

Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes
07/16/2020

In attendance: Diane Jurmain (DJ); Doreen Hayes (DH); Doug Riley (DR); Nancy Sitta (NS);

Not In Attendance: Craig Schultze (CSc); Chair -Chris Soffayer (CSo),

Invited Guests: Town Clerk, Lisa Jane Hardin (LJH); Select Board, Erin Underhill (EU),

Zoom Video Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by Diane Jurmain.

I. Housekeeping

- a. **A motion was made by DH to approve the minutes from 5/14/2020 meeting and was seconded by DR. The Committee was polled and the minutes were unanimously approved and accepted as written by DH, DJ, DR and NS.**
- b. The Committee Members will be reminded the day before the next meeting. Please notify CSo, Chair, if you are unable to attend.

II. Millis Home Rule Charter Review

As part of our research, the following elected members from the Town of Millis were invited to attend our meeting: Lisa Jane Hardin (LJH), Town Clerk; and Erin Underhill (EU), Select Board.

Two-fold purpose: The Committee is seeking views to specific points; and we are interested in hearing their views as to which changes we should be considering.

A. Lisa Jane Hardin (LJH), Town Clerk

1. The Town Clerk oversees Town Elections and Town Meetings and maintains the Town Records. The job also provides services for the Residents and the Town. LJH stated that the Town Clerk must be a resident but that was questioned by a couple of members. LJH feels the position should be elected for a 3-year term and should be a full-time position and not a union position. LJH does not feel that it is necessary for the Town Clerk to be supervised by anyone in the Town.

LJH was not sure what information the Committee was looking for and felt unprepared initially. She stated that the Clerk's job should be a 3-year term, because 1 year is too short – more time is spent on learning the job. The Committee asked questions about the study (Organizational Assessment) that was done last year of the Town Clerk's Office.

LJH says Town Clerk needs to be available during off hours as Residents cannot always meet weekdays. In Millis' 135 years, there have been only 6 Town Clerks. People stay till they retire or die. Even with a salary, a Town Clerk puts in what is needed as the job is to serve the people of the Town.

2. LJH feels that we could benefit with a new elected position: Parks Department, as Medway has. She thinks that if there were more elected positions, residents might be more willing to volunteer for the positions, therefore sharing the responsibility, and attend Town Elections and Meetings, as demonstrated with the most recent Town Election of 6/22/2020.

LJH commented that the By-Laws state that the Town Meeting must take place the 1st week in November which puts pressure on the Town Clerk staff, as Town Meeting would take place that Monday evening and National Elections would take place the next day. To be considered by By-Law Review Committee.

Additional information may be forthcoming from LJH.

Erin Underhill (EU), recent elected Select Board Member at the 6/22/2020 Town Election and speaking to us regarding her 2 years' experience as Moderator.

EU declared that the By-Laws have more information about the Moderator's position. The only Moderator change EU sees in the current Charter is the gender issue which was addressed by the ballot question.

The By-laws state that a review must take place every ten years. She questions when the last review was updated and completed.

1. Topic: Town Moderator for 1- or 3-year Term. EU says that if a 3-year position, saves time and money by not running every year. If a 3-year position and the elected person is not the best candidate for the position, then tough to make any changes. EU did a random poll of Moderators and the message was "one year is fair". She will poll the MA Moderators Association and find out what percentage is 1 year / 3-year term. Consideration should be given to the learning curve for a new Moderator. That adds weight to a longer term of 3 years.
2. Topic: Changing Town Meeting Day and Time to better accommodate more residents, to hopefully increase attendance. She agrees with general public, no right day or time. She did note that most Town Meeting attendees are seniors. She noted that in both the Spring and the Fall meetings, there is no requirement for a quorum. If a special Town Meeting is called, then a quorum is needed which is 4% of the voting population in the Town.

III. Future Agenda Items

The Committee's mandate is to provide Charter revisions and suggestions to be placed on the November Warrant. To expedite this, the information gathered to date will be reviewed by Committee Members, by Topic, in search of missing information for further review.

At 8:04 pm, DR made a motion to adjourn the meeting. DH seconded the motion. Approved unanimously in favor to adjourn (DJ, DR, DH, NS).