

## TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

### TOWN COUNCIL/CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

June 13, 2022

**PRESENT** Town Council: Chair Richard Kehoe, Vice Chair and Charter Revision Commission Chair Don Bell, Majority Leader Sebrina Wilson (Via Teams), Minority Leader John Morrison, Councillors Angie Parkinson, Awet Tsegai, and Harry Amadasun, Jr., Councillors and Commissioners Thomas Rup and Travis Simpson

Charter Revision Commissioners: Deb Arrieta, Richard Bates, Shelby Brown (via Teams), Eric Thompson, Angel Santiago (via Teams), and Marcia Leclerc

**ABSENT**

#### CALL TO ORDER

The Joint Special Meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Town Council Chair Richard Kehoe to review the Town Council's recommendations to the Charter Revision Commission Draft Report. The Chair announced the exit locations in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §29-381.

Charter Revision Commission Chair Don Bell then called to order the Charter Revision Commission members at 6:35 pm.

Chair Kehoe took a moment to acknowledge the passing of former East Hartford Mayor Melody Currey. The Council and Commission took a moment of silence to honor Ms. Currey.

Chair Kehoe briefed the Councillors and Commissioners on the revisions made in the Charter Revision Commission's draft report that was provided to the Council in April. The Chair then made note of additional recommendations that the Council provided back to the Commission in May, highlighting changes that included (1) the removal of pronouns and using titles and position names instead; (2) more consistency in references to Town Council; (3) clarity of meaning of "office of profit under town government"; (4) a provision to move the first council meeting in November after a Municipal Election to a Tuesday when there is a conflict with Veterans Day holiday; and (5) section references within the Charter were made more uniform and accurate. Chair Kehoe then opened up the meeting for questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Bates requested clarification of why the Town Council would be referred to as "the Council" within the Charter. *Chair Kehoe explained that in Section 3.1 the Charter specifically states that going forward in the document, the Town Council would be herein after referred to as "The Council."* Therefore, the Council made recommendations to remove the word "Town" for uniformity. Commissioner Bates proposed that all references should be defined as "Town Council" for clarity. The

councillors were in agreement with either council or town council as long as the term was used consistently throughout the charter

Commissioner Arrieta proposed that the discussed reference in Section 3.1 be removed to make the document be more cohesive, and use “Town Council” throughout the document

Commission Chair Bell advised that to properly reflect such change, a motion would be required in the upcoming Charter Revision Commission to amend the Commission’s report to reflect all references to The Council be uniformly written as “The Town Council.”

The Commission requested clarity regarding compensation for the Town Treasurer as according to the Charter, the Treasurer is able to contribute to the town’s retirement system. *Chair Kehoe responded that the issue can be reviewed and clarified within Ordinance.*

Commissioner Brown acknowledged the concern regarding the issue but feels that the issue being raised at this point in the process is out of order given the substantive nature of the change and lack of time to discuss it in depth.

Commission Chair Bell requested detail on descriptive text that could be provided to the public that would help clarify the proposed changes made to the Charter. *Much like any referendum question, a “neutral document” explaining what the question is in an explanatory text would be made available. Chair Kehoe advised that the text could be posted on the town’s website, along with a summary of changes to the Charter.*

Commissioner Arrieta asked what the specific questions would be on the ballot in November. *Chair Kehoe stated that the Council will make the decision of the wording that will be placed on the ballot. Given the recommendations provided are not controversial, the Chair suggested that a single clean question that makes mention of the prominent changes should be considered- depending on how long the question would read.*

#### Opportunity for Public Comment

No one came forward.

#### ADJOURNMENT

MOTION      By John Morrison  
                  seconded by Don Bell  
                  to **adjourn** the Town Council Special Meeting (7:07).

Motion carried 9/0.

MOTION      By Eric Thompson  
                  seconded by Marcia Leclerc  
                  to **adjourn** the Charter Revision Commission Special Meeting (7:08).

Motion carried 9/0.