



CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

CJH Municipal Center – 1 School Street – Bethel, CT 06801
(203) 794-8501 – Fax: (203) 778-7520

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Monday, May 13, 2013
7:00 p.m.

CJH Municipal Center – Meeting Room “A”

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TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK

PRESENT: David Olson, Chairman, Nicholas Hoffman, Meghan O’Connor, William Hillman, Paul Improta and William Shannon. Also in attendance was Attorney Nicholas Vitti.

CALL to Order / Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: David Olson called the regular meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Approval of Minutes – April 25, 2013: William Hillman made a motion, which was seconded by William Shannon, to approve the minutes with the following amendments: General Discussion – Roles & Responsibilities of the Board of Finance – 1.) Mr. Hillman suggested that the BOS should be permitted to make inter-department budget-neutral line item transfers within the Town Operating Budget, up to a certain clip level, without increasing head count with BOF approval. 2.) David Olson suggested that the BOF should review the individual department line items when the budget is being formulated but not eliminate or reduce the amounts of the line items. The Town Dept. budgets may be increased or reduced on a bottom-line basis and the line item adjustments will be left to the discretion of the individual Departments/Commissions. Mr. Kingston was agreeable to this suggestion.

General Discussion:

- 1.) Nicholas Hoffman provided the Commission members with the ERG A-B (Bethel) First Selectman’s Salaries. William Hillman suggested that the commission also look at the salaries in the DRG D (District Reference Group D). These towns are similar in economic and demographic make-up to Bethel. David Olson will use this data to provide the average salaries for comparison at the next meeting.
- 2.) The Commission discussed timing for getting the charter revision out to vote. Is it possible to get it onto the November, 2013 ballot? David Olson will speak to the First Selectman.
- 3.) CRC Tracking Document 11-Mar-13 V2 – the Commission used this document to gage whether or not to include topics brought before them in this charter revision. The following decisions were made:
 - Change Public Utility Commission to five appointed positions – This item will remain on the list for further discussion.

- Two-thirds vote of BOF to revise budget after Public Hearing – William Hillman made a motion, which was seconded by Nicholas Hoffman to remove this item from the list. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.
- Communicating the fact of a Town Meeting, Public Hearing, Election – Nicholas Hoffman made a motion, which was seconded by William Hillman to remove this item from the list. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.
- Require budget be presented at the annual Public Hearing and Town Meeting (PowerPoint). Paul Improta made a motion, which was seconded by Nicholas Hoffman to remove this from the list. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.
- Eliminate the ability to reduce proposed budget at the annual Town Meeting. Nicholas Hoffman made a motion, which was seconded by Paul Improta to remove this item from the list. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.
- Delete advisory question from the budget ballot. This item was tabled until next meeting for further discussion. Nicholas Vitti will research other types of advisory questions that could be used.

4.) The following items have been previously discussed by the Commission. They have decided to adopt, adopt with changes or table the item for further discussion. Any adoption or adoption with changes will be subject to Counsel’s review and drafting of “Charter Language” prior to a vote. Attorney Vitti did provide the Commission with draft language for **C8-14 Fire Departments** as requested.

1. Paragraph C3-4A - Increase the Board of Selectmen from three (3) to five (5) members. David Olson made a motion to adopt this item, which was seconded by Paul Improta. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.
2. Paragraph C3-4B - Increase the term of office for the members of the Board of Selectmen from two (2) years to (4) years. William Shannon made a motion to adopt this item, which was seconded by Paul Improta. Voting in favor of the motion: William Shannon, Megan O’Connor, David Olson. Voting against the motion: William Hillman. Abstaining from the vote: Nicholas Hoffman and Paul Improta. The item was tabled for further discussion at the next meeting.
3. Paragraph C5-1E (New Paragraph) - Effective with the next annual budget process following adoption of this Charter Revision, establish the First Selectman’s annual salary at the mid-point of the salaries of First Selectmen of Bethel’s Economic Reference Group (ERG) with annual increases provided throughout his term, the percentage being equal to the Municipal Cost Index (MCI). With each new First Selectman, this process shall be repeated. William Hillman made a motion, which was seconded by Paul Improta to adopt this item. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.
4. Paragraph C6-3A(1) - Annual Town Budget Meeting

The Annual Town Budget Meeting shall be held on one (1) of the first seven (7) days of April.

Nicholas Hoffman made a motion, which was seconded by Paul Improta to adopt this item. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.

5. Change the positions on the Police Commission (Paragraph C3-16), Planning & Zoning Commission Alternates (Paragraph C3-9), Zoning Board of Appeals Alternates (Paragraph C3-11) and Inland Wetlands Commission Alternates (Paragraph C3-15) from elected to appointed positions.

Nicholas Hoffman made a motion, which was seconded by William Hillman to adopt this item. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.

