



## Charter Commission

Administration Building  
149 Main Street  
Watertown, MA 02472  
Phone: 617-972-6470

Commissioners:

Mark S. Sideris,  
Chair

Stephen P. Corbett  
Michael Donham  
John A. Donohue  
Dennis J. Duff  
Susan G. Falkoff  
Anthony Palomba  
Rhiana Kohl  
Angeline B. Kounelis  
Cecilia Lenk  
Pamela Piantedosi  
Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.  
John J. Lawn, Jr.  
David Siegel  
Athelia Tilson

### ADOPTED MINUTES CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2010 @ 7:00 PM RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO CHAMBER ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

- 1. ROLL CALL:** The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber. Present for the meeting were Commissioners: Stephen P. Corbett, Michael Donham, John A Donohue, Dennis J. Duff, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Rhiana Kohl, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Pamela Piantedosi, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., John J. Lawn, Jr., David Siegel, Athelia Tilson and Chair Mark S. Sideris.
- 2. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:** [April 20<sup>th</sup>](#). After a brief discussion on what procedures the Commission will follow with respect to amendments to the minutes, Commissioner Donham moved to adopt the procedures of the Town Council, seconded by Commissioner Lenk and adopted by voice vote. The Chair indicated that the draft minutes for April 20<sup>th</sup> will be taken up at the next regular meeting.
- 3. MATTERS OF BUSINESS:**

Informational Presentation by Robert T. Markel of Mass Municipal Association: Mr. Markel, a former political science professor at Westfield State College is a former councilor and mayor; and currently serves as manager for the town of Ipswich. He indicated that he does not have the normal bias that comes with most managers, due to his years serving as an elected official. With respect to the manager/council form of government, he noted that the best manager's are those who have the skill set to manage staff and deal with the citizenry. The manager who is appointed can come in and be far more neutral in so far as the decisions and appointments he makes not having grown up in the town and not having to carry the burden of personal friendships. He indicated that all politics are personal and managers have less pressure in that area.

Regarding elected officials whether mayor or council; Mr. Markel noted that from his experience the worst of all worlds are two year term elected positions as most problems take a sustained effort to solve; the two term office doesn't allow for that. He further noted that often the elected official must make unpopular decisions that

are necessary and if you are a two term elected official, making unpopular decisions that are good decisions however unpopular, are difficult as the two year official is constantly in a campaign mode. He also noted that the intense competition of a mayor and a council form of government is an enormous burden and may distract the mayor or elected officials from doing what must be done for its people. Mr. Markel stated that if Watertown is seriously considering a mayor/council form of government, he favors a four year term over the two year term so that officials are not always engaged in politics.

Regarding the appointment process, Mr. Markel stated that the system that gives the manager appointing authority allows the manager to manage his staff, without that, the manager cannot be held accountable. Government has become much more complex, he noted, with more services, and with towns struggling financially to prevent layoffs, service cuts, etc and under pressure from citizens to expand services even more. Financial management is complex, the manager or mayor needs the skill to manage effectively especially on the financial side. An elected mayor will need a longer learning curve, which is a substantial down side.

As to forms of governments, Mr. Markel indicated that the pattern in eastern Massachusetts is to have a stronger manager/council form of government; with western Massachusetts having mayor/council form of governments. The worst of all possible worlds, he noted, is the town administrator. With town administrators, you expect them to manage, but you don't give them the power to manage, as they have no appointment or dismissal authority.

Lastly and in regard to citizen representation, Mr. Markel stated that that is best achieved in the legislative body, from the council. You need a balance between representing what the people want and what is best for the community.

A question and answer forum followed Mr. Markel's presentation.

- a) Discussion and vote on dissemination of the final revision of a [one-page](#) informational flyer. The Chair reviewed the flyer noting additional revisions were incorporated into the document tonight and handed out this evening to the commission members. The Chair stated that he will review the revisions and make a determination on the final document.

Regarding other housekeeping matters; Commissioner Lenk reviewed the Charter Commission's new website. The website will be finalized and documents will be posted as soon as possible.

The Chair indicated that there will be no Charter Commission meeting on June 1<sup>st</sup> due to budget hearings. There will be a brief discussion on the Commission's summer schedule at the next meeting.

Also on May 18<sup>th</sup> a presentation by a supporter of the manager/council form of government will take place as well as discussion on Articles 5 and 6. Commissioners will review the articles and prepare comments. On June 15<sup>th</sup>, a presentation by a non supporter of the manager/council form of government will take place as well as discussion on Article 2.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business to come before the Charter Commission, Commissioner Duff moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 pm, seconded by Commission Palomba and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

For a complete transcript of the meeting, a DVD is available upon request.