Town of Greenwich
Selectmen’s Board of Education Charter Revision Committee
Meeting 7 December 2016
7:00 p.m.
Town Hall – Employee Lounge

DRAFT MINUTES

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

   a. Attendance:

      Committee members: Joan Caldwell (Chair), William Finger, Barry Rickert, Peter von
      Braun, Brian Peldunas (Secretary) – Present.

      Members of the public: Peter Sherr, Jeff Ramer, Laura Erickson, Patti Jomo, Bob Brady,
      Carol DeSalvo, Ken Borsuk

2. Discussion with representatives from the League of Women Voters (if available).

   Ms. Caldwell spoke with a representative of the LOWV). They declined to come to the meeting,
   but provided some background on the previous review (1985) done on the BoE. Pros to the
   method in place at the time: one could self nominate within party, open to third party
   candidates. Cons to the method in place at the time: few contests, confusion on vote
   mechanism, no competition for nominations.

3. Discussion of input received from Law Department and Secretary of State’s
   office.

   No further input was received from the Law Department or Secretary of State.

4. Discussion to structure contact with past and current Superintendent search
   firms.

   After discussion, the committee decided that Mr. Finger and Mr. Rickert would contact the two
   Superintendent search firm’s by phone, and would question them about the process and the
   impact the committee’s work might have on the process. All committee members were
   requested to forward questions to Mr. Finger and Mr. Rickert.

5. Review of information gathered from other sources: Superintendents, BoEs,
   literature on effective sizes of boards.

   No additional information was gathered in the previous week.
6. Review of structures and other options.

The committee briefly reviewed the five options under consideration: status quo, charge option (expand from 8 to 10), odd number of members (7 or 9), eight members with elections of 3 and 5, eight members with chair having tiebreak. Pending further discussion with the Law Department, the committee also decided to keep open the option for a non-partisan board. Mr. Finger will speak with Mr. Fox.

7. Discussion of recommendation relating to initial charge and to other recommendations.

A general discussion was held between among the public attendees and the committee members regarding the history of the 1975 change, the intent of the proposed change (charge option) to create competition, the indication (Ramer) that there would be less interest in becoming a BoE member from the minority party side if the board was unbalanced, the vetting process of the town committees (in some elections, and done “pathetically poorly” for some elections), the need to address the “privileged class” of a minority party candidate where fewer votes are required for election than a majority party candidate not seated, the recognition that there is no guaranteed means of providing a choice in the current system, the belief that the projected impact of any change was speculation, and the belief that the current system provides an “incentive to work it out.”

There followed a few questions aimed at framing decisions:

- What structural changes would incent parties to nominate more people?
- What would the RTC party chair say if asked to nominate more than two people (under the current method)?
- How does the town recruit more qualified candidates?
- How does the town educate and recruit unaffiliated candidates?

This prompted a discussion on what the PTAC could do (educate, not select as per Ms. Jomo) to provide education. Mr. Peldunas was asked to follow up with Mr. Trogni from PTAC to see if they would be interested in providing education (possibly in connection with LOWV at some point) to the public.

8. Adjourn.

The committee reviewed and approved (motion Mr. Finger, second Mr. von Braun) the 29 November 2016 minutes.

The committee reviewed calendars and Mr. Peldunas was asked to schedule the next meeting for 6:00 PM at Central Middle School (12 Dec) and for 7:00 PM at Town Hall (3 Jan).

Mr. von Braun made a motion to adjourn at 8:45, seconded by Mr. Finger.