6. Paragraph C6-4A and C6-4B - Change the threshold for Actions Requiring a Town Meeting (from \$25,000 to \$50,000 with annual increases of the threshold in accordance with a recognized public index selected by the Board of Finance (e.g. Municipal Cost Index – MCI).

William Hillman made a motion, which was seconded by Nicholas Hoffman to adopt this item striking ‘with annual increases to an index’. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.

7. Paragraph C6-4C - Add “demolition” to the “sale or lease” of Town owned property
Megan O’Connor made a motion, which was seconded by Nicholas Hoffman, to adopt the item. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.

8. Petitions to Overrule

C6-5A – To overturn an Ordinance or Resolution of Board of Selectmen ... ten (10) percent of total electors.

C6-5B – To overturn an action of a Town Meeting except for the Annual Town Budget Meeting(s) ... fifteen (15) percent of total electors.

C6-5B – to overturn the result of the Budget Referendum ... twenty (20) percent of total electors.

This item has been tabled for further review and discussion.

9. Paragraphs C8-3, C8-5, C8-6, C8-10 C8-11

The Tax Collector, Director of Civil Preparedness and Fire Marshall, Director of Health, Town Engineer and Building Official shall be full-time Town employee positions.

Megan O’Connor made a motion, which was seconded by William Hillman to adopt this item. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.

10. Paragraph C8-13C4i - Change the advertised bidding threshold from \$30, 000 to \$50,000 with annual increases of the threshold in accordance with a recognized public index selected by the Board of Finance (e.g. MCI).

Paul Improta made a motion, which was seconded by William Shannon to adopt this item striking 'with annual increases to an index'. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.

11. Paragraph C8-14 (New Paragraph)

- A. Two volunteer fire companies provide fire-fighting, rescue and emergency services throughout the Town; the Bethel Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. and the Stony Hill Fire Company, Inc.
- B. The aforesaid volunteer fire companies shall operate and provide fire-fighting, rescue and emergency services in accordance with their adopted By-Laws and their Mutual Aid Agreements and in accordance with the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut, including but not limited to Chapter 104.
- C. Each Fire Chief shall be the chief administrative officer of their respective fire company and shall be responsible to the First Selectman for the operation of said company.

Nicholas Hoffman made a motion, which was seconded by Paul Improta to adopt this item. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.

12. Paragraph C10-2D - Within the annual budget process, the Board of Finance shall review the Selectmen's recommended individual Town Department budgets on a line item basis but shall not eliminate, reduce or increase individual line item amounts. Town Department budgets may be individually increased or reduced by the Board of Finance on a bottom-line basis, with implementation of reductions or increases left to the discretion of the individual Departments and Commissions.

David Olson made a motion, which was seconded by William Shannon to adopt this item. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.

13. Paragraph C10-4B - Special Appropriations & Transfers of Appropriations

The Board of Selectmen, when requested by any town agency and after approval of the Board of Finance, may make special appropriations from any town agency surplus or an approved contingency fund in amounts not to exceed in total for any individual town agency fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) in any one (1) fiscal year.

Nicholas Hoffman made a motion, which was seconded by William Hillman to adopt this item. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.

14. Paragraph C10-4E (New Paragraph) - Permit the Board of Selectmen to execute budget-neutral line item transfers within an individual Town Department operating budget up to \$50,000 with the exception of increasing the number of employees, which will still require Board of Finance approval.

This item was tabled for further discussion at the next meeting.

15. Paragraph C10-4F (New Paragraph) - Permit the Board of Education, in accordance with CT-10-248a, to carry over up to one (1) percent of its unspent annual budget to the next budget year with the cumulative amount not to exceed at any time two (2) percent of the

then year approved budget. Monies carried over are to be specifically designated for emergency situations, unforeseen opportunities and set-asides for future initiatives.

David Olson made a motion, which was seconded by William Shannon to adopt this item. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.

16. Paragraph C10-4G (New Paragraph) - Permit the Board of Education to create a Special Revenue Funds account for special revenue sources external to State and Town sources (e.g. Department of Defense support of NJROTC, Student Activities Fund).

This item was tabled for further discussion. Mrs. Yonsky, BOE, will be invited to next meeting to provide more information.

17. Paragraph C11-11 (New Paragraph) – Meetings

All meetings of elected or appointed boards and commissions, regularly scheduled or special, shall take place at the Clifford J. Hurgin Municipal Center or such other town building (e.g. Bethel Public Library) as may be readily accessible to the public.

Nicholas Hoffman made a motion, which was seconded by William Shannon to adopt this item. Vote, all in favor, unanimously approved.

Although there was no **Correspondence** on the agenda, resident Ann Cleary presented the Commission with correspondence dated May 13, 2013 with reference to a proposed “Oversight Board”. Each member received a copy and will review it for next meeting.

Adjourn: As there was no further business on tonight’s agenda, William Hillman made a motion, which was seconded by Nicholas Hoffman, to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Debra Roper in cursive script.

Debra Roper, Recording Secretary