



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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2024 DEC 23 AM 7:32

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Charter Review Committee

Date: 2024-10-23

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Town Hall

Location: Berger Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Business

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chair Chris Haley, Jesse Arnold (remote), Jonathan Barnes, Geoff Beckwith, Alan Foulds, Chuck Robinson

Members - Not Present:

Vice Chair Phil Pacino, Andrew Grimes

Others Present:

Town Manager Matt Kraunelis, Town Counsel Ivria Fried, Town Clerk Laura Gemme, Nancy Docktor, Dave Talbot

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Jacquelyn LaVerde

Topics of Discussion:

This meeting was held in the Berger Conference Room of Town Hall and remotely via Zoom.

Chair Chris Haley called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Roll call attendance: Jesse Arnold (remote), Jonathan Barnes, Geoff Beckwith, Chuck Robinson, Chris Haley, Alan Foulds.

Mr. Haley noted that Phil Pacino could not attend this evening, and the RMLD sections will be reviewed at the next meeting so he can participate in the discussion.

Public Comment:

Nancy Docktor of Pearl Street, and Precinct One Town Meeting Member, thanked the Committee for entertaining her suggestion to change the Board of Health to an elected board, though she feels that it calls for a larger discussion and she will be presenting an instructional motion to Town Meeting.

Dave Talbot of 75 Linden Street, and current Chair of the RMLD Board of Commissioners noted that the letter produced by Duncan & Allen was not requested by the Light Board, and they just had their first conversation about the proposed Charter changes at their public meeting last night. He requested that Town Counsel Ivria Fried attend an RMLD BOC meeting to discuss her letter responding to the Duncan & Allen letter. Ms. Fried stated that she could only attend if directed by the Town Manager. She also stated that she represents the Town, not RMLD, and could not provide the BOC with legal advice.

Review of Proposed Charter Changes with Town Counsel:

Town Counsel Ivria Fried reviewed her memo to the Committee that outlined amendments to three sections that would require a Special Act: Article 2.6 removal of Town Meeting Members, 5.1 Qualifications of the Town Manager, and 8.11 Recall Petitions.

The Committee discussed several topics including: the voter notification and election process from the last Charter Review in 2014; the process to change to make the Board of Health an elected Board going through the Attorney General's amendment process now, or through a Special Act in the future, and conditioning it on a ballot vote; and involving the RMLD BOC in Charter revision discussions.

The Committee reviewed Ms. Fried's comments on Jonathan Barnes's suggested edits to the Board/Committee removal process. Mr. Barnes clarified his intentions that an appointed Board/Committee member would have the rights afforded in section 8.12. Following discussion, Ms. Fried stated that she would provide further comments ahead of the next meeting.

Future Meeting Dates/ Future Agenda Items:

The Committee discussed and agreed to schedule the next meeting for Tuesday, November 26th. At that meeting, the Committee will continue its review of Charter changes with Town Counsel, review the RMLD section, and continue to review Jonathan Barnes's suggested revisions to the sections relating to the removal of a Board/Committee member. The Committee will also discuss the results of the Town Meeting instructional motion, and calendar of action to wrap up the review.

Approval of Minutes:

On a motion by Chuck Robinson, seconded by Jonathan Barnes, the Charter Review Committee voted 4-0-2 to approve the meeting minutes of September 23, 2024 as amended, with Geoff Beckwith and Jesse Arnold abstaining, as they were not present at the meeting.

Roll call vote: Jesse Arnold – Abstain, Jonathan Barnes – Yes, Geoff Beckwith – Abstain, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Alan Foulds – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes.

On a motion by Jonathan Barnes, seconded by Chuck Robinson, the Charter Review Committee voted 6-0-0 to adjourn at 8:34 pm.

Roll call vote: Jesse Arnold – Yes, Jonathan Barnes – Yes, Geoff Beckwith – Yes, Chuck Robinson – Yes, Alan Foulds – Yes, Chris Haley – Yes.