

Prospect Town Council  
Special Meeting  
Unapproved Minutes  
May 26, 2016

Chairman Thomas J. Galvin called to order the Special meeting of the Prospect Town Council @ 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Prospect Library, 17 Center Street and began with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was taped.

**Members Present:** T. Galvin, Pat Geary, Al Delelle, D. Merriman, Jeff Slapikas, Carla Perugini-Erickson @ 7:08 p.m., L. Fitzgerald, S. Pilat and C. Graveline

**Members Absent:** None

**Also in Attendance:** The Charter Revision Commission (CRC): Bob Hiscox, Phil Reed, James Paulella, Katie Blinstrubas, Glenn Gruber-Chairman, Paul Krisavage, Eileen Cranney, Robert Nash and Tom Galvin (Member of CRC)

The Special Meeting of the Town Council was held to allow questions to be asked regarding the draft of changes that the CRC recommended and to help clarify the ‘why and what’ meanings to the changes. CRC Chairman, Glenn Gruber explained that anything in color was a proposed change. The Council reviewed the document containing ‘Major’ Document Changes for the Town Council /Mayor (see Schedule A). Each section from the ‘Summary of Major Charter changes’ was discussed. One area of great concern that several Council members, including P. Geary and J. Slapikas, commented on in particular was Section 2.01 Elections – General: stating that by allowing a seated Mayor to appoint a Tax Collector, Town Clerk or Treasurer, more power would be given to the Mayor and eliminate the voters entirely. CRC Chairman Gruber explained that if a seated Mayor appoints, it would be with the consent of the Town Council. J. Slapikas commented that the appointment would be based on job descriptions and qualifications. The discussion continued with regard to hiring as a contracted position. Paul Krisavage commented on ‘setting the bar’. P. Geary stated that she did not agree with the appointed positions for a small town. Katie Blinstrubas, Democratic Registrar for the Town of Prospect, commented that 2/3 of the voters are unaffiliated and they do not have a choice.

K. Blinstrubas continued that it is sometimes more advantageous to vote for someone that is contracted. Eileen Cranney commented that the local pool is dwindling of candidates. Bob Nash commented to look to the future and choose the individual with the best ability. L. Fitzgerald commented that with job descriptions and qualifications, it makes it harder for people to apply as they would need to meet the qualifications. Phil Reed commented that the current Town of Prospect Assessor was chosen based on his qualifications. T. Galvin also commented that if no one individual in the Town of Prospect was qualified, then to look outside the ‘current expertise’. C. Perugini-Erickson commented that the recommendations were ‘right on point by choosing someone with qualifications’, but found that an appointment would not allow the public to have a voice in the decision making process.

The discussion continued on parts of the Charter including a **new Section, 6.19** Land Use Inspector which took the responsibility from the P&Z Commission **Section 4.07** and placing it upon the Mayor to choose a Land Use Inspector with a committee of three.

Reviews were made of the remaining Sections of the recommendations including **Section 2.0**-length of terms (2 vs 4 year terms).

**Section 3.02** - P. Geary commented on Section 3.02 Town Council –Presiding Officer: P. Geary did not agree with the Mayor breaking the tie and electing a Chairperson. P. Geary stated her concern regarding the Town Clerk presiding over the Town Council Meeting if the Mayor was absent until a Chairperson was elected. S. Pilat advised that someone is needed to call the meeting if the Mayor is absent. The discussion continued on appointed individuals. Bob Nash stated that only elected officials would be appointed.

Discussion continued on the referenced sections.

**Section 3.06** – Conflict of Interest: Updated and moved to new Chapter 11 to therefore apply to all Boards, Commissions, Employees and Town Council.

**Section 3.08, 3.09, 8.04 & 9.01** – ‘These sections have been modified to have Notifications not only be in newspapers, but to include utilizing the Town’s Website. Also see section 12.01’.

**Section 3.14: Salaries** – Officers and Town Employees: The Town Council shall establish a compensation plan for all town employees not covered by collective bargaining agreements. The Town Council shall cause to be created, job descriptions and an annual Performance Review process for Town Employees.

**Section 4.03:** Emergency Management Advisory Council: The Mayor appoints (by State Statute) not Town Council, therefore deleted and moved to Chapter 6, section 6.04.

**Section 4.08:** (New Section) Commissions Established by Ordinance: The Town may establish any other board or commission by ordinance. Appointments to these boards or commissions shall be made by the Town Council in accordance with such ordinance provisions.

**Section 5.02:** Duties of Mayor: The Mayor shall prepare a Transition Report for the incoming Mayor and Town Council to ensure the continuity of operations of the Town.

**Section 6.04: (Re-Named):** Emergency Management Advisory Council: Updated to include section 4.03 and the responsibilities of the Emergency Management Director.

**Sections 6.5, 6.16, 6.17 & 6.18 (New Sections):** Addition of these sections for the appointments of the Tax Collector, Town Clerk, and Town Treasurer & Hearing Officers by the Mayor with the consent of the Town Council.

**Section 6.19: (New Section)** Land Use Inspector (Hiring Process)

**Section 7.01: Police Services:** Updated for content. P. Krisavage commented on the Police ‘code of conduct’ and the hearing board. P. Krisavage also stated that P.O.S.T. sets the police standards. J. Slapikas commented on his concern of limiting the powers of the Town.

**Section 7.02:** Fire Department Updated to include: The Town Council may enter into a written agreement with the Volunteer Fire Department of Prospect, Inc. for the protection of the Town from fire and other services. Chairman Gruber stated that this Section is for the protection of the Volunteer Fire Department and consideration of an agreement should be made.

**Section 8.01: Annual Audit:** The number of consecutive annual audits performed by the same independent certified public accountant or same firm of independent certified accountants shall be limited to (5) five years.

**Section 8.02:** Annual Financial Proposal: The head of each Department, Office or Agency of The Town, shall file with the Mayor, by January 15 (no longer February 10) the appropriate

Financial information. T. Galvin commented that this information has been changed from the February 10<sup>th</sup> deadline to January 15.

**Section 8.03:** Duties of the Mayor on the Budget: The Mayor shall present the proposed budget on February 15 (no longer March 10). Additionally, subsection (c) has changes which update the requirements for proposal content and format.

**Section 8.04:** Duties of the Council on the Budget: The process for ‘Preparing the Annual Budget Proposal’ has