

**Longmeadow Charter Commission Minutes**  
**DATE: October 21, 2003 TIME: 6:30pm-10:21pm**  
**PLACE: Fire Station Training Room.**

This was the 17th meeting of the Longmeadow Charter Commission. Present: Susan R. Altman, Kathleen E. Grady, William Hoff, R. Peter Landon, Arlene C. Miller (Vice Chair), Roger F. Nadeau, Joseph A. Occhiuti, Rebecca M. Townsend (Clerk), Roger B. Wojcik (Chair). Also present: Mr. Thomas Groux, charter advisor. 3 members of the public were present.

Mr. Wojcik opened the floor for **public comment**. Dr. John Papale, member of the Board of Selectmen, had three points: he argued that it was important to see a centralized town government. The separate boards for Water and Sewer and Highways, Streets, and Engineering, for example, set up competition. Regarding the Select Board, he was in favor of 3 members, because he believed there is a problem getting people to run, and that it makes the current Administrator's job easier to have 3 members to contact for questions. Lastly, he said, the Selectmen strongly support us and wish to help us market the final document. He would like to keep the lines of communication open. He thought that 7 members should be on the School Committee since, he said, their budget is huge.

**Mr. Wojcik announced that the Charter Commission would address the town by the 1st week of November.**

1. Mr. Wojcik called for a **review of minutes of October 15, 2003 and October 18-19, 2003**. Ms. Miller moved that the **minutes of October 15, 2003 be accepted as written**. Ms. Altman seconded, and **minutes were approved**. Ms. Miller moved that the minutes of **October 18-19, 2003 be accepted as written**. Ms. Altman seconded, and **minutes were approved**.
2. Mr. Wojcik opened discussion of our **Draft Model Development process**. He distributed to Charter Commission members a **letter from Selectmen Hal Haberman** that detailed his reasons for wanting the Selectmen to stay at 3 members, and stated this conditional support for our work. Members offered comments on the letter. Mr. Landon indicated that the issue of the Board of Selectmen number is predicated on the assignment of a potential Town Manager for the various duties now handled by 3 Selectmen; additional authority in a professional management position would solve the problem of having to constantly contact members for their opinions. Mr. Occhiuti wanted to ensure that the last sentence was clarified.
3. **Mr. Groux reviewed the weekend's tentative consensus on various issues**. He wrote our tentative decisions on the board and noted things that were not eliminated. The following was on the board: Open Town Meeting with Rules Committee, elected Moderator, Finance Committee, Town Meeting vote with referendum procedure (potential 5-day waiting period for finalization of some decisions). He indicated that the model proposed by Mr. Wojcik posed some potential legal issues, and that Marilyn Contreas (Dept. of Housing and Community Development) is not aware of any town that has that model. Mr. Wojcik said that the Governing Council model is too complex and hard to implement, while elements may have value. He took his sense of our direction and drafted and distributed a summary handout. Members discussed the elements on the handout, pointing out features that were previously handled.

4. **Mr. Groux pointed out that Longmeadow has not had a central administration authority. Because we have not had that, we are having difficulty seeing how the issues raised would be addressed with a more centralized authority.** A centralized Town Manager, for example, prepares the budgets and capital plans, drafts a comprehensive warrant and prints the entire budget with a policy statement. This solves many of the issues that cause problems in town.

To provide **checks and balances**, Mr. Groux explained, **some appointments a professional manager could make would be subject to the Board of Selectmen's approval, while others are subject to their veto. The Town Manager can be on equal footing with the School Superintendent, empowering positions to work together.** This lessens the need for formal institution of dual board membership. Lots of issues that become troublesome are not policy, he explained, but are instead administrative, so management can address them. Dr. Grady pointed out the ICMA website and how she believes employees should report to employees.

5. Discussion then turned to options for **elected or appointed positions**. Options include having the Board of Selectmen appoint the currently elected positions, or retaining the elected status but assigning to a professional manager the responsibility for hiring of paid staff. We discussed the Board of Assessors' duties, including: approving values, hearing appeals on abatements, and recommending tax rates. We discussed the Planning Board and their relative independence. Mr. Groux noted that if elected, their responsibilities likely would not be of the sort to cause conflicts with those of other town offices. We discussed the importance of civic participation in government through having boards and committees. Some boards are presently defined by by-law.

Changing the present configuration would require noting the powers, duties, and roles each board would have. Each would need definition. We discussed possible configurations, as well as the possibility of leaving reorganization partly to the Selectmen and/or professional manager, or reorganization via Town Meeting by-law. We discussed who would have the responsibility for buildings and grounds, the procedures for appointment of a town accountant, clerk, collector, and/or treasurer and whether these appointments, if made by professional management, should be subject to approval or veto by the Board of Selectmen.

6. Mr. Wojcik asked Dr. Grady to discuss the plans for **continued outreach efforts**.
7. **Mr. Groux said that he would provide us with a sample draft of charter provisions that we had reached some consensus on.** Such a document, where we could see our ideas in print and all put together, could aid our decision-making. We then discussed our voting procedures.

Mr. Nadeau moved to adjourn at 10:21pm. Mr. Wojcik seconded, and the meeting voted to adjourn until October 29, 2003.

Approved October 29, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca M. Townsend, Clerk