

17TH CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

FINANCIAL COMMITTEE

WWW.STAMFORDCHARTERREVISION.ORG

Donald B. Sherer, Chair

Members

JOANNA M. GWOZDZIEWSKI

DAVID LUCAS

ROSANNE MCMANUS

GEORGE SESSA

MINUTES

Wednesday, February 8, 2012

7:00 p.m. – Republican Caucus Room

4th Floor, Government Center

888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, CT 06904-2152

In Attendance: (see attendance sheet)

Committee Chair Sherer called the meeting to order at 7:00. On the agenda was to discuss various fiscal areas of the charter including Pensions, Bonds and Budgeting with members of the Board of Finance and Board of Representatives.

Kathleen Murphy commented on the Capital Budget, and said there was no thought to the out years, and that it was important to do so. As well, she mentioned auditors cannot trace bond funds.

When discussing board approvals of transfers, both BOR and BOF members agreed that the approval level should be increased from \$500 to \$2,500 requiring approvals.

There was a general conversation about a Mayor's Budget Public Hearing, and it was generally agreed that the hearing would need to be extremely early, and that the Mayor had constant feedback from constituents, and that the public hearing was not necessary.

There was a general conversation about reducing the scope of the BOF and BOR responsibilities, especially in light of the other board's mission. Then, there was a general discussion of the missions of the two boards: BOF is to insure that policy is paid for; to be the financial watch dog. The BOF should not set policy.

The Charter should clarify- once the budget is approved, who has control over the budget? Should the Mayor be empowered to move money from one line item to another?

The BOF does not have unilateral power. The Mayor and the BOR, with a super majority, can over ride the BOF.

Members of the BOF thought they did not have enough power over labor contracts. Since this is the largest line item in the budget, they should have more than “advice” with regard to the negotiations.

Also discussed was a need for clarification of the Mayors control over the budgets not under his control (non-profit).

Dudley Williams indicated concern about the BOF getting involved in non-fiscal/financial matters.

David Martin thinks the Charter should not limit the power to audit, for any reason. Harry Day agreed, but thought the wording in the BOF Power section in the Charter was odd and needed reviewing.

Kathleen Murphy thought the wording in the Charter with regards to investigations was too limiting.

Also, that the wording with regards to OPEB (C6-20-9) needed to be revised.

It was suggested to review C8-30-3 as the wording is inconsistent.

There was a general discussion about the even number (6) of members of the BOF, are tie votes often a problem. It was decided that the only issue is setting the mill rate, and that if the BOF cannot come to agreement, it is up to the BOR. All agreed the number does not need to be changed.

There was a discussion with regards to the auditors report being completed in 3 months as the charter requires. Staff does not feel 3 months is adequate. Some board members thought 3 months was sufficient.

There was a general discussion by all with regards to the need for an Internal Audit Department, which is required in the Charter (C5-50-2 (4i)), but was taken out of the budget 15 – 18 years ago, and moved into OPM . There was unanimous consent that a strong independent Internal Audit function was required and important.

Bd of Finance could put pressure on the Mayor to keep internal audit separate or they could hire an auditor themselves.

Combining the BOF and BOR budget presentation was discussed. BOR members argued strongly against this, since they feel too much changes in the time between presentations, and that they have a different set of questions and concerns. There was not as much opposition to combining presentations of additional appropriations.

Pensions- It was decided there is a need to review state statute with regard to Pensions, Cerf provision etc., and to review all suggestions with legal counsel to see what needs to e re-written, what can be added.

Budget;

The group discussed the safe debt limit, and was suggested that the Mayor should advise what debt can be paid for.

1. R. McManus moved to close the meeting, seconded by J. Gwozdzowski

This meeting is on [video](#).