

**MINUTES
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 24, 2011**

1. Chairperson Bottinick called the meeting to order at **7:06 p.m.** with the following in attendance:

L. Caine, III
M. Ciacciarella
D. Cronin
B. Gregorio

C. Herb
D. Hoff
R. Neth, absent
S. Poynton

PRESS:
A. Malik
E. Gugliotti

OTHERS:
Attorney E. Fitzpatrick

RESIDENTS:
Two

2. Chairperson Bottinick led the Charter Revision Commission (hereafter “CRC”) in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.
3. **VOTED:** Unanimously on a motion by C. Herb and seconded by D. Cronin that the CRC approve the minutes of the organizational meeting of **January 25, 2011** and the Public Hearing of **February 9, 2011**. Each member received copies for review.
4. A discussion by the CRC of the matters presented at the Public Hearing of February 9, 2011 took place. Chairperson Bottinick suggested a roundtable discussion ensue and asked each member of the CRC to offer their personal comments and observations of the matters presented and the opinions offered at the February 9th Public Hearing.

L. Caine is not certain whether a budget referendum on the municipal (including Board of Education side and Municipal side) budget is appropriate in a town of Naugatuck’s size. Mr. Caine questions whether enough citizens are acquainted with the details of the local budget to make an informed vote at a referendum on the budget. Mr. Caine believes the language in the Charter should be updated to reflect modern times as well as to amend those sections of the Charter in conflict with state law.

C. Herb suggested it would be a good idea to put the Charter into layman’s language but had concerns about the ultimate costs surrounding revision and/or deletion of current Charter language. Mr. Herb believes other areas or topics of concern regarding the Charter deserve priority over language revision and/or deletion. He would like to see the Charter revised to allow the voters to cast ballots for a maximum of nine candidates running for Burgess. He would like to see the concept of a Town Manager form of government explored. Mr. Herb believes the current budget making process, as well as the budget referendum process, allows the average citizen a means by which to participate in the budget making and adoption process. Mr. Herb believes a November municipal election should be explored as well as four year terms for both Mayor and Burgess.

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D. Hoff does not believe in an automatic referendum on the municipal budget. She believes that the budget referendum process be left alone. Mrs. Hoff believes a November municipal election should be explored. Echoing Mr. Herb's thoughts, Mrs. Hoff would like to see the concept of a Town Manager form of government explored. She would like to have a cost/benefit analysis conducted on the concept of a Town Manager as well as putting the Charter in layman's terms. Mrs. Hoff believes four year terms for both Mayor and Burgess should be explored.

M. Ciacciarella believes there are more important issues facing Naugatuck than reformatting (putting the Charter into layman's terms) the Charter. Mr. Ciacciarella believes four year terms of office be considered for the municipal offices of Mayor and Burgess. He believes that a November municipal election cycle be explored. Mr. Ciacciarella believes consideration should be given to the election of the Finance Board and that Selectmen and Bailiffs be eliminated. He is still considering the comments made at the Public Hearing concerning the suggestion that there be an automatic referendum on the budget.

D. Cronin supports an automatic referendum on the municipal budget. The current process of voting on separate budgets, municipal side and education side, should remain undisturbed. Mr. Cronin believes there should be more than three referenda on the budget, assuming prior referendum votes result in rejection of the proposed budget. He believes the number of referenda on the budget be increased to five. Mr. Cronin believes if the budget is rejected at a fifth referendum, then the budget should automatically be reduced by somewhere between two and five percent. Additionally, Mr. Cronin believes consideration should be given to a four year term for the office of Mayor; subject to a recall if permitted by state law and that the term of a Burgess remain undisturbed at two years. Moreover, Mr. Cronin supports the inclusion in the Charter of a provision compelling the removal of school department staff if it is determined the individual staff members fail to satisfactorily perform their respective jobs.

S. Poynton suggested language changes that need to be made to the Charter will be a huge undertaking and engaging in such a large task runs the risk of changing the meaning of what the Charter contemplates. Ms. Poynton does not believe there should be an automatic referendum on the budget. She believes five referenda are too many. Ms. Poynton supports increasing the term of office for Mayor to four years and the term of office for a Burgess remain undisturbed at two years. She wants to know the exact cost or savings of moving the municipal election from May to November.

B. Gregorio strongly feels the Town Manager form of government is superior to other forms utilized in Connecticut. Relying on his personal experience, Mr. Gregorio offered his opinion that the Town Manager form of government removes politics from the decision making process. In light of "Naugatuck's Weight Class", compared to similarly situated Connecticut communities, Naugatuck should have a Town Manager, especially because those municipalities

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similarly situated employ a Town Manager form of Government. He believes local governmental officials need to reach out more to the citizens of the community in order to insure that the townsfolk are in fact informed about the important issues facing the town, especially the budget. Mr. Gregorio believes consideration should be given to increasing the term of office for Mayor to four years, but the term of office for Burgess remain at two years. He wants a cost/benefit analysis performed on the concept of changing the municipal election from May to November.

A. Bottinick believes this Commission should leave the language revision issues alone at this time as he believes there are more important matters the CRC must undertake. Chairperson Bottinick identified several sections of the Charter he believes should no longer exist and opined those provisions be simply deleted from the Charter. He offered the opinion that there are three major areas of concern facing the CRC which are 1) the Budget Referenda Process 2) the Town Manager Form of Government Question, and 3) the May to November Election Change and Four Year Office Terms. Mr. Bottinick strongly believes the energy of the CRC be devoted to those questions, not precluding the discussion of other areas of interest, and under his authority as Chairperson of the CRC appointed three sub-committees of the CRC to study each area of concern. The respective sub-committees as appointed by the Chairperson are as follows:

Elections Sub-Committee: D. Hoff, R. Neth and L. Caine

Form of Government Sub-Committee: B. Gregorio and C. Herb

Budget Referenda Sub-Committee: S. Poynton, D. Cronin and M. Ciacciarella

The Sub-Committees will issue their respective reports by the next CRC meeting.

5. It was determined the next meeting of the CRC would be held on March 31, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at a venue to be determined.
6. **VOTED:** Unanimously on a motion by D. Hoff and seconded by S. Poynton to adjourn the meeting at **8:50 p.m.**

Attest:

M. Leonard Caine, III
Secretary