

CONWAY CHARTER COMMISSION
CONWAY TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM
CONWAY NH
SEPTEMBER 6, 2023

Attendance

The following members were present: Ray Leavitt, Mark Guerrigue, Harrison Kanzler, Karen Umberger, David Weathers, Stacy Sand, and Tom Holmes

Absent: V. Noel Blake

Pledge of Allegiance

Tom Holmes opened the meeting at 5:30. Mark Guerrigue handed out an article from 1991 when the last charter commission was created. It included the proposed charter that the 1991 Charter Commission had recommended to the voters.

The agenda was approved with the addition of providing information from our lawyer that we had requested. Dave Weathers made the motion and Stacy Sand seconded. Vote 8-0.

The questions that were asked by the Chairman were:

1. Should we include the Solid Waste management Committee in the Charter. The basic answer from Mr. Courtney was he did not recommend including it in the charter. If the town wishes to terminate the Committee, it would require a Charter amendment.
2. Can Capital Reserve Accounts be combined into one article under Selectmen official ballot? Or can that only be done in a Town Council format? The short answer is yes.
3. Can we add a requirement for a 2/3rds vote to overturn a recommendation made by the Budget Committee at the Deliberative Session? The short answer is no.
4. Can we change the ZBA to elected officials rather than appointed under our Current (SB2) form of government. The short answer is yes.

Eliza Grant suggested that we plan on having a third public hearing in October on the Charter. The purpose of the hearing would be to give the citizens an input prior to the final public hearing in November.

Eliza Grant moved, and Stacy Sand seconded the following motion. That the Charter Commission plan to have a third public hearing on October 19 at 6 PM in the Town Meeting Room. The vote was 8-0.

Eliza Grant moved, and Stacy Sand seconded the following motion. Move to recommend that ZBA members are elected to their position. The vote was 5 in favor and 3 opposed.

Ray Leavitt moved, and Harrison Kanzler seconded the following motion. Move we create an Official Ballot Town Council form of government.

We discussed whether the Town Council members should be elected at large or if we should create wards within the town. One of the problems that the community would face is getting the population data to establish the wards. Stacy Sand talked to the Planning Dept and they believe they can create wards within the Town.

Harrison Kanzler also checked with the state Office of Planning and Development, and they were not sure information was readily available to create the wards. Tom Holmes suggested a type of blended Selectmen/Town Council is what we should do.

After a lengthy discussion identifying the pros and cons of moving forward with an Official Town Ballot Town Council Harrison Kanzler moved, and Stacy Sand seconded we move the question. The vote was 8-0.

A roll call vote was taken. Ray Leavitt yes, Eliza Grant yes, Karen Umberger yes, Harrison Kanzler yes, Stacy Sand yes. Mark Guerrigue no, David Weathers no and Tom Holmes no. the final vote was 5-3

We had a discussion on the number of Town Councilors there should be. Many suggested that the current 5 selectmen were not sufficient to get all the work done. Selectmen have several committees that they sit on as well as being a selectman. At the end of the discussion although no vote was taken the sense of the commission is we should go to 7 councilors.

NHMA in the briefing they provided identified several areas that need to be specified when the form of government is a Town Council. Eliza Grant will put together a list of requirements from the RSA's for changing to a Town Council form of government as well as from the briefing for our next meeting.

Tom Holmes suggested we should be sure to look at where Conway should be in the future.

Old Business:

Tom Holmes checked with Chief Mattei if animal control was a statutory requirement, and the answer was no. However, the Chief believed it was necessary.

Karen Umberger discussed with Lt Kelley-Scott if changes needed to be made for the Police Commission based on the LEAC Commission study and changes in the RSA's. The answer was no.

Stacy Sand indicated the Budget Committee was meeting on Sept 20th so we should ask them to our meeting after they have met.

New Business:

Since we had had discussions about the workload of the Selectmen, we are going to ask them to come to our next meeting to get an understanding of their workload. Tom Holmes will contact them.

Public Comments:

Jim Lefebver provided a comment on the budget committee.

The Commission adjourned at 7:02 PM.

Karen Umberger

Secretary