

Hopkinton Charter Commission
Meeting Minutes – December 15, 2004

Present: Irvin, Herlihy, Carver, Eldridge, Pratt, McRobert, Karlin, Daugherty

Called to order 7:06 p.m.

Review rules of engagement.

No discussion of individuals or problems not relevant to charter commission.

Listen to others, no side conversations, no debate with audience.

Motion to spend the first hour of each meeting on the template. Discussion of the need to hear things that impact except for special guests. We need closure. Passed unanimously

Motion to vote as we go passed unanimously.

Charter commission timeline: We do not want to put our names on something that is rushed. Self imposed tight schedule less important than getting it right. Much effort to get the commission together but should not rush. 16 months to preliminary, 4 wks for hearing, within 18 months to produce final.

Motion for weekly meetings in January passed 7 to 1.

Meeting on January 5, 5:30 p.m. in Room 211 in Town Hall, with Exec Sec, Treasurer, Accountant, Member of Appropriations, Member of Capital Improvements, Assessor, and business manager of School Dept. to discuss existing financial/budget process.

Format for discussion:

What is your role in budget process? Which information do you collect? Can the process be improved? Does it need to be improved? Who is steering the ship and setting the course? How might the process change with a finance office consisting of the Treasurer, Assessor, and Accountant? Should we continue the three-year plan. Is the board of selectman ultimately responsible for budget direction. Why was the financial planning portion picked as a topic for Charter Commission discussion? This was central in all charters. Eldridge will send the questions to the committee for comment before sending to attendees.

Review of responses from interview with town departments, boards and committees. Little change. Need a more centralized system, full-time professional to manage day-to-day operations of town.

In discussion about charter template: commissioners agreed to eliminate language about how to fill vacancies in elected and appointed positions from individual sections of the charter and develop one section about this topic. Suggestion: vacancies filled by appointing authority or if elected, by the Board of Selectmen, until the next annual

election. At that time voters will determine which candidate fills the vacancy for the remainder of the existing term.

How are School Committee vacancies filled? Tom Irvin will check with the School Department.

Commission agreed to review minutes for next meeting and discuss and approve them at that time.

Meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.