

May 17, 2014

To: The Eliot Charter Commission

I am writing to comment about what went on at last Wednesday's meeting, May 14th. I don't believe this will be the last time and it has certainly not been the first that the Commission has been presented with issues, unrelated to the Charter itself, during the public comment portion of our meeting. I find this to be a distraction to the work of the Commission.

The public is well informed as to what the Charter Commission process is, what we are discussing, and they are being given ample opportunity for input:

- The public is aware of the dates of our meetings which are held on a regular schedule on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month. Any change in that is posted at least a week in advance and published.
- They have access to the agendas of the Commission's meetings well in advance and know just what articles will be under discussion. The agendas are posted on the town website.
- The approved minutes of our meetings are posted after the meeting in which they are approved and before our next meeting. The minutes are posted on the town website.
- They are aware that we are using the Rockport Charter as our template.
- They have the opportunity to review the Articles that we will be working on and come prepared to bring with them any additions, deletions or rewording they might want to suggest or they can write to us with those suggestions and comments.
- It was said at our first public hearing that it would be helpful, if not preferable, for the public to give their input in writing to us when making suggestions as to language, provisions that they would like to see in the charter, etc.. Several residents have already done so.
- Public comment time is provided at the beginning of our meeting (upon a suggestion from a citizen), at the end of the meeting and before taking a vote on a specific article in the Charter that will be presented to the public. Up to this time we have not voted on any of the articles. Comments though have been allowed, at the discretion of the Chair, during discussions on the articles.

I would point out that we have not had an overwhelming turnout of public attendance at our meetings. Hopefully people are following along with us and will participate in the next public hearing, following the release of the Charter's first draft. The majority of our meetings have had only one or two different members of the public attend (other than the two who attend regularly). People attending have been invited to speak, surely not all the times that they would have wanted to be recognized and certainly not on every "wording" discussion, but for anyone to say that we have not given them opportunity to speak at the meetings would be grossly misleading and plainly untrue.

Despite given ample opportunity to comment on the Charter and to make suggestions at the meetings and in writing the "public comment" time is being used to critique the Charter Commission and specifically the Chair. I do not believe this is what we had in mind when speaking of "public input" and placing "public comment" on our agenda.

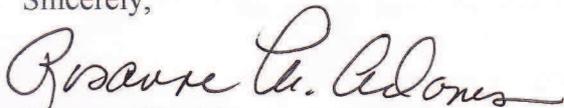
Members of the public making speeches on how they feel about the way we are conducting our meetings or what we are or are not doing I believe is inappropriate. It is not a time for speeches, grandstanding or as has occurred several times – outbursts and name calling by those attending our meetings. Our focus is the work of crafting a Charter and it only detracts from that work.

I would like the Commission to consider the following

1. That public comment and input during our meetings be confined to comments about the Charter itself.
2. That all other matters be required to come to the Commission in written form, so that all members can review the information and then, if deemed appropriate, can place it on the agenda for discussion.
3. That when such a matter is placed on the Commission's agenda those participating in that discussion will be limited to Charter members and the person submitting the matter. This discussion will not be open to public comment.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,



Rosanne M. Adams

To the members of The Charter Commission,

I am writing in response to a news article recently published regarding the decision of appointed members for Town Boards versus being elected and causing a dispute. I've reviewed several of your meetings minutes as well as minutes from other Boards regarding a statement Mr. Rankie made that has caused an issue brought forth by Donna Murphy and followed up by Gary Sinden. As a Citizen I feel as though recounting the minutes is a fair way to judge the situation. I feel it is important for my Charter Commission to hear my view when considering the outcome of this situation. It's imperative for any group to hear outside opinion. But keep in mind: when the same voices continue to speak, that glaring eye of pressure can make people feel the need to tip-toe through their thoughts instead of boldly making mistakes.

I applaud Mr. Rankie for having a real feeling, instead of censoring himself. While stating no further discussion may have been inappropriate depending on how the Commission's rules work, I am aware of how hard productivity can be when specific members of the public attend any given meeting. I have a feeling that this statement was made out of frustration, and that should be taken into consideration. I do not think natural human emotions should be punished with the extreme of formally requesting a resignation from Mr. Rankie. I think we can all agree that any topic should be on the table, but everything needs to have its place on an agenda. I can appreciate questioning authority, and keeping leaders in check with public pressure but this doesn't seem like that. This seems like an issue that's being used to side track the agenda, stumble member's confidence, and basically obstructs The Commission from focusing on the task at hand. If this continues, I would encourage you to revisit when and how the public may comment during your meetings. We elected you. We trust that you'll stay focused and not let the noise of a few derail your efforts. The fact that his statement went all the way to the paper is making a mountain from a mole hill. This should have been dealt with internally. People, volunteer people, should be encouraged and supported through their mistakes. They shouldn't be publically shamed into thinking they should have known better. Please don't let this noise of pettiness disrupt your good work. I feel The Charter Commission members should be able to freely function as Citizens of the town, and shouldn't be punished formally for thoughts or ideas. I hope the Commission will spend little to no more time on this issue, and not feed the obstructionist machine. There is an important Charter to be drafted, and it's disappointing local politics are getting the attention they don't deserve.

Additionally I would like to state that the idea of having members of the Boards in question be elected is an unbearable idea. While I do feel an election vs appointment should be discussed, the amount of time that is being spent on this issue seems too personal from some members. The future of our town is in your hands, and bringing personal problems to the table shouldn't happen. These Boards are the preverbal classroom to Town Government. It's a jumping off point to Citizens who have a want to volunteer or who may have future plans in Government. As an appointed Alternate member of The Planning Board myself, I can speak on a personal level regarding this idea. If I had to put together an election campaign to join this Board, I wouldn't have done it. If I had to consider the cost to raise money for signs or the time it would take to drum up supporters, I would be a no show. This doesn't mean I don't have determination to be involved, it just means I'm

practical and working so hard for a volunteer position is unrealistic. I didn't know what a Planning Board did when I first walked into Town Hall two years ago. But I knew I found it interesting and I know public service was important. Please remember an election process for these Board leaves room for local politics - meaning one person could be qualified but not get a vote because a neighbor has an issue with the sound of their motorcycle in the morning. Versus an appointment which is more likely to be made objectively by Selectman. Elections prolong uncooperative members' terms because it takes a recall vote, where as an appointed Board member can be removed by Selectman for incompetence. The majority of Towns have appointed Boards for a reason, because it works and make the most sense. Eliot does not have a line out the door of Town Hall full of Citizens wanting to volunteer or be involved with Town Government, where an election might be more practical. It would be shameful future planning for The Charter Commission to make it more difficult for Citizens to participate by entertaining the idea of an election process for the now appointed Boards.

Thank you for the time you are giving up to volunteer for this Commission. This is a very important document you are creating. I hope you'll keep your eye on the prize and not get bogged down with petty obstacles.

Sincerely,  
Melissa Magdziasz-Horner

May 1999

Eliot Budget Committee  
141 State Road  
Eliot, Maine 03903

Procedures and Guidelines

1. There shall be seven (7) Members. Members shall be elected for three (3) year terms. These elections shall be staggered.
2. At the first meeting following the Annual Town Meeting, the Budget Committee shall elect its officers as they deem necessary. ( Usually a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary ).
3. The Budget Committee shall operate under the Maine Moderators Manual 5<sup>th</sup> Edition 1989.
4. No meeting shall be held or a recommendation considered without a majority of the Committee present.
5. Any motion or vote shall carry by a majority of the members present.
6. The Chairman of the Committee shall vote ONLY in case of a tie vote of members present.
7. All recommendations of the Committee shall be voted on at a regular meeting called by the Chairman to consider matters of the Committees business. Voting by telephone shall not be done.
8. The Budget Committee will maintain and make available within ten (10) days following each meeting a record of all matters before the Committee and resulting votes. The minutes shall be accepted at the next regular meeting and then submitted to the Town Hall for filing purposes within ten (10) days.
9. The Secretary or the Chairman of the Budget Committee shall maintain a file of all correspondence and documents.

10. The Budget Committee shall meet not less than six (6) times annually with a public notice of the date, time and place, to be posted at least one (1) week prior to each meeting.
11. The Budget Committee may establish an annual budget to cover the normal and/or unusual administrative, investigative or informal activities.
12. The Budget Committee shall annually hold a public hearing on final budget recommendations at least one (1) week prior to Town Meeting.
13. The Budget Committee may make a request to the Board of Selectmen for the resignation of any Budget Committee member failing (without an excuse) to attend three (3) consecutive meetings.
14. The Budget Committee may seek out, name and recommend to the Board of Selectmen, appointments to the Budget Committee where any vacancy exists no later than sixty (60) days prior to the Annual Town Meeting.
15. The Budget Committee's recommendations shall be printed in the Town Warrant in conjunction with the municipal official's recommendations.
16. The Budget Committee shall receive from the Selectmen or Agency a request for funding for their Annual Budget for the upcoming fiscal year.
  - 16a. These requests are to be in writing and in the possession of the Budget Committee on or before September 1 annually.
  - 16b. Requests for funding must be presented by the Department Heads or Agency representatives in a meeting with the Budget Committee.
17. Requests must include:
  - 17a. An itemized list of proposed expenditure by function. I.E.: Personnel salaries, overtime, office supplies, travel, telephone, electric, equipment, equipment maintenance, training, etc. The amount appropriated for the present year, and the amount anticipated to be spent at fiscal year

end must accompany every request.

- 17b. An itemized list of proposed Capital Expenditures, estimated costs, and estimated years of life, actual balances in reserve funds presently on hand for purchases if any, equipment to be disposed of and the value of the items to be disposed of if any.
  - 17c. A written explanation of any increases or decreases in amount showing differences plus or minus in excess of 3% for the current years appropriation. Also justification for any new or additional programs, staffing or equipment.
18. The Budget Committee may request attendance of a representative or staff member of the Board of Selectmen or any Department or Agency where the Committee deems their presence is necessary.
  19. The Budget Committee may appoint advisory subcommittees for special studies.
  20. The Budget Committee may request the presence or advice of any individual to aid in its decision making process.
  21. The Budget Committee may request joint workshops with the Board of Selectmen throughout the annual budgeting process.
  22. The Budget Committee shall prepare and submit to the Board of Selectmen all Budget recommendations by the end of January.