

ELIOT TOWN CHARTER COMMISSION

MINUTES - DECEMBER 16, 2013

The meeting was opened at 7:00pm with Town Clerk Wendy Rawski presiding.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence, the town clerk, took attendance and then the formal swearing in of the members of the Town Charter Commission: Gary Sinden, Edward Strong, Roland Fernald, Charles L. Rankie, Jr., Robert W. Fisher, John (Jack) Murphy, Maryann Place, Dennis Lentz, Rosanne M. Adams.

Wendy handed out packets of information that included an agenda she had prepared and previously emailed to members. An attendance list with contact information was passed around (copies of which were later given to commission members).

ELECTION OF OFFICERS – Wendy asked for a discussion as to who would be interested in the three positions and stated the election would be by secret ballot. Members expressed their interests. Election of Chairman was done by show of hands; upon objection the group then proceeded with secret ballots. VOTE 9-0 for Charles L. Rankie, Jr..

Wendy Rawski then handed over the meeting to the Chair.

Chairman Rankie suggested that a Treasurer be added to the list of officers. After a reading of the State Statute and information the Chair had from an MMA lawyer that this position would be appropriate, there was discussion as to what the perceived need would be. An alternate suggestion was made to combine Secretary and Treasurer positions. MOTION by Fisher, 2nd Strong that the Commission have a Treasurer. VOTE: MOTION FAILED.

The following officers were then elected:
Vice-Chairman - Gary Sinden - 6 VOTES
Secretary – Rosanne Adams – 8 VOTES

BUSINESS

The Chairman brought up the following subjects with additions by members –

1. Use of Skype at meetings: Chair related information from MMA attorneys that there is no issue with SKYPE being used as long as there is a quorum sitting at the table. [The Commission has a member who goes to Florida for a period of time]
2. State Statute and relationship to Eliot's Ordinance Governing Boards, Commissions, and Committees – the Chair made the statement that we are governed by State Statute not by town ordinance.

ELIOT TOWN CHARTER COMMISSION

MINUTES - DECEMBER 16, 2013

3. Time Line -The need to plan a public hearing within 30 days of this organizational meeting and publicized at least 10 days before.
4. Meeting Schedule/Video Streaming: Wendy stated that the Selectmen have strongly recommended that all meetings be video streamed. There was discussion of the various places including Grange (\$50), Eliot Elementary (custodial pay on weekends), Congregational Church Hall (\$35), Regatta (free). CONSENSUS to meet at the Town Hall and reconsider if public attendance becomes an issue. AGREED that Wednesdays are the best evenings to meet with a time of 7 PM
5. Public Hearing: MOTION by Fernald, 2nd Sinden that the Public Hearing be at the Town Hall with the Grange as a backup. VOTE: 8-0. Chair concurs.

AGREED that the Public Hearing will be Saturday, January 11, 2014 at 6:00 PM.

6. The Chair went over the time line; Treasury balance (\$100) and asked about any clerical assistance that might be required but as suggested might want to wait until January to discuss that. Discussed was the possible need for stenographer services as this is an historical process; that we could make that decision when and if/necessary to aid the Secretary and that it would be helpful to the Secretary for the Chair to restate motions and the outcome of votes.
7. Establishing a presence on the Town Website – The Chair asked if the Commission might want to formally ask the Selectmen for this. Wendy explained the work that she does on the website and stated that she can create a page for the Charter Commission; placing on it any documents the commission wants to share with the public. Although this is part of her job the commission can certainly make a formal request. There are also ways of doing surveys on the site and although she hasn't yet, she will investigate this further for us. Presently, as questions come in from the public, she fields them to the proper department. AGREED that a majority vote of the commission would be taken as to documents and/or links placed there. There was NO OBJECTION to the Chair making a formal request to the Selectmen for presence on the town website.
8. Agenda Format and Public Input - the Chair passed out a sample agenda (from another Committee) and talked specifically about round table discussion and citizen input. The sample showed public comment/questions to be at the end of the meeting before initiating a Commission roundtable, with the understanding that there are exceptions and that the meeting would be opened for public input during discussion of specific charter items as well. There was GENERAL AGREEMENT to both of these items.
9. Posting of Agendas and Minutes - The Chair explained that his plan is to have the agenda posted (and to commission members, along with the previous meeting's minutes) a week before the meeting. The Chair then asked Commission members to have ~~to him~~ any additions to the agenda

ELIOT TOWN CHARTER COMMISSION

MINUTES - DECEMBER 16, 2013

two days before that deadline. In addition, approved minutes will be submitted to Wendy the next day.

10. Eliot's Ordinance Governing Boards, Commissions, and Committee Ordinance - Wendy explained that the reason for this document to be in the Commission's packet is that this group is still a town committee. (The Chair had previously expressed that the Commission is created under State statute is not governed by town ordinances.) She said that some parts of this document do apply to the Commission such as the need for agendas as much in advance as possible and minutes submitted in a timely manner – both in hardcopy and PDF form.
11. Information the Commission might want to request - Charters: Jack had copies for members listing all charters available on the MMA website with notations showing those that have town managers, councils, board of selectmen, etc. It was agreed that it would be very helpful in sorting out which we might want to look at. The Administrative Assistant is working to get printed copies of all the charters that are linked to the MMA website into binders for the Commission's use. The Chair asked Wendy to notify MMA of the names of the Commission's members.
12. General Discussion and Comments :
 - a. May wish to be careful that we don't put existing ordinances into the charter or other things that may need to be changed frequently because of the strict process regarding amending or changing the charter.
 - b. Need to think about obtaining input from Department Heads.
13. Public Comment
 - a. Importance of public participation and involvement along the way and for all meetings to be video streamed, or if not possible, to be videotaped and put on town website later.
14. NOTICE FOR PUBLIC HEARING: AGREED to place AD in the "Sentinel" (Dec. 23rd) for publication on December 27th. The Chair and Secretary will work on the wording. Chair will find out total cost and request additional funds at the next Selectmen meeting, if there is not enough in our account.
15. Next Meeting: AGREED to meet Monday, January 6, 2014 at 7 PM. We will ask that the video be set for 4 hours. (Video tonight ended at 8:30pm)
16. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:
 - There was unified agreement that although we did the legal notice it is important to do more informal notices of meetings – newspaper articles, announcements on "Eliot online". Need to come up with ideas to get the word out and solicit comments and suggestions; find creative ways to engage the public
 - It is important that we put aside individual likes and dislikes and make decisions that reflect what is best for the town

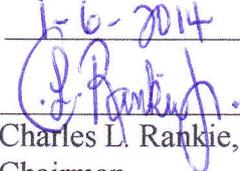
ELIOT TOWN CHARTER COMMISSION
MINUTES - DECEMBER 16, 2013

- It is important that we put aside individual likes and dislikes and make decisions that reflect what is best for the town
- That we work together as a team
- We will need to hold other public meetings and make sure that the public feels welcomed – this is a very important part of the process.

Meeting adjourned at 9:16 pm

Respectfully Submitted,


Rosanne M. Adams
Secretary

Approved: 1-6-2014

Charles L. Rankie, Jr.
Chairman

CC: Committee Members
Eliot Town Clerk