BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Clifford J. Hurgin Municipal Center, 1 School Street
Bethel, Connecticut 06801 Telephone: (203) 794-8501

Matthew S. Knickerbocker, First Selectman
Richard C. Straiton, Selectman
Paul R. Szatkowski, Selectman

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MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING

Friday, March 7, 2014
7:00 p.m.
CJH Municipal Center – Meeting Room "A"

PRESENT: First Selectman Knickerbocker, Selectman Straiton, and Selectman Szatkowski. Also in attendance were Town Counsel Martin Lawlor and Charter Revision Commission Chairman David Olson.

First Selectman Knickerbocker opened the Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m.

Public Comments:

Dominic Ippoliti, Linda Lane: Among other comments, acknowledged a learning curve for new selectmen, offered that he is not in favor of a 4 year term for First Selectman, favors a 3 year term, can't see the need for more than 3 selectmen and questioned what the selectmen do.

Regina Ippolito, Linda Lane: Among other comments expressed concern if someone is "no good" – 4 years is a long time, favored a 3 year term.

J. Phillip Gallagher, Sunset Hill: Among other comments offered that he would have thought the Charter Revision Commission would have made some changes based on the comments expressed at their public hearing, is not in favor of the proposal to change the financial items, opposed to a 4 year term and favors a 5 member Board of Selectmen as maybe then there would be more debate on topics, feels changes would cause the Board of Finance to lose power – they are the voice of the people, Board of Selectmen makes recommendation on the budget, never alters the Board of Education budget but nickel + dimes the town side, makes the Board of Finance the villains.

Pat Bowers, Windaway Road: Among other comments offered that she thought there would be more in attendance, questioned how people are advised of meetings, here to listen, and questioned the 3/12 meeting purpose.

David Glahn, Elizabeth Street: Among other comments, doesn't see anything broken with the Board of Selectmen, some chairman limit public comments, education is ruining us, Board of Education should give money back to the town and there needs to be handrails on the front steps.

Jim Bishop, Grace Court: Among other comments, asked how many other towns have a 4 year term.

John Rondano, Plumtrees Road: Among other comments, leave the term at 2 years and no more Selectmen.

Billy Michael, Fleetwood Avenue: Among other comments, is critical of the changes, general good of the citizenry, unique make-up of the Charter Revision Commission members, sees future problems with recommendations, need to retain line item control, against salary for elected officials being in the charter.

Cynthia McCorkindale, Elgin Avenue: Among other comments, spoke about the process, against 4 year term, the make-up of the Charter Revision Commission, doesn't think appointed Public Utilities Commission is a good idea, something should prohibit the First Selectman to be moderator at town meetings, wondered where the change to the date of the town meeting came from,

Bill Hillman, Walnut Hill Road (Charter Revision Commission member): Among other comments, offered he supported a 5 member staggered term, adamantly opposed to a 4 year term, earlier supported moving the town meeting date up now is opposed, as requested by fire departments – now recognized in the charter, did support an appointed Public Utilities Commission – now thinks elected is better, recommended breaking out charter items to vote separately.

Will Duff, Long Meadow Lane – Among other comments, is opposed to a 4 year term for First Selectman, as a citizen likes the chance to vote incumbent in or leave them in office.

Kurt Diehoff, Hickok Avenue: Among other comments, no 4 year term – Board of Selectmen 5 members but staggered, make the website more friendly,

Paula Antonielli, Jacobs Lane: Among other comments, thinks agenda/minutes are hard to find on website, doesn't understand why comments are not included in minutes, doesn't agree with Mr. Glahn – thinks education is important, need security in school buildings,

thinks we should use other media sources, like the Patch or Bethel Bulletin, website should be more user friendly.

Bob Legnard, Evergreen Drive: Among other comments, offered that he agrees with some comments, disagrees with others, expanding the Board of Selectmen from 3 to 5 people doesn't necessarily make it better, agrees with spreading out the ballot questions – good to get it out to the people.

Shani Burke Specht, Nashville Road: Among other comments, Charter Revision Commission didn't listen to the people who spoke at their public hearing, people vote on a budget, Board of Selectmen shouldn't make changes, Board of Finance is elected to manage town funds, Public Utilities Commission should be elected not appointed.

As there were no further comments, First Selectman Knickerbocker closed the Public Hearing at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Smith

Wendy Smith, Recording Secretary