

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE KILLINGWORTH
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

Monday, February 20, 2023 7:00 p.m. via GoToMeeting

Members in Attendance: Arjumund Abid, Joanne Gorman, Joan Gay, Casey Jacob, Eric Nunes, Cathy Iino, and Kathleen Zandi, Chair

Members Excused: None.

Visitors (as identified on screen): First Selectman Nancy Gorski, Eileen Blewett, Laura Lefko, John Samperi, and Bill Tobelman

The meeting was Called to Order at 7:00 p.m. by K. Zandi, Chair

Public Comment:

Joanne Gorman read into the record one public comment that was submitted via email (the email is attached at the end of these minutes).

Fred Dudek submitted a public comment regarding his concern about the CRC vote on November 21, 2022 to not allow a Volunteer Firefighter to be elected to the Fire Commission.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion #1 - Eric Nunes *Moved* and Joan Gay *Seconded* a motion to approve the Minutes of February 11, 2023 as presented.

Voting to Approve: J. Gay, C. Jacob, E. Nunes, C. Iino, K. Zandi

Voting to Abstain: A. Abid and J. Gorman (Both abstained since they were not at the February 11th CRC meeting.)

Motion passed (5-0-2).

Approval of Clerk Invoice:

Motion #2 - Joan Gay *Moved* and Joanne Gorman *Seconded* motion to approve the Clerk's invoice in the amount of \$378.00 as presented.

Voting to Approve: J. Gay, C. Jacob, E. Nunes, C. Iino, A. Abid, J. Gorman, K. Zandi

Motion unanimously passed (7-0-0).

Draft Presentation for Public Hearing:

Due to the Legal Notice not being properly filed in time, the Public Hearing scheduled for 2-20-23 was canceled. The CRC discussed dates for rescheduling it, the first choice being February 28th, and second choice being March 2nd.

Motion #3 - Casey Jacob *Moved* and Joan Gay *Seconded* a motion to reschedule the final remote Public Hearing date to either February 28, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. (first choice, if proper Legal Notice can be made in time) or March 2, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

Voting to Approve: J. Gay, C. Jacob, E. Nunes, C. Iino, A. Abid, J. Gorman, K. Zandi

Motion unanimously passed (7-0-0).

Chair Zandi reviewed the Public Hearing slides with the CRC noting changes within the slides in Public Input, Consideration to be Deferred to future CRC due to time constraints, and CRC's Recommendation/Motions slides. Chair Zandi will update the slides and email them to the CRC for additional feedback and/or questions.

Chair Zandi drafted a cover Memo to the BOS of everything that has been accomplished and the process that was used, attaching a list of all motions, a clean version of Charter, redlined version of Charter and both the Memos recommending forming an Ethics Commission and Code of Ethics, and forming a Governance Committee. Chair Zandi suggested creating a Table, that she would make, of all recommended changes, topics that haven't been resolved, almost as a guide to make it easier for the BOS' review. Chair Zandi will circulate to the CRC the Table to gather further suggestions and/or comments. Discussion took place around submission of the Charter and all pertinent information to the BOS for review on March 10th. Chair Zandi will present it to the BOS at their March 27th meeting due to her traveling on the March 10th date.

Follow up on Fire Commission:

Cathy Iino and Eric Nunes met as a Working Group along with the members of the Fire Commission and Fire Chief to discuss the recommendation and motion that was passed by the CRC on November 21, 2022. Concerns were raised by CRC members about the Working Group's meeting having been recorded and posted on the Killingworth Republican Town Committee YouTube site, even though it wasn't a public meeting. Eric Nunes, who recorded the video with the knowledge of the Working Group and Fire Chief and Fire Commissioners, stressed the importance of the video as a way for Community members to stay informed. First Selectman Gorski will brainstorm other avenues going forward for posting meeting videos for the public to see, possibly use of the SharePoint CRC folder. She will also touch base with Tom Heddick, an FOIA expert, to make sure that the CRC is in compliance regarding same.

Discussion took place about adding the topic of conflict of interest as a discussion for the proposed Ethics Commission. Eric Nunes will take down the meeting video at Joan Gay's request. Casey Jacob suggested that Kathy Zandi include on the Public Hearing slides, that the CRC has only disagreed on four motions. Eric Nunes gave a brief update on the Working Group's meeting. He extended a warm thanks to all three Fire Commissioners who were present along with the Fire Chief. Eric stated that their discussion was fruitful noting the Levels of

Membership were discussed in length. The Fire Company feels as though they are being unfairly targeted in terms of looking at conflict of interest to serve on both the Fire Company and Fire Commission.

Motion #4 - Eric Nunes **Moved** and Joanne Gorman **Seconded** a motion to rescind Motion #2 passed on 11-21-22 (which stated that elected Fire Commissioners “may not be current members of the KVFC”) and to attach to the Charter Revision Commission’s recommendation to the BOS that a Code of Ethics be created and an Ethics Commission be formed the suggestion that an examination be made of potential conflicts of interest in all Killingworth Committees and Commissions.

Discussion took place about two motions that Eric Nunes brought to forth, one at a previous meeting. Cathy Iino gave her insight on the Working Group meeting, Amount of funding that gets distributed from Town to the Fire Company was discussed in length.

Voting to Approve: J. Gay, C. Jacob, E. Nunes, J. Gorman, K. Zandi

Voting to Abstain: A. Abid, C. Iino

Motion passed (5-0-2).

Charter Verbiage Edits Review:

Casey Jacob stated while looking into the Statutes and Ordinances, it had become clear that many are either out-of-date or contradict each other. She suggested that the CRC recommend to the BOS that they appoint a group to review the Ordinances. Chair Zandi will include this item on the Memo she will prepare for the BOS for review and consideration.

Casey Jacob suggested Charter Verbiage edits and two motions were made below:

Motion #5 - Casey Jacob **Moved** and Cathy Iino **Seconded** a motion to remove the word “Resolution” throughout the Charter.

Voting to Approve: J. Gay, C. Jacob, E. Nunes, C. Iino, A. Abid, J. Gorman, K. Zandi

Motion unanimously passed (7-0-0).

Motion #6 - Casey Jacob **Moved** and Cathy Iino **Seconded** a motion that references to specific Charter sections be made as “Charter § #”.

Voting to Approve: J. Gay, C. Jacob, E. Nunes, C. Iino, A. Abid, J. Gorman, K. Zandi

Motion unanimously passed (7-0-0).

Chair Zandi will schedule a special meeting directly after the Public Hearing for a debrief. Also, after the date for the next Public Hearing is established, the other possible date (Feb. 28 or March 2) will be scheduled as a CRC Special Meeting to go through Charter Verbiage.

Adjournment:

Chair Zandi adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Submitted By: Jamie Sciascia, Clerk

February 13, 2023

To the Killingworth Charter Revision Commission

I am deeply disappointed and disturbed by a recent commission vote to ban a volunteer firefighter from serving on the Killingworth Fire Commission.

Volunteer firefighting is as American as Mom and apple pie. The difference in Killingworth as proposed by the Charter Revision Commission is that Mom and apple pie can serve on our Fire Commission, but not a volunteer firefighter.

I cannot believe that intelligent people would vote to disallow a Killingworth citizen their constitutional right to run for public office because they serve the town in a volunteer capacity as a firefighter. Volunteer firefighters vote every day for the betterment of the town by their actions and responses to medical emergencies, fires, storms, hazardous material emergencies, lost person searches, as well as responding to false alarms, and calls of good intent.

I served from 2011 through 2017 as the State of Connecticut volunteer fire recruitment program manager through a federal grant funded effort. This was managed overall by the International Fire Chiefs Association. The grant was awarded due to the shortage of volunteer firefighters in the state. Recently, the Connecticut Legislature has taken up the effort to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters due to the shortage that soon may become a crisis.

Should the town ever have to fund a career firefighting staff, you are talking about adding millions of dollars to the annual town budget. This includes 24 hour staff, berthing quarters, overtime and paid training hours.

When I was the town's fire chief, I was elected to the Board of Finance serving eight years. The ousted First Selectmen claimed I could not serve due to a "conflict of interest." The question was put to our town counsel, the same group used today, and the answer was it was not a "conflict of interest" and I could continue to serve. Additionally, I served four years on the Board of Tax Review, and thirteen years on the town Board of Selectmen. My volunteering as a firefighter was never an issue. Past First Selectmen have served as volunteer firefighters, and past fire commission members have served as volunteer firefighters. The volunteer fire company has even had fire commission members join the service because they saw the need and shortages of volunteers. There never were any issues, and I do not understand your reasoning for including this new requirement. It seems to me you are questioning the honesty and ethics of all volunteer firefighters.

What is next? Volunteers at the library cannot serve on the library board of directors? A teacher living in town and teaching at HK cannot serve on the Board of Education? A resident public works foreman cannot run for public office? A volunteer firefighter cannot serve on the Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen, and any other elected public office in town?

In closing, get rid of this ridiculous requirement you have proposed in the charter revision. It points to singling out one volunteer agency rather than all volunteer agencies and I truly believe it is unconstitutional, and not in the spirit of small town Connecticut.

Volunteers should be embraced and nurtured and not treated as second hand citizens.

Respectfully,

Fred Dudek, 3 L'Hommedieu Road

Past Fire Chief, and member of multiple elected Boards.