

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
Special Meeting
July 28, 2022 - 6:00 PM
HYBRID MEETING
IN Person – Sullivan Independence Hall, First Floor Conference Room
and VIA WEBEX

A recording of this meeting can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2oAv2_zeao

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Bryan Cafferelli, Vice Chair Christopher Brogan, Secretary Marlene Battista, Pamela Iacono, John Mitola, John Wynne

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jay Gross

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Steven Mednick, Town Attorney James Baldwin, First Selectwoman Brenda L. Kupchick, Selectman Thomas Flynn

I. Call to Order

Chair Bryan Cafferelli called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

II. Roll Call

Jay Gross was the only Commissioner not present.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Cafferelli led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Public Comment

Bill Gerber-RTM D2, 25 Shady Hill Road- The CRC has misjudged Fairfield. RTM decision made by selection bias. Spoke about findings from the Strategic Planning Committee and how conclusion did not seem right. Feels vindicated speaking his mind. Leave the RTM alone.

Steve Sheinberg- Chair DTC, 15 Flax Road- We are a democracy and have different opinions. RTM holds executive branch accountable so why reduce it? How is it possible that a smaller RTM is better for voters? Spoke about letters sent to CRC on not reducing RTM from all political parties.

Ellen Jacob, 637 Cedar Road- Last night's meeting was fabulous. Thank you for listening to each other and us. Is in favor of less governmental overreach. Was on RTM at 50 members and it was hard to find candidates. First Selectwoman Kupchick saved her son when she handled the mold problem in the schools.

Gerard Lanzano, 255 Bulkley Drive- Size of US Congress is set at 435. Congress decided how large it should be and RTM should have that same power. Size of RTM should not be mandated in charter.

Reini Knorr, 82 Alberta Street- Thank you for your hard work. Supports keeping power with RTM to regulate its own body and leave it untouched as in the charter. It is more important to get the charter right than get it on the November ballot.

Sharon Pistilli, RTM D3, 107 Lota Drive- No substantial reasons to reduce the RTM. The decision should remain with the RTM and not be mandated. Residents have come out in full force against RTM reduction. It won't pass at the ballot and all the CRC work will be wasted. She appreciates the work that has been done.

Cindy Perham, RTM D2, 45 Winnepoge Drive- RTM carves out time happily. Meetings aren't hybrid or in a room with each other. Not everyone has something to say at every RTM meeting, but it doesn't mean they aren't working behind the scenes. The RTM is a good group of people who care about what they do. Supports keeping it at 40.

Drew Georgiadis, RTM D9, 321 Puritan Road- RTM is volunteers who take time out to get elected and

know constituents. Reducing the number might make those on the RTM too busy to be there for constituents. Changing from 40-30 will make it harder to get a 2/3's majority. She enjoys her time and speaks at the meetings, but it doesn't mean she is more involved than those who don't speak.

Matthew Hallock, 6 Somerville Street- Doesn't want to limit number of RTM members and give more power to the First Selectperson. Leave democracy and representation the people.

Elizabeth Zezima, RTM D4, 160 Fairfield Woods Road- RTM speakers tonight remind her of why she loves her caucus. As majority leader she is disappointed no one has reached out to her. RTM is the Town's legislative body. Proud to lead the caucus. Abandon the issue to reduce the RTM.

Cindy Wapnisky, 41 Valley View Place- CRC needs to let the public know why they are reducing the RTM. Diminished representation will take away from those who need it the most.

Kathy Braun, TPZ Commissioner- Sent letters to the CRC earlier in the day regarding the time frame issue. Reducing the RTM is a compromise from not changing the Town form of government. Ms. Braun spoke about the memo she sent the CRC. Let decision go past the August deadline or take the RTM issue off and bring it up another time. First Selectperson should not be allowed to mediate over boards as they are independent bodies. Do not lower standards of DPW Director.

Christine Vitale, Chair BOE, 254 Verna Hill Road- Thank you for correcting language regarding BOE and Town contracts. Doesn't support reducing the RTM and hears the public voice to keep the number the way it is. Capital Planning on the BOE side is different than on the Town side. The BOE needs answers earlier. Please be flexible with BOE projects being approved earlier.

Kathleen Griffin, 15 Stonybrook Road- Read her detailed email to the CRC sent earlier in the day. The email is included in the meeting backup documentation.

Matthew McKinnis, 301 Sasco Hill Road- Keep RTM at 40 members so people have an adequate voice. Budget process should stay the same. Ask yourselves if reducing RTM will be good for Fairfield.

Marcy Spolyar, RTM D4 Deputy Moderator, 110 Brookridge Avenue- Remove proposed changes to RTM. She's not a political person but learned about the RTM in 2012 when she helped one of her neighbors. She was asked to run as a regular PTA mom to represent people in this town. Don't cut the RTM.

Cynthia McDonald, 1894 Cross Highway- Ms. McDonald has been a resident of Fairfield for over 10 years. She is trying to pay attention and has read everything and doesn't understand why there needs to be a reduction in the RTM. Ms. McDonald is disappointed because she appreciates the representation and thinks the town needs checks and balances. This is bipartisan agreement and doesn't understand why the CRC does not see that.

Emma Kennelly, 117 Edgewood Place- People like changes and the Charter needs to be redone but you need to listen to the people.

Carol Waxman- Ms. Waxman is unaffiliated and not in the Fairfield government. People should be heard, and she's worried about the reduction of RTM members. Ms. Waxman served in Westport as an unaffiliated RTM member and it was easier to work with others from other parties. The RTM is based on partisan agendas and decisions are made already along party lines. Miss Waxman worries about the beach area also. The DPW director should have an engineering license.

Valerie Wilkie- Feels very strongly in keeping RTM the size it is. She does not support reducing it.

Laura Karson, RTM D4, 187 Buena Vista Road- At all meetings the CRC people are expressing wanting to reduce the size of RTM but without reasons to do so. There are many more people speaking in favor of keeping the RTM the way it is.

- V. To review, deliberate, hear, consider and act upon the RESOLUTION OF THE FAIRFIELD BOARD OF SELECTPERSONS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION, PURSUANT TO C.G.S. s7-191(b) (Including participation by members of the Board of Selectpersons)

Commissioner Iacono requested to move the RTM size issue to the end of the Resolution review and there were no objections from the rest of the Commission

1. Article 1, 1.4- Atty Mednick explained his reasoning for the proposed change.
2. Article 1, 1.4(8)- Elected Town Official-RTM will not be included as they are a separate body. All their powers and duties remain the same.
3. Article 1 and Generally- Rules of Order and Civility will be included with Boards and Commissions as well as keep with Rules of Order and Civility. DEI clause will be inserted.
4. Article II, VII & VIII- Charts from old charter will be used as they are clearer.
5. Article II, 2.3A(1)and(2), 2.3C(1)(a) & (b)- This was an error. It has no effect on the First Selectpersons authority and the First Selectperson has no additional powers.
6. Article II 2.3B & C.1(c) and Article III, 3.2A(1)(c)- moved to end of review.
7. Article II, 2.6D- language was changed to reflect the state statute.
8. Article III, 3.3G- Removing this item.
9. Article III, 3.6B- Refer to state statute.
10. Article IV, 4.2A- Errata has been corrected
11. Article IV, 4.2B(1)(a)- Inserting wording, “except contracts authorized to be made by or on behalf of BOE. Remainder of contracts new threshold from \$100K to \$50K.
12. Article IV, 4.2B(4)(c)- add the term “of the Town” to the end of the sentence and removing “board”.
13. Article IV, 4.3B(4),(5),(6), (8)- Discussion about the Capital Plan. Attorneys Mednick and Baldwin will re-write and bring back to CRC Monday, 8/1/22.
14. Article IV, 4.3B(12)- Recommendation will be removed.
15. Article IV, 4.3C(3)- Recommendation will be removed.
16. Article IV, 4.3F- Look at delineation of duties and suggested language drafted for that position. Revert name back to Chief Administrative Officer.
17. Article V, 5.7B(1)- no discussion
18. Article VI, 6.1A- no discussion
19. Article VIII, 8.16- all were in agreement.
20. Article IX, 9.1A- Leave language where it is.
21. Article IX- no discussion
22. Article IX, 9.3B- no discussion

Commissioners Iacono and Wynne presented their full report with data in support of reducing the size of the RTM. They referred all their numbers and information to the documents composed and included in this meeting’s backup materials online. To hear the full presentation please go the the meeting link above.

VI. Next Steps

Chair Bryan Cafferelli asked the Commission to think about the RTM size and what has been presented to be ready to discuss at Monday’s meeting. (8/1/22)

VII. Adjourn

Commissioner Iacono made a motion to adjourn. Vice Chair Brogan seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Pru O’Brien
Recording Secretary