



Town of Burlington

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2016

The meeting convened at 6:56 PM, Monday, January 4, 2016. Present were: Ed Jurkiewicz, chairman, Mike Vollono, vice chairman, David Goshdigian, secretary, Pat Miller, Dick Alden, John Derewonko, and Dave Wagner, members, Ginger Doherty, alternate, Mary-Jane Ugalde, Town Clerk, and Ted Shafer, First Selectman.

Citizen Comment: The chairman granted the public's request for a brief period of citizen comment.

Barbara Dahle stated that she has researched the surrounding towns, and Torrington is the only town that is hiring a consultant to work on their ordinances. She said that she did not think that we should pay someone to do this, and expressed concern that this would open the door to posting other town business on the internet.

John Hebert, chairman of the Conservation Commission, spoke as a private citizen. He recounted his experience serving on town boards, which included drawing on members' collective experiences, not that that of outside consultants. Mr. Hebert did not support hiring an outside consultant.

Discussion and Vote on Retaining a Vendor: Mary-Jane Ugalde gave her opinion as Town Clerk on hiring a consultant to review and maintain the town ordinances. Mary-Jane was in favor of hiring a consultant. In her opinion, maintaining the ordinances online with a consultant will provide the public with better access. Furthermore, it will be better for future town clerks if there was a consultant who organized the ordinances going forward—it would make the transition between town clerks easier.

Ted Shafer, First Selectman, expressed his support for hiring a consultant. He reported that the town attorney stated it would be more cost-effective for the town to use a consultant; otherwise, everything produced by this committee would have to be reviewed by the town attorney. Ted stated that a consultant of this nature would have been helpful when revising the town charter. Also, in response to concerns expressed during public comment and by committee members, Ted advised that, although many towns in the northwest corner of the state have not used a consultant with the exception of Torrington, Burlington is the third largest municipality in that area.

Pat Miller expressed concern regarding the terms and conditions posted on the websites for the town codes serviced by General Code, specifically, the fact that the hosting of the ordinances could be delegated to other companies. Dave Wager explained that this concerned the consultant's ability to house a certain amount of data and the need to use other companies to meet the demands of their customers. Pat also expressed concerns that the ordinances from towns serviced by the same consultant are all similar, that the committee might have to add extra meeting to accommodate the consultant's timetable, and that the annual fee might increase in the future.



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Dave Goshdigian stated that he thought the town should use one of these consultants, but not at this time. He would like to see what this committee could do and then recommend retaining one of the consultants at the end of the committee's term. He also expressed concern about the consultants' ability to complete a revision of the ordinances by the expiration of the committee's term.

Ed Jurkiewicz expressed concern that, if we did not use a consultant, the committee would not be able to address the substance of the current and proposed ordinances. He would support using a consultant so that the committee could focus on substantive issues.

Dick Alden moved for a vote on whether to recommend that that Board of Selectman hire a consultant at this time; John Derewonko seconded the motion. The motion passed: four votes in favor, two against, and one abstention.

Next, the committee discussed which consultant to recommend, General Code or Municode. John Derewonko recommended General Code based on his previous contact with representatives from the two consultants. He felt that General Code is more responsive. He also felt it more beneficial that General Code will provide the town with an organization for the ordinances before a legal analysis, whereas Municode provides a legal analysis and recommendations first, which takes up to six months to prepare. As a result, the committee could get started on responding to recommendations earlier with General code. Dave Wagner pointed out that the cost is less per page with Municode, but thought that Municode's hosting fee was a negative.

The committee then discussed the possibility of Ted negotiating the details of a potential contract with the two companies, including pricing with respect to the page count and pushing up the companies' proposed timelines. Ted proposed that he could begin negotiations with the two vendors, but leave the ultimate decision as to which consultant to the Board of Finance.

Dicked moved to vote on whether to recommend to the Board of Finance that the town be authorized to contract with General Code; Dave Goshdigian seconded the motion. The motion passed with six votes in favor and one abstention.

Ted asked for representatives from the committee to accompany him to the upcoming Board of Selectman and Board of Finance meetings, in order to help present the committee's recommendations. John said that he will finalize an exhibit conveying the details of the companies' proposals.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Goshdigian
Secretary, Ordinance Committee