

**Longmeadow Charter Commission Minutes**  
**DATE: November 25, 2003 TIME: 6:35pm-9:05pm**  
**PLACE: School Committee Room, Longmeadow High School**

This was the 22<sup>nd</sup> 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. 2 members of the public were present.

Mr. Wojcik opened the meeting to **public comment**. Saul Finestone congratulated us on what we have accomplished so soon. He urged us to “sell, sell, sell!” Mr. Wojcik said that the next update article would summarize the proposed charter. It would be published in time for the Roundtable Discussions. It is also available from [www.longmeadow.org](http://www.longmeadow.org). He offered his thanks to Dr. Grady for her work on that.

Gerry Nolet thanked us for our work and asked 2 questions: what is our feeling is the biggest contribution the charter would make, and could we foresee any adverse consequences? Mr. Wojcik put the questions to the group. Mr. Occhiuti said that the charter, with its visible structure, would end the fragmentation the current arrangement has. Ms. Miller said that the Town Manager, in conjunction with the reduction in separate elected boards, would be good contributions. As for any possible negative impact, Ms. Miller said that she was concerned about the cost implementation would be. Mr. Landon noted that with the new Town Manager and departments logically organized for efficiency, it would be hard to find any down side. Mr. Nolet asked if the structure was malleable. Mr. Wojcik said that there are built-in mechanisms for improvement. Dr. Grady noted that the departmental structure is revisable, but that the core elements are harder to change. Mr. Occhiuti closed by saying that the right personnel in the right place would allow for internal changes to be made and wouldn't require a “valve job” to address minor issues.

1. Mr. Wojcik opened **review of the minutes of November 19, 2003**. Mr. Landon provided Ms. Townsend a clarification of the item on the Library-town relationship. Ms. Townsend clarified the point about the upcoming update to reflect its status as the next one, and remove references to number. Ms. Miller moved that the minutes be accepted as amended; Mr. Occhiuti seconded, and **minutes were approved as amended**.
2. Mr. Wojcik asked Dr. Grady to report on the **Outreach Program status**. Dr. Grady reviewed the visual aids. Members recommended additions, like noting that the Select Board may remove the Town Manager at any time, adding a page on the School Committee, adding a page on financial procedures, and eliminating the reference to the timing for elections. Members then discussed whether there should be a page devoted to all committees and boards.
  - a. **Presentations should last 20 minutes**, with Mr. Wojcik opening and closing the series of presentations. Clarification questions can occur during presentations, and the rest of the meeting is devoted to general question and answer discussion.

- b. Dr. Grady distributed a handout on talking points the outreach members (Grady, Occhiuti, Townsend) culled from general Charter Commission meeting discussion and public input. Ms. Townsend prepared and distributed an analysis of the correspondence we had received thus far (a copy follows these minutes). Mr. Wojcik, on recommendation from Mr. Finestone, asked Ms. Townsend to prepare and distribute additional material addressing the Council form. Mr. Landon commended the outreach members for gathering these materials.
  - c. Charter Commission members discussed **which members would attend which session**. Those who plan to attend all sessions are: Grady, Nadeau, Occhiuti, Townsend, Wojcik. In addition, those who plan to attend on particular dates include:
    - Monday: Miller
    - Tuesday: Altman, Hoff, Landon, Miller
    - Saturday: Altman, Hoff, Landon, Miller
  - d. Mr. Wojcik will handle the introduction, criteria, and conclusion. Ms. Miller will speak about the executive branch. Mr. Landon will speak to financial procedures. Ms. Townsend will speak on the legislative branch. Mr. Groux thought we might want to note how the scope of the Select Board has expanded in the charter: and they may remove the Manager at any time. We also should address transition provisions.
  - e. We will **gather all public feedback** and **refine the model during our December 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> meetings**. One likely issue we would be discussing is School Committee membership (5 or 7).
  - f. We discussed attendees for other meetings:
    - i. Those who plan to attend the Thursday Department Head Meeting in the Selectmen's Meeting Room are: Hoff, Miller, Wojcik.
    - ii. The Chamber of Commerce invited the Charter Commission to present on Jan. 6: Grady and Wojcik plan to attend.
3. Mr. Groux addressed the issue of **Transition Provisions**. The transition from the current arrangement to the charter's system could take from 2 months to as much as 2 years. To allow for ease in transitioning, not all transitions would occur at once. Departmental functions would likely take longer to transition.
4. Mr. Wojcik distributed a draft organizational chart. Members discussed the form and content.
5. Members discussed **qualifications and criteria for the Town Manager's background**. Such a person would be **fit by education, training, or previous experience as a professional manager to be considered qualified for the position**.
- a. Education can include a **Masters in Public Administration**.

- b. Training and experience, would typically occur through the **professional association for Town and City Managers, the International City Manager’s Association (ICMA). The ICMA offers a Town and City Manager Credentialing Program.**
  - c. **Town Managers**, whose salaries could be slightly higher than those for executive secretaries or town administrators, have the requisite authority **to create efficiencies and improve employee performance**, as Mr. Landon noted.
  - d. **All members agreed that the Select Board should have 5 members on it before looking for a Town Manager.**
6. Mr. Wojcik opened discussion on **Financial Procedures** (Article 7) on the 11-25-03 working draft model charter. We discussed the provision that requires the **School Committee to publicize its budget**. Members discussed **feasibility, timing, and value of such a requirement**. Mr. Wojcik said that communication is important and this provision helps that along. Ms. Altman thought that the procedure was excellent. Dr. Grady and Ms. Miller raised concerns about cost factors, to requiring the “general summary” of “its budget” be “published in a local newspaper.” Dr. Grady agreed that it needed to be publicized. **All agreed on a compromise: instead the summary shall be submitted to a local newspaper and publicized by all available means (including electronically via the town website, and copies available in Town Hall). A similar compromise was reached (all agreed) regarding the Town Budget.**
7. We discussed the provision for a **Budget Message** “submitted by the Town Manager” that “shall explain the proposed budget for all town agencies, both in fiscal terms and in terms of work programs. It shall:
- outline proposed financial policies** of the town for the ensuing fiscal year;
  - describe important features** of the budget;
  - indicate any major variations from the budget** for the current year **in financial policies, expenditures and revenues together with the reasons for such changes**;
  - summarize** the town’s **debt position**; and
  - include** such other material as the town manager deems desirable.”
- a. Further, the **budget shall be an executive budget and “shall be balanced in terms of total proposed expenditures and total estimated revenue for the ensuing fiscal year.** The proposed budget shall provide a **complete financial plan** of all town funds and activities, including the budget as requested by the school committee, for the ensuing year. The town manager shall **include** in the proposed budget **[the manager’s] recommendation regarding the budget voted by the school committee.** Should the town manager’s recommendation on the school budget be less than the amount voted by the school committee the town manager shall state the reasons for the amount [the manager] recommends.”
  - b. “Except as may otherwise be required by general law or by the charter, the proposed budget shall be in the form the town manager deems desirable or the board of selectmen may require. **In [the] presentation of the budget the town manager shall make use of modern concepts of fiscal presentation so as to furnish a maximum**

**amount of information and the best financial control.** The budget shall be so arranged as to show the actual and estimated income and expenditures for the previous, current and ensuing fiscal years, and shall indicate in separate sections:

- (a) **proposed expenditures for current operations** during the ensuing fiscal year, detailed by town agency, function and work programs, and the proposed methods of financing such expenditures;
- (b) **proposed capital expenditures during the ensuing fiscal year**, detailed by town agency, and the proposed method of financing each such capital expenditure; and
- (c) **estimated surplus revenue and free cash at the end of the current fiscal year, including estimated balances in any special accounts established for specific purposes.”**

c. **Members discussed the need to publish such comprehensive fiscal information.**

Ms. Townsend emphasized that this was critical to voter knowledge at Town Meeting. Having all such fiscal information in one place, in conjunction with explanatory text provides the currently missing context for better-informed fiscal decision-making. Further, it removes any secrecy that may be suspected and allows citizens to hold officials accountable, in addition to satisfying many other criteria we have outlined with the public. Some members were concerned with the cost or work a document would entail. Arguments in favor noted that the benefit of a knowledgeable public exceeded the cost. Most managers in other towns (e.g. Amherst, Chatham) produce such a document as part of their professional obligations. As Mr. Groux noted, people cannot inflate revenue if it is published so widely.

**Commission members agreed that we do need to publish such information.**

8. Ms. Altman moved to adjourn, Ms. Miller seconded. Members voted to adjourn. Mr. Wojcik adjourned the meeting at 9:05pm.

Approved December 3, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca M. Townsend, Clerk

**Charter Commission Correspondence Analysis**  
(as of November 24, 2003)

What follows is an analysis of the correspondence the Charter Commission has received.

As of 11-24-03 the Charter Commission has **a total of 40 letters, notes, or emails.**

Many contain a variety of recommendations or opinions on a variety of issues.

**Executive Branch**

For Consolidation	<b>Concerns Re: Finance/ Administration</b>	Communication
5	<b>20</b>	12
1 proposal has too much centralization		

**Legislative Branch**

<b>Assumes as is or Prefers OTM</b>	Concern regarding TM Procedure	Concern Regarding TM Access	Different form	Against other forms
<b>26</b>	7	4	1	2 no RTM
			3 Prefers issue voting at elections	1 no mayor
			1 for TMgr or Mayor	
		1 Wants “responsive.... easier to establish responsibility for government actions or inactions”	1 Contrasts Town Manager with TM; 1 wants TMgr; 1 wants a “qualified individual at the top of the organization chart;” 1 wants “a paid employee (perhaps a mayor?) who has <u>no</u> <u>interests</u> in the town”	

Other:

Appropriations Committee: “the power vested in [the Moderator’s] position with respect to the appointments of the Appropriations Committee is wholly inequitable and may prove prejudicial”

Appointed Committees: “talented people that give good service at low cost” 3

Comments on Park & Recreation 2

Rebecca M. Townsend, Clerk