

Town of Harwinton Four-Year Term Taskforce

Minutes: June 9, 2010

Attendance: Chairman Tom Schoenemann, Christina Emery, Andy Kasznay, Judith Pleau, Gary Schaff, and Myrna Watanabe. Guest: Frank Chiaramonte and Marie Knudsen. Members of the Public: Girvice Archer

1. Call to Order

Tom Schoenemann called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in the Selectman's Conference Room.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Upon motion by Andy Kasznay, seconded by Myrna Watanabe, the Committee adopted the agenda.

3. Minutes

Upon motion by Andy Kasznay, seconded by Gary Schaff, the Committee approved the May 12, 2010 minutes.

4. Discussion with Current and Former First Selectman

First Selectman Frank Chiaramonte and former First Selectman Marie Knudsen were present to discuss their views of the position with the Committee.

Frank Chiaramonte explained the pros of a four-year term: It takes more than two years to start and finish a project; Takes time to learn the job, which is becoming increasingly complex; Would eliminate the time and expense of running a campaign which takes the last six months of a term. Frank also noted that a con is that a switch to a four-year term would remove the ability of the voters to have a choice. Noting that the goal is to do what is in the best interest of the town, Frank believes a two-year term is appropriate.

Marie Knudsen noted that this issue has come up many times in the past and she agreed with Frank's list of both pros and cons. She thinks a four-year term is appropriate, provided it would go into effect after the incumbent declares he is no longer running.

5. Review of Town Survey

A survey of other towns with populations under 10,000 prepared by Judith Pleau was distributed and reviewed. The survey noted which towns have charters and the length of Selectman terms.

Christina Emery will contact the Town Clerks of Roxbury, Bridgewater, and Sterling to get their views on a four-year term. Specifically, the questions to be asked include: 1) What was the process for changing? 2) Do you have a copy of a report or study leading to the decision? 3) Is the four-year term working for your town? 4) How long have you had four-year terms? 5) Do you have anything else to add?

6. Planning for Future Meetings

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday June 30th at 7 PM. At that meeting, the Committee will make plans for a public informational meeting. Also, Tom will prepare a draft document of the findings to date, and Christina will report on the three towns contacted.

7. Public Participation

Girvice Archer was present and expressed his view that without a recall provision, a two-year term would be in the town's best interest.

8. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christina Emery
Recording Secretary

RECEIVED FOR RECORD AT HARWINTON, CT
ON *6-14-10* AT *8:30 AM*
ATTEST: PATRICIA K. WILLIAMSEN, TOWN CLERK