



## Town of Burlington

### **CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING Monday, February 10, 2020 – Burlington Town Hall**

#### **1. Call Meeting to Order:**

The meeting convened at 7:35 p.m., Monday, February 10, 2020. Present were David Goshdigian, Chairman, Tony DiNicola, Vice Chairman, and Ginger Doherty and JP Parente, alternate members. Ginger Doherty sat for Barry Faticoni and JP Parente say for Antoinette Vosburgh. Laura Gara arrived after the January 27, 2020 public hearing and regular meeting minutes were accepted. First Selectman Ted Shafer was also in attendance.

#### **2. Citizen Comment:**

There was no citizen comment.

#### **3. Acceptance of January 27, 2020 Public Hearing Meeting Minutes:**

Ginger Doherty moved to accept the minutes, Tony DiNicola seconded the motion, and the minutes were accepted unanimously with JP Parente abstaining.

#### **4. Acceptance of January 27, 2020 Meeting Minutes:**

Tony DiNicola moved to accept the minutes, Ginger Doherty seconded the motion, and the minutes were accepted unanimously with JP Parente abstaining.

#### **5. General Review of Charter Sections:**

*Section 2-5, Vacancies in Elective Office* – The committee discussed whether the charter should provide that, in the event of a vacancy in elected office, the vacancy would be filled by the Board of Selectmen for either the rest of the vacated term or until the next election, at which the town would vote to fill the vacancy. First Selectman Shafer indicated that the Town Clerk had flagged this section for review. The committee felt that it was important to preserve the town's ability to elect someone to fill the vacancy, as is the current practice, but it will look to improve the language of this section. The committee will review what the practice in other towns and consult with the Town Clerk before drafting proposals.

*Section 3-3, Board of Selectmen, Staggering Terms* – The Board of Selectmen has indicated that it is interested staggering the terms of the members of the Board of Selectmen so as to avoid having an entirely new board without any experience. The committee suggested several possible ways to prevent such a scenario: adding two more selectmen, for a total of six, with the two new members having staggered terms; asking one selectman from each party to step



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down two years early; or at the next election, the candidates for Board of Selectmen receiving the two highest vote totals are elected to four-year terms and the next two highest are elected to two-year terms.

Other ideas included having the candidate from each party with the highest vote total sitting for a four-year term, with candidate from each party having the second highest vote total sitting for a two-year term. The committee also discussed whether, following the next election, the Board of Selectmen would decide which members will serve two-year terms and which will serve four-year terms. The committee also considered how these proposals would be affected by a candidate who, unaffiliated with a political party, petitioned their way on to the ballot. Additionally, the committee discussed whether the term of the First Selectman should be changed to further stagger the terms of the Board of Selectmen. Once the terms of the Board of Selectmen are staggered, all of the selectman would be elected to four-year terms, as is the normal practice.

Ginger Doherty also suggested that it might be beneficial for elections for the Board of Selectmen to be on the same schedule as U.S. Presidential elections. This would help to increase voter turnout for such elections, and she suggested we should consider this going forward.

*Chapter 5, Appointed Boards, Commissions and Officers* – The committee considered whether all boards and commissions should have staggered terms. Furthermore, the committee also considered some other provisions of general application, such as whether to have an attendance requirement where members of boards and commissions could be removed if they have a certain number of unexcused absences from meetings.

The committee also considered whether to reduce the number of members of the Library Board of Directors. This would be affected by eliminating positions through natural attrition. First Selectman Shafer reported that, due to changes in the regional planning agencies, section 5-15 can be deleted because it no longer reflects the current practice.

Tony DiNicola suggested a change to section 5-20 requiring prior approval from the First Selectman, or his designee, before a town official or board engages town counsel. The intent of this change would be to avoid unnecessary expenditures.



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### 6. New Business:

There was no new business.

### 7. Adjourn:

JP Parente moved to adjourn, Ginger Doherty seconded the motion, and the motion to adjourn passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:35.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dave Goshdigian  
Chairman, Charter Review Committee