discussion and make a decision on the Town Manager form of government at the next meeting. He recommended for the Commissioners to review the presentation and other town charters.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Irene Muench

Council-Manager Form of Government

Town of Simsbury Charter Revision Commission
December 3, 2015
Matt Hart, Connecticut Town & City Management Association

How does council-manager government work?

- Elected council/board serves as legislative body and establishes policy to govern overall operation of municipal organization
- Council appoints competent, professional manager to implement policy and to oversee daily operations as CEO/CAO

Role of the council

- Council serves as community's legislative and policy-making body
- Legislative power is centralized in elected council, which approves budget and determines tax rate
- Focuses on community goals, major projects and other long-term issues
- Appoints manager

Role of the chair/mayor

- Chair/mayor serves as key political and policy leader
- Specific duties depend on charter
 - Typically voting member of council who presides at meetings
 - Represents municipality in intergovernmental relationships
 - Sets council agenda with manager

Role of the manager

- Hired on basis of merit to serve council and community
- Serves at pleasure of governing body
- Makes policy recommendations to council for its consideration and final decision
 - Implements council policy - bound by action council takes
 - Control in hands of elected representatives

Duties of appointed manager

- Serves as CEO/CAO - oversees work of municipal departments
- Administration of personnel – appoints and provides direction and leadership to department heads
- Management of public funds
 - Prepares annual budget and multi-year capital improvement program
 - Ensures fiscal responsibility and modern accounting practices

Duties of appointed manager

- Implementation of programs, policies and initiatives – works w/elected officials and community leaders to achieve common goals and objectives
- Coordination of service delivery – anticipates future needs; organizes work operations
- Performance management – sets goals and objectives; assesses performance of personnel and programs

Manager's Training & Qualifications

- Educational requirements: typically BA and Master's in Public Administration
- Experience: 5-10 yrs. progressively responsible experience
- Professional Development
 - ICMA; other
- ICMA Credentialed Manager
 - Annual CEU's

Manager's Training & Qualifications

- Traditional career track: Analyst/Assistant to Manager → Assistant Manager → Manager
- Other career tracks - dept. heads; military retirees; former elected officials

Benefits of council-manager government

- By removing responsibility for day-to-day operations, frees elected officials to focus on policy making and community issues
- Empowers elected officials to lead and to develop vision for the community
- Offers flexibility to go in new directions while providing continuity during transitions

Benefits of council-manager government

- Encourages open communication between citizens and government - political power is not concentrated in the chair, but shared by all members of the council
- Diffuses power of special interests - all constituents and interests have a voice, not just those that are well-funded or well-connected

Benefits of council-manager government

- Eliminates partisan politics from personnel, financial and contracting decisions - merit based decision-making based on qualifications and performance
- Encourages the development and retention of talented municipal employees
- Fosters professional ethics

What value does a professional manager contribute to a community?

- Oversee day-to-day operations, which allows elected officials to focus on policy issues
- Share and apply skills gained through education, professional experience and contacts
- Access to information about latest trends and best practices (e.g. performance analytics)
- Devote time and skills to tackle a problem or opportunity

What value does a professional manager contribute to a community?

- Assist the elected body with development of a vision and long-range strategic planning
- Recommend cost-saving ideas and productivity improvements
- Enhance the community's responsiveness to its citizens through administrative and fiscal accountability
- Develop corps of professional staff - strong emphasis on professional ethics

What types of communities use council-manager form?

- Used by 3,677 (49%) of 7,524 US cities and towns with populations of 2,500 or more (2013)
- 92 million people in US live in communities operating under this form
- Connecticut – 34 ICMA recognized communities

Summary

- Council-manager government enables local officials to involve and serve the entire community, and to actively plan for the future
- In turn, appointed professional manager applies professional skills and training to assist the council and to administer the daily operations of the community

For more information

- ICMA (International City Management Association)
 - www.icma.org
- CTCMA (CT Town and City Management Association)
 - Jeff Bridges, Wethersfield - Jeff.Bridges@wethersfieldct.com
 - Matt Hart, Mansfield – hartmw@mansfieldct.org