

Town of Greenwich

Board of Selectmen

Special Meeting - Board of Education Charter Revision

March 16, 2017

3:00 P.M.

Town Hall Meeting Room

APPROVED MINUTES

1. The meeting opened at 3:02 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

a. Attendance:

- i. First Selectman Peter J. Tesei - Present
- ii. Selectman John Toner - Present
- iii. Selectman Drew Marzullo – Present

The First Selectman greeted and welcomed attendees. He commented that it was a Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen to continue the community-wide discussion about a proposed Charter Revision regarding the method of electing members of the Board of Education.

2. Old Business: Proposed Charter Revision changes regarding the Board of Education

Mr. Tesei offered a summary of the process to date, to provide a broader view of the Charter Revision Procedures which was first presented to this Board of Selectmen by the Town's Law Department at its regularly held public meeting on January 22, 2015.

At the May 14, 2015 regularly scheduled public meeting the Board of Selectmen discussed a proposed amendment to the Charter of the Town of Greenwich to Change the Number of Members elected to the Board of Education. This proposal was requested by several members of the Representative Town Meeting District 8 delegation. (Messrs. Rickert, Auerbach and Silver).

At that meeting (May 14, 2015), the Selectmen heard from the proponents, Mr. Rickert and Mr. Auerbach, the Town Attorney as well as the public. The Board of Selectmen chose not to approve the proposed amendment and resolution for transmittal to the RTM. The Meeting Minutes of May 14, 2015 contain the details surrounding the discussion.

At the June 9, 2016 regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting, a discussion was held in response to the RTM members request to review a proposal to expand the Greenwich Board of Education from eight (8) to ten (10) members. Mr. Branyan was tasked "to develop a timeline of how long the process would take once a Committee or a Commission was appointed; and, the Selectmen were to consider who shall be appointed to either a Committee or a Commission."

At the June 23, 2016 Regularly Scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting, the Board heard from Town Attorney Wayne Fox on the distinction between appointing a Committee and Commission to look at the proposed requested Charter Amendment. We also heard from 15 speakers including current members of the Board of Education.

The Board voted 2-1-0 to establish a Committee to review the proposal. The Board then unanimously approved creation of a five-member Committee. The Board solicited candidates for appointment at the Board's next meeting which was held on July 14, 2016.

The Selectmen's Board of Education Charter Revision Committee was appointed and given its charge: to put forth an alternative that would provide voters with a greater number of candidates.

The Charter Revision Committee held 17 public meetings and a public hearing from July 2016 through March of 2017. The results and recommendations of their work is what is presently before this Board for consideration and approval for transmittal to the Representative Town Meeting which has the final say.

March 15, 2017's Board of Selectmen Public Hearing provided further opportunity for citizens to express their opinions about the proposed change to the current governance of the Board of Education.

While the proposal for the charter change has been available since March 9, 2017, the language codifying this proposal was provided to the members of the Board of Selectmen for the first time, on the evening of March 15, 2017. This codification encompasses the previously provided proposal.

A concern has been raised by one member of the Board and others, that the process is being rushed. Mr. Tesei responded that he did not agree with that analysis because it is important to the Town to that avoid such a perception. It is for that reason that Mr. Tesei suggested that the Board of Selectmen discuss the language today, but that it not formally be presented to the Town Clerk or the Representative Town Meeting at this time.

The issue will be acted upon at a future meeting.

Mr. Fox read the text of the Committee's statement aloud saying it was not his role to express an opinion but to phrase the statement according to the Town Charter. He met with the full Committee, both sides of the Committee separately and came up with a document that they wanted. Mr. Marzullo suggested that another public meeting with the BOE, parents and other stakeholders. Mr. Tesei remarked that since the PTA acted as parent representatives, they needed to aggregate their constituents' opinion and express it, but ultimately the RTM would decide on the Charter revision which would require 116 votes for the change so that the timing of the presentation should correspond to the seasonality of when 80% of the membership would traditionally be attending an RTM meeting.. Whereas the Board of Selectmen did not have the legal authority to change the Charter, it could express its opinion on the policy and procedure recommendations.

3. Adjourn

Mr. Toner motioned to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Marzullo. Motioned passed unanimously at 3:47 P.M.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Peter J. Tesei". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Peter J. Tesei
First Selectman

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Catherine Sidor". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Prepared by Catherine Sidor
Recording Secretary