

Longmeadow Charter Commission Minutes
DATE: November 19, 2003 TIME: 6:35pm-9:14pm
PLACE: Storrs Library

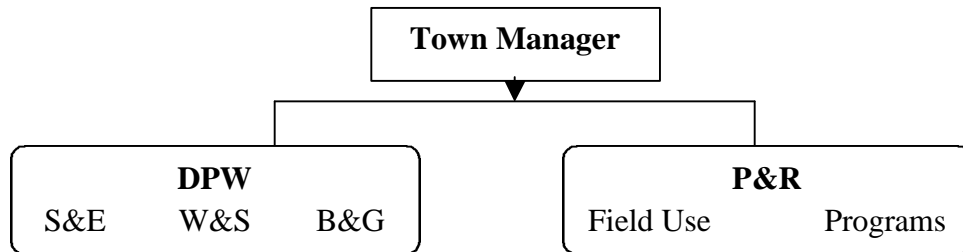
This was the 21st meeting of the Longmeadow Charter Commission. Present: Susan R. Altman, Kathleen E. Grady, William Hoff, R. Peter Landon, Arlene C. Miller (Vice Chair), Roger F. Nadeau, Joseph A. Occhiuti, Rebecca M. Townsend (Clerk), and Roger B. Wojcik (Chair). Also present: Mr. Thomas Groux, charter advisor. 3 members of the public were present.

Mr. Wojcik opened the meeting to **public comment**. Gerry Nolet commented that he didn't want all our work to go to waste and asked what our plans were to market our model charter. Mr. Wojcik replied that plans are being made now to inform every voter in town about what the charter contains and the reasons for it. Among other plans, we will hold several roundtable discussions in addition to a formal public hearing.

Saul Finestone thanked Mr. Landon, Mr. Wojcik, and Mr. Occhiuti for attending the recent Longmeadow Democratic Town Committee Meeting to discuss the Charter Commission's work. He thanked Dr. Grady and Ms. Townsend for their presentation. He noted that everything that everyone wants will not be in the charter, but that does not mean that they should not vote for the package. He will support it. He commented that if people do not vote for the package, things would remain the same; "I don't think that's acceptable to anyone." Mr. Nolet seconded these comments, noting that Longmeadow has a "serious opportunity." The Commission encouraged people to attend the discussions and hearings to get their questions answered.

1. Mr. Wojcik opened **review of the minutes of November 12, 2003**. Mr. Landon had a clarification question about item 3b; Ms. Miller noted that the comment in question had to do with "school contract negotiations," and proposed the amendment to the minutes to clarify the point. Mr. Wojcik wanted items 3 c and d to be clarified. Dr. Grady moved that the minutes be accepted as amended; Ms. Miller seconded, and **minutes were approved as amended**.
2. Mr. Wojcik asked Dr. Grady to report on the Outreach Program status. Dr. Grady said that the format for the **December 1, 2, 3, and 6 Roundtable Discussions** will have the **following format**:
 - Mr. Wojcik will **introduce the general model**, and then there will be **short 5-8 minute presentations concerning major parts of the proposed charter**. She prepared and distributed a series of visual aids, to go on poster board or PowerPoint slides. Commissioners reviewed the document for accuracy.
 - Presentations will allow for the **public's clarifying questions**.
 - Following all presentations the public will get to discuss the model**, noting its strengths and their concerns. **Commissioners will listen and provide answers, and take feedback regarding the model back to the group for our regular meetings**.
 - Our December 10th and 17th meetings will focus on refining the model as input to Mr. Groux for the final draft of the Preliminary Charter.
 - Public input will continue to help shape the document so that it reflects the criteria the town outlined**.
3. Mr. Wojcik made a proposal to **consolidate the functions of Buildings and Grounds (for both town and school) maintenance with the functions now under the separate Water and Sewer Commission authority and those Streets & Engineering functions that are currently under the Selectman's authority**. After much discussion, which considered **cost**

savings, efficiency, streamlined authority structure, opportunities to create cooperation across currently separate functional areas of government, personnel issues and the potential problems, the group reached agreement, with all in favor. The functions of streets & engineering (S&E), water & sewer (W&S), and buildings & grounds (B&G) maintenance (for school and town) will be housed within a Department of Public Works (DPW), to be accountable to the Town Manager. Parks and Recreation (P&R), also accountable to the Town Manager, would be responsible for field use and program creation and supervision.



Mr. Wojcik asked Mr. Landon to report what had been learned about the free public library’s affiliation with the town. Mr. Groux informed us that town-library relationships all over the state are “unique” and unlike any other department area. Mr. Landon had met with the Storrs Library director and the Chair of the Library Board of Trustees. **The Director and the staff are operating like Town employees and a Town Department but the 1/23/90 99-year Operating Lease contradicts the current practice(s) in some of its language.** The agreement does point out that the corporation’s personnel decisions are subject to reasonable review and approval by the Town and are also subject to personnel policies established by the Personnel Policy Board of the Town.

We have proposed that the Library be further reflected on the organizational chart by adding a dotted line from the Library Staff (Operating Dept) to the Library Trustees of the Richard Salter Storrs Library of Longmeadow Inc-(a municipal corporation) on the Voter’s level. A copy of this proposed chart has been delivered to Mr. Eagan for his review.

4. Mr. Landon proposed an **Audit Committee** be created to handle the following **functions**:

1. **Review annual financial statements**
2. **Oversee implementation of Management Report recommendations**
3. **Establish and approve town wide audit procedures**
4. **Communicate with the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, School Committee, and Finance Committee on special situations**
5. **Provide information re: state of audit procedures for the public sector**

The Board of Selectmen should appoint this 5-member group. **All Commissioners agreed with this proposal.**

5. Mr. Groux indicated that **charters often contain administrative re-organization provisions** should the town ever need to re-assess its departmental structure as the charter outlines it. He distributed the 11-19-03 Working Draft Charter for reference. Including re-organization procedures would allow the town administration to re-organize without having to go through the trouble of charter amendment. **The procedures the whole Commission approved**

provide for the following: the town manager would prepare an administrative code, a plan of organization or re-organization of town government that would provide for the orderly, efficient and convenient conduct of the business of the town. The town manager would submit the plan to the Board of Selectmen, who will conduct a hearing. A majority of the full board (3[+] of 5) would be required to approve the plan.

6. The Commission agreed that we would finish discussing fiscal procedures and placement of boards and committees at our next meeting, Tuesday November 25.
7. The press will receive our next Charter Commission Update (#9—previously it was mistakenly described as #10) so it may be published in time for our Roundtable Discussion series.
8. Ms. Miller asked if the Commission would attend the next town Department Heads meeting Thursday morning. Mr. Wojcik and one-two other members would attend.
9. Mr. Groux noted that by-laws typically determine what employees' duties are and that **transitional provisions** usually are put in place to safeguard employees:
 “Any person holding a town office or employment under the town shall retain such office or employment and shall continue to perform [those] duties until provisions shall have been made in accordance with the charter for the performance of the said duties by another person or agency. No person in full-time service or employment of the town shall forfeit [...] pay grade or time in service. Each such person shall be retained in a capacity as similar to [the] former capacity as is practical.” (p. 28, 11-19-03 Working Draft Charter)
10. Mr. Wojcik proposed that the new charter adopt the name **“Select Board”** to be a gender-neutral variant of “Board of Selectmen.” Ms. Miller noted that this change would only apply to charter language, since Massachusetts law refers to this board as “selectmen.” **All members agreed with the change in name.**
11. Dr. Grady noted that the Outreach committee would be meeting Sunday November 23, 2003 to discuss plans for the **December 1, 2, 3, and 6 Roundtable Discussions** at the Storrs Library. Commission members are invited to suggest plan ideas.
12. Mr. Occhiuti moved to adjourn; Mr. Hoff seconded. Mr. Wojcik declared the meeting adjourned at 9:14pm.

Approved November 25, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca M. Townsend, Clerk