

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN SPECIAL MEETING FINAL MINUTES**  
**Monday, July 11, 2022**  
**3:00 pm**  
**Via Webex and In Person in the**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room, Independence Hall 725 Old Post Road, Fairfield, CT**

A recording of this meeting can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmBHfrizdV4>.

MEMBERS PRESENT: First Selectwoman Brenda L. Kupchick, Selectwoman Nancy E. Lefkowitz

MEMBERS ABSENT: Selectman Thomas M. Flynn

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Steven Mednick, Town Attorney James Baldwin, CRC Vice-Chair Christopher Brogan, Commissioner Pamela Iacono, Commissioner John Wynne, FairTV, CAO Tom Bremer, members of the public

1) CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Kupchick called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

First Selectwoman Kupchick led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3) CONTINUATION OF BOARD OF SELECTMEN TO PROPOSE AND REVIEW  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER  
CONSIDERATION BY THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

First Selectwoman Kupchick said that Selectman Flynn is traveling for business and that is why he would not be available to participate in the meeting today.

Attorney Steve Mednick reviewed Article IX, the budget provisions, which is where he said the Board of Selectmen had left off from its July 5, 2022 meeting. He said proposed changes are not dramatically different from the current budget process and the CRC tried to establish more clarity in the budget process. He then discussed budget submission, a timeline and the objective of joint meetings with the BOF. Attorney Mednick said proposed changes do not take any authority away from the Board of Finance. He discussed referendum provisions moving to the RTM section and said there are no changes to the RTM's powers in relation to the budget.

First Selectwoman Kupchick stated her reasoning as to why she suggested some of the proposed changes on the budget process. Specifically, she said she had spoken before the CRC on the repetitiveness of the current budget process. She said it's more collaborative for the main town bodies to meet together, more efficient for department heads and easier for the public to follow.

Selectwoman Lefkowitz said she had questions and concerns about the budget process. She said she wants to make sure there is good rationale for compressing the timeline. Town Attorney Jim Baldwin discussed the budget calendar process and coordination between the three town bodies to come up with a calendar that works for everyone.

Selectwoman Lefkowitz asked if the Town Administrator/CAO plays any role in the setting of the budget calendar. Town Attorney Baldwin said the Town Administrator/CAO is not in charge of budgets; that person is in charge of administering what's been passed by the town bodies. Selectwoman Lefkowitz said she will make provide more clearly by tomorrow's meeting what she wants from the budget section to go back to the CRC. First Selectwoman Kupchick said the calendar is slightly condensed due to town bodies meeting together. She said she believes it's a benefit to the RTM to include them in joint budget meetings as they would be in the same budget discussions with the BOS and BOF and engaged in the budget process from the beginning.

Attorney Mednick summarized the three issues from Article IX that Selectwoman Lefkowitz wants the CRC to review and discuss. They include consideration of moving the cooperation clause to Article I or moving all the cooperation clauses to Article I; the issue of presiding and facilitation of the joint meetings; and the timeline. He asked for more guidance on the timeline.

Attorney Mednick then discussed Article X. He discussed three provisions: modified language in the Charter so the Town can change the Town Seal by ordinance through the RTM; a mandatory check – not review- every 10 years of the Charter and the BOS decides if there is a need for a Charter Revision; and for the CRC to take one last look at 10.5. Selectwoman Lefkowitz asked for the BOS to have a discussion at its meeting tomorrow to add language appointing an ongoing body to look at issues not covered in the current Charter Revision review. Selectwoman Lefkowitz went through the rest of her questions by Article.

#### 4) PUBLIC COMMENT

Judy Ewing – 98 Sasco Hill Terrace – Ms. Ewing said the Model City Charter is not the same as Fairfield. She said most model cities could have more than 20,000 residents and this has nothing to do with Fairfield. Ms. Ewing went through comments from other meetings and spoke about what is best for Fairfield. She also talked about the RTM size as it compares to other towns.

Mary Hogue – 165 Stonewall Lane – Ms. Hogue said she lives in an area where people don't know their RTM reps, but still thinks it should be a 40-person body. She said Democracy is messy and the Town needs many voices. Ms. Hogue said the prolonged budget process gives citizens time to digest it. She said efficiency and condensing is a disservice to citizens. She said the DPW Director should have an engineer degree. Ms. Hogue said she is also concerned about the BOS having authority over the BOE.

William Gerber – RTM D2 – 25 Shady Hill Road – Mr. Gerber said to put the Charter Revision on pause and use what was done as a foundation for the future. He said he feels the process was rushed. He discussed concerns with the Strategic Plan Committee process and bias in appointing some SPC members to the CRC. He expressed concerns with the CRC not holding enough meetings with public participation and feels the redline version is impractical for the public and was created before any substantive changes were made.

Laurene O'Brien - 104 Edison Avenue – Former RTM Member – Ms. O'Brien said to please be respectful of all opinions. She said the CRC has concerning recommendations and errors of omissions.

Ms. O'Brien said the CRC has not reviewed enough of the Charter because of the given timeline. She said there are no qualitative facts to support suggested changes including reducing the RTM which she is not in favor of. Ms. O'Brien said the review needs to be performed completely, correctly and in the best interest of Fairfield.

Laura Karson – RTM D4 – 187 Buena Vista – Ms. Karson said she's speaking as a resident, not as a member of the RTM. She said it's important to speak on behalf of those not engaged in this process. She is not in favor of a smaller RTM. Ms. Karson applauded Bill Gerber on his efforts and agrees the process should be slowed down.

First Selectwoman Kupchick said she has received many mails regarding the Charter. She said most towns don't require an engineering degree for their DPW Director. She said Fairfield's Interim DPW Director is Interim because he doesn't have an engineering degree, yet he was Director of Engineering and Director of Capital and Planning at Aquarion Water Company. First Selectwoman Kupchick said the Town's 2006 Charter Revision Committee met for the same period of time and there were complaints about the amount of time of the process. She said recommendations were still made and put on the ballot that November. First Selectwoman Kupchick said she said Attorney Mednick laid out the timeline when the process first started including the process and what was required. She said the Charter is a large document and changing the whole document would take too long. She said this process has been transparent and has more opportunities for the public to be engaged between technology and FairTV. First Selectwoman Kupchick said the process wasn't rushed and she announced in her first State of the Town there would be a Charter Revision. She said she picked some SPC members to serve on the CRC because they spent a tremendous amount of time meeting with numerous stakeholders, including residents, in the community and did a lot of research providing solid results. She noted the SPC members were appointed by the prior administration. She said ultimately the voters of Fairfield will decide on what changes they want in the Charter. She said she will make sure it's made clear to voters what will be on the ballot.

Selectwoman Lefkowitz said the process matters and should be supported by evidence. She said the proposed changes do not have enough research and more time for this process is needed. She said she is looking forward to having a continued conversation at tomorrow's meeting. She thanked members of the public for their input.

Attorney Mednick said he will update the resolution for tomorrow and also update where items are in the Charter for tomorrow's meeting.

5) ADJOURN

Selectwoman Lefkowitz made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:04 pm. First Selectwoman Kupchick seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pru O'Brien  
Recording Secretary