

# Ashland Charter Review Committee Agenda

January 23, 2017

## Town Hall -- Meeting Room A

Members present: Chairman Roberta Soolman (Roberta), Vice Chairman Ken Rush (Ken), Joe Magnani (Joe), Steve Greenberg (Steve), KG Narayana (KG), Alexis Christopher (Alexis), Secretary Betsy Emberley (Betsy)

Members absent: None

Guests: None

Residents: None

Call to order: 7:03 pm

**1. Welcome:** Roberta welcomed everyone and reminded everyone that the committee is not voting on final recommendations but rather obtaining a sense of the members' preferences.

**2. Approval of minutes from November 17, 2016 and December 20, 2016:** Steve moved to approve 11/17/16 minutes, KG seconded, motion passed 7-0-0. KG moved to approve the 12/20/16 minutes, Ken seconded, motion passed 7-0-0.

### **3. Final review of committee recommendations for Town Charter, Parts I through 9:**

Section 7-1. Budget Process: We re-visited this section in order to assess how to effectively promote transparency. We agreed we cannot specify dates instead of the number of days as staff suggested because the date of Town Meeting changes every year or strike the word "material".

For clarity, it was suggested to have the sentence after (a)(ii) become (b) and re-number the existing (b) through (e) to become (c) through (f) . In the referenced sentence ("The town manager shall notify the finance committee of material changes to the budget then under consideration by the finance committee as soon as reasonably possible after the identification of any such change."), we decided to strike the word ""material" to promote transparency.

In the new (c), we deleted the word "general" so the sentence would read "Annually, not later than November 1, the finance committee, after consultation with the board of selectmen, the school committee and the town manager, shall issue a general policy statement that shall establish the guidelines for developing the next town budget."

We will add language to the new (d) or create a separate section to indicate that a draft budget is sent to the town manager after input from the relevant board or committee.

For the new (e), add “any and all” so it reads that the town manager’s budget “shall indicate any and all proposed expenditures”.

For the new (f), the second sentence will have the word “deferral” added after “deletion”. Roberta will ask the town finance director if anything is missing from (f)(i) through (vi). In (f)(iv), “significant” is replaced with “any and all”; in (v), change to read “a budget, including revenue, expenses and general subsidies for any and all enterprise funds and revolving accounts for town government and the school department. For (vi), change to read “such other material as the town manager and school committee may deem appropriate.”

We also discussed adding to the new (f) the reporting requirement for providing actuals for the previous fiscal year and adding a separate sub-section similar to (f) specifically for the school district.

7-2. Finance Committee Action: In the first sentence, add after “budget”, “including Enterprise Funds and Revolving Accounts.

7-3. Capital Improvements Program: Roberta will check into the Collins Center recommendations.

7-4. Approval of Warrants: We could add “for Payments” to the title to clarify that this section deals with paying invoices, not town meeting warrant articles. In the first sentence, add the word “(invoices)” after “warrants for payments”.

We discussed adding a new section “7-5. Financial Reporting”.

## **Part VII -- General Provisions**

8-1. Charter Revision or Amendment: This section does not require changes at this time.

8-2. Periodic Charter Review: We discussed a possible change to the first sentence to read “Commencing in the year 2010 and at least every 5 years thereafter after submission of the report and the date of the public hearing” and agreed to research the language in other towns’ charters.

8-3. Notification of Resignation: We will add the requirement for “a non-electronic signature”.

8-4. Notification of Appointed Vacancy to Appointing Authority: No change suggested at this time.

8-5. Failure to Fill Appointed Vacancies - Town Boards, Commissions, or Committees: Discussion ensued.

**4. Follow-up with Collins Center:** We will finish a draft, then have them come for their final consult to go over recommended revisions. Roberta will contact them to see if they are available on February 21, 23 or 27.

**5. Next meeting:** January 31, 2017

**Adjourn:** Joe moved, KG seconded, motion passed 7-0-0, 10:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted by  
Betsy Emberley

*Please note: these minutes are a representation of the action and discussion at the Charter Review Committee meeting and are not a verbatim transcript.*

Documents used:

- Ashland Town Charter with Notes for 2016/2017 Recommendations as of 1/23/17
- 11-17-2016 and 12-20-2016 CRC Minutes