



**TOWN CHARTER COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
OF FEBRUARY 26, 2024**

Members: Judy Bickford, Don McDowell, Chris Palermo, Laura Streets, Richard Craig, Sara Haskins, Brian Yeaton, Christopher Moks, Craig Santenello

Staff: Carrie Johnson, Interim Town Manager; Judi Alberi, Executive Assistant

Guests: Kristin Marriott; Anne Downey-Greenharg; Jamie Jaret; George Cormier; Sheila Tarbox; Tony Cote, Bob Bortree, Jerry Throne, Evelyn Throne, Paul Griswold, Christy Snipp, Donnie Blake

**participating via Zoom*

4:30PM - CALL TO ORDER

Judy Bickford called the Charter Committee to order at 4:30PM at the Tegu Building.

4:31PM - AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

No changes to the agenda.

Members of a committee introduced themselves and discussed procedural matters, including the importance of preparing and sharing information before meetings to ensure efficiency.

4:32PM - APPROVE MINUTES

1. Approve minutes 1-29-24

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the minutes of 1-29-24. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (9/1) Craig Santenello abstained. Craig indicated he did not believe the minutes accurately reflected the meeting.

4:35PM - NEW BUSINESS

None

4:36PM - OLD BUSINESS

1. Morristown Charter 2nd draft - review

Charter Review and Recommendations:

The committee reviewed all sections of the second draft charter, incorporating recommendations from the town's attorney, focusing on language standardization and legal advice for specific sections. The town attorney was consulted on specific questions that arose at the last meeting, but was not supplied with the draft charter to formally review. Sara Haskins shared the information that she reviewed back from the attorney. The overall advice was for the committee to use language from

other charters that was previously approved by the legislature and to keep the first charter as simple as possible. There was a conversation about whether the advice received from the attorney should be included in the meeting minutes for clarity and record-keeping. Going forward, a better effort will be made to inform all the committee members of the work being done behind the scenes. The language suggested in the second draft is based on the advice from the attorney.

The discussion moved to section #3 local option tax (LOT), with a focus on the advice from the attorney not to change this section of the charter. There was also talk about ensuring that the charter reflects the state's role in collecting and administering the tax as currently proposed in Waterbury's draft charter. There was a brief discussion on whether the charter should explore other revenue sources beyond the local option tax, but it was decided that not all tax revenues needed to be included in a charter at this time. Discussion on the potential of implementing a local option tax in Morristown has prompted the need to identify the data that a LOT could produce in revenue dollars. Carrie Johnson has reached out for a study to be done by Economist, Jeff Carr. Carrie stressed the importance of accurate data for voter decision-making. The Committee discussed the importance of communication clarifying with the community that the charter is separate for the local option tax. The charter language would only be enabling to allow a local option tax be created and the voters would vote on enabling a local option tax separately from the charter.

Moving to section #4 of the draft regarding the Town Manager duties, the language in the draft has been taken from Waterbury, VT. At the next charter meeting the committee will revisit section 4 to see if Waterbury's charter was approved with this language.

The last section for discussion was #5 - Recall. Debate followed on including a recall section in the charter for elected officials, with considerations on the potential for controversy and the impact on charter approval. The group concluded that they would remove the recall section completely at this point. The Committee's goal is to keep the charter simple as it can be revised in the future and the Town can choose to add to it or amend it later down the road.

4:56PM - OTHER BUSINESS

None

5:00PM - ADJOURN

Motion made by Don McDowell to adjourn. Motion seconded by Chris Palermo. Motion carried. (10/0)

Meeting adjourned at 5:23PM

Submitted and filed this February 29, 2024.

Judi Alberi, Scribe

Please note all minutes are in Draft form and are subject to approval at the next Town Charter Committee meeting.