

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

Special Meeting

August 13, 2013

Present: John Marini, Chairman
Patrick Henri
Kay Jeanette
David Knapp
Christopher Lisi
Elizabeth Lynch
William Luneski
Lorie Vaccaro
Janet Vitarius Waugh

Others Present: Mayor James Della Volpe
Gene Sharkey
Ed Adamowski
Peter Marcinko
Charles Stowe
Joan Radin
Joseph Jeanette
Madeline Bottone
Tara Kolakowski

The Special Meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Marini.

All present rose and pledged allegiance to the flag.

The secretary called the roll. There was a quorum present.

Chairman Marini explained the procedure for Charter Revision and that the Commission has to vote this evening as to whether they want to send the items listed to the Board of Aldermen for consideration for November's ballot. He said the deadline is September 5th, either the Board of Aldermen accepts or rejects the items and the Commission will resolve.

Mr. Henri said items 1, 2, and 3 are good to go and the Commission should proceed with them. In lieu of the response from the people during the public hearing, the discussion was the referendum should go to the Board of Aldermen. The issue to bring to vote the referendum regarding the budget increase of more than 1.5% the people should have the final say.

Mr. Vaccaro said there were some very emotional comments and pleas regarding this issue. The referendum should go to the people and let the people decide if the increase is more than 1.5%. The incumbent Mayor and Aldermen, whether right or wrong will receive negative votes because of the tax bills. Mr. Henri's point is well taken. He said he supported this in the past and he wholeheartedly supports it tonight.

Ms. Vitarius Waugh said there was a very nice turnout this evening for the public hearing. She said it is all about volunteering and suggested that the group come to the Commission with their suggestions. She said their terms will be ending shortly and they have done a lot of work since September and she doesn't want their work to fall through the cracks. She said there is a lot of work to do on the referendum and maybe there should be people who are elected responsible. She said she has lived here 12 to 13 years. She would like to hear some suggestions and not just negative suggestions. Say yes to volunteer – work together for the town.

Mr. Lisi asked where the 1.5% figure came from.

Chairman Marini said it was just a number that came up.

Mr. Lisi asked if it is an arbitrary number.

Chairman Marini said the Commission discussed two different proposals. BOAT would be second or just dissolve and the Mayor and Board of Aldermen would handle the budget. The BOAT does work on the budget month to month. We discussed having a referendum only if there is a substantial change to the budget increase. The number was floating around at 1.5%. This year the increase was 4.5% which is a substantial increase.

Chairman Marini said Item #4 is something the Board of Aldermen will have to reinstitute or Charter Revision can add it to the list for the ballot. He said do we want to add an item to send on to the Board of Aldermen tonight. We have a check and balance – Charter Revision sends to the Board of Aldermen and they approve it and have a public hearing and then it is finally on the ballot and the public will vote on it in November.

Chairman Marini said the Board of Aldermen will have to finalize it for their public hearing. The commission will have to hear from the Board of Aldermen. The cut off date is September 5, 2013. We could continue the Charter Revision Commission and go to referendum with it if there is a specific item the Commission wants to address.

Mr. Vaccaro said we have an election in November and we have a referendum for five million dollars and we have this on the ballot also. It is the same as taxation without representation.

Chairman Marini said if it goes to the Board of Aldermen they have a discussion on it and can either approve or disapprove it.

Mr. Vaccaro said he would like to propose to add it on to the list to send to the Board of Aldermen.

Mr. Henri said the Commission has a written proposal, it's deep enough. It says if the taxes go up over 1.5% the budget goes to referendum. The Board of Aldermen can figure out the details.

Chairman Marini said we could amend the Charter to say you have to hold a referendum for the budget if it goes over 1.5%. The proposal talks about a lot of items.

Mr. Henri said we don't have to have the entire proposal.

Mrs. Lynch read the proposal from July 25th meeting. She asked how can the commission do it on such short notice. There is not enough time to do it.

Chairman Marini said the budget can be accepted by the people's votes or it can be revised by BOAT to get it down. Seymour goes to referendum and there is a big expense, but again their budget is 10 million less than Ansonia's budget. We have to look at the total savings.

Mr. Vaccaro made a motion to add the budget referendum to the questions for the November election.

No second to the motion.

Mr. Luneski said they have to look at the percentage number more closely.

Chairman Marini said the Board of Aldermen will look at it.

Mr. Henri said he doesn't go along with it. The commission had 1.5% for a long time. We have to draw the line and get it to the Board of Aldermen.

Mrs. Lynch said there was a dispute on what the commission wanted the language to be. There were many issues discussed and it has to be finalized. We have to go over everything in order to make an informed decision.

Chairman Marini said the commission will stay with item #4 and we could have an item #5. We can explore the larger question but they work with the budget month to month. We could ask the Board of Aldermen to continue the Charter Revision Commission to finish this question.

Mr. Henri said we can do it now and change it and then have the Board of Aldermen finalize the question.

Mr. Knapp said the commission discussed this at length and voted on it a few times.

Chairman Marini said it was a split vote. The first time it was to remove it from the draft list. The second time it was to add it on and that was a split vote – it was tie and the vote failed.

Mr. Knapp said everyone sitting here at the table thinks we should explore going to vote for the 1% or 1.5% referendum but it was removed from the list and we agreed and now we ran out of time to do it justice. We voted on this issue two times and it was agreed to remove it from consideration and here it comes again. He said he doesn't think the commission is prepared to go forward with this at this time. This would be a great mission for the next Charter Revision.

Mr. Henri said we have it now.

Mr. Vaccaro made a motion that the City of Ansonia will follow the budget referendum of July 25, 2013 meeting (attached) that a referendum will be held if the Board of Apportionment & Taxation has a 1.5% increase from the previous fiscal year. Mr. Henri seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Patrick Henri:	Yes
William Luneski:	Yes
Lorie Vaccaro:	Yes
Janet Vitarius Waugh:	Yes
John Marini:	Yes

Kay Jeanette:	No
David Knapp:	No
Christopher Lisi:	No
Elizabeth Lynch:	No

The Chair declared the motion carried: 5 yes, 4 no.

Mr. Luneski made a motion to append the last motion to stipulate that the 1.5% will be examined closely. Mr. Lisi seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Chairman Marini reviewed the sheet "Draft Report" August 13, 2013 with the Commission members. He said the items under "Recommendations which the Commission was requested to consider" are not on the ballot for consideration because Item 1,3,4 are considered to be under the Mayor and the Salary Committee as part of their position. Item 2 is more of a constitutional problem and there are no state statutes that address this issue.

Mr. Knapp made a motion to pass these questions on to the Board of Aldermen and the City Clerk. Mr. Vaccaro seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Chairman Marini thanked the members of the Board for all their hard work on these issues that were presented to the Board of Aldermen. He thanks the members from the public for attending the meeting and voicing their concerns.

Mrs. Lynch made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 p.m. Mr. Henri seconded. All in favor, so carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Lynn Flaherty
Secretary