

Charter Review Meeting Minutes – second draft

November 22, 2021 at 4:00PM

Virtual-WebEx - recorded and available for viewing at the following link: <http://trurotv.truro-ma.gov/CablecastPublicSite/show/5160?channel=1>

A quorum of CRC committee members was present: Brian Boyle, Nancy Medoff, Cheryl Best, Bill Golden, Robert Panessiti, and Meg Royka. (Chris Lucy arrived at 5:11PM).

Also present were: Select Board member, Sue Areson, and members of the public.

The meeting was started at 4:00 PM. Chair Boyle invited the public to call in and gave the necessary information to do so.

Public Comment:

- No public comment

1. Agenda Item – Consideration of Minutes

- A motion to approve minutes as written was made by Ms. Best and seconded by Mr. Golden. Minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Agenda Item – Committee's annual schedule and charge

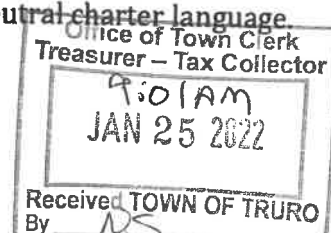
- Chair Boyle discussed the updates he made to the committee's annual calendar, adding a second public meeting during the ATM as suggested at the October CRC meeting.
 - Action Item: Chair Boyle will distribute the calendar to the CRC members and post it to the Town website.

3. Agenda Item – Areas of the Charter Reviewing for 2022 ATM – finalize summary language

- The language approved at the October CRC meeting was confirmed as what the committee voted on and what would be sent to the Select Board as recommendations. There was a discussion about recommendations for what to include on the citizen petition form for the warrant.
- There was also a discussion on doing something to educate the public on the warrant petition process. It was suggested by Mr. Panessiti that if the CRC is a sitting committee, one of the 2 public CRC meetings could be used for public education.
 - Action Item: Ms. Best will draft three short introductions, one for each of the recommended charter language amendments. She will distribute those introductory paragraphs to the CRC members for approval at the December meeting, prior to sending them to the Select Board.

4. Agenda item – Gender neutral charter changes

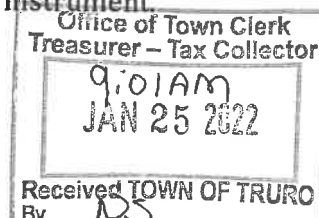
- Mr. Panessiti shared that he received information on town council's recommendation, suggesting that the CRC make the recommendation on gender-neutral language changes.
- Ms. Areson shared that staff would make the changes.
 - There was a discussion on the process for completing this and the next steps involved.
 - Action Item: Chair Boyle will query town management to clarify that they are working on changes, which will eventually go to the CRC so that they can use them to make a recommendation to the Select Board for gender-neutral charter language.



- It was determined that town management will decide how to move the recommendation forward, either through ATM vote or through the State Government.

5. 0:39:10 Agenda Item – Update on Survey sent to four Committees/Boards and next steps

- Ms. Medoff shared that she had sent everyone the newest survey results, (i.e. one response from the BOH), and stated that it had some interesting information that could be used as one data point to move forward with the recommendation for elected vs. appointed if that's what the committee would like to do.
- Chair Boyle shared the process that the CRC had followed over the past two + years to study the issue. He summarized what we had done and the data we have on all committees studied, and his feelings that there is not much more we can do and it would be nice to clear the item
 - Ms. Best shared that the CRC had done an enormous amount of work on the issue but has not found adequate reason to recommend changes to the Charter. She then moved that the CRC recommend to the Select Board that the 4 committees we studied at the request of the public (Planning Board, Cemetery Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Board of Health) all remain with their current manner of filling seats as outlined in the charter. Ms. Royka seconded the motion and a lengthy discussion on the motion ensued:
 - Ms. Medoff shared that she did not oppose the suggestion but that she felt we had not adequately discussed it and we might want to.
 - Ms. Best shared that during our previous meeting, Mr. Panessiti requested that we put this issue to bed and complete or work at the next meeting, [November 22] She added that the motion was meant to initiate the discussion.
 - Mr. Panessiti stated that he would not support the motion on the floor and would prefer to separate out the committees. He then shared his thoughts on the Cemetery Commission, stating that they had requested to be appointed because the election process is onerous for them.
 - Ms. Best responded that we agreed not to make recommendations based on individuals, that the process would not necessarily be onerous for others, to which Mr. Panessiti shared that it was more than an individual request. He cited open seats on the Cemetery Commission, which people are not running for and that there have been some administrative challenges on that committee.
 - There was then a discussion about the lack of community engagement in town governance and the 30% vacancy rates on appointed committees, which led to a discussion about the population in town, which Ms. Best noted has shown over a 20% increase over the past ten years based on the 2020 census and that we should work to get the people involved because they are here. Mr. Panessiti countered by stating that over the past 15 years the year-round population has decreased by 43%. These facts were left unresolved.
 - Mr. Panessiti then asked Ms. Best if she did not have enough data to recommend a change, what data she felt she was missing. Ms. Best stated that we had no shortage of data, that the committee had done great work, but that the information we have did not support a change. She listed some of the work done by the committee in due diligence, such as reviewing data collected on other towns and Ms. Carbone's discussion on the Collins criteria. She added that the warrant articles had some political flavor and that in her opinion, the Charter should not be used as a political instrument.



- Ms. Medoff asked that if the issue began with a petition about the Planning Board, did we know why the petition was submitted, to which Chair Boyle responded that no one came to public meetings to express their views so all we have are signatures on a petition. And Mr. Panessiti responded that no justification is required on a petition.
- Ms. Best reminded the committee that people have spoken up, and in many cases they had personal reasons because the Planning Board made it difficult for them to do something by enforcing regulations. She clarified that the reason we added the question to the survey about whether a committee deals with the requests of individuals, was to be sure that choices were not based on vendettas.
- 1:11:00 Mr. Lucy arrived to the meeting. Discussion continued.
- Committee members Medoff and Golden stated that they had to leave the meeting soon.
- 1:12:59 Mr. Golden moved to call the question. Ms. Best seconded. Mr. Lucy recapped the study process and shared that he believed the new data from the Board of Health was useless. He then asked where the motion came from. Discussion continued for a couple more minutes.
- 1:15:10 Mr. Lucy asked for clarification on the motion, and the above motion was read to him.
- 1:18:00 The vote to call the question passed 6 to 1 on a roll-call vote with Mr. Lucy dissenting.
- 1:17:29 A vote was taken on the motion, as written above. The motion passed 4 to 3 on a roll-call vote, with Mr. Panessiti, Ms. Medoff, and Mr. Lucy dissenting.

6. Other Issues from any Committee members

- 1:18:38 Mr. Panessiti requested that, as suggested by the Select Board, we discuss changing the Planning Board from a five to a three-year term at our next meeting.
- 1:20 Ms. Medoff left the meeting.
- 1:20:14 Ms. Best suggested the CRC discuss nepotism at our next meeting based on the Select Board's demonstrated concern with this issue.
- 1:21:49 Mr. Golden left the meeting

7. Next Meeting Schedule

- The next meeting was set for December 20th at 4:00pm.

Ms. Best made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Panessiti seconded. The 5 remaining members agreed unanimously via a role call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 5:32pm

Respectfully Submitted



Cheryl Best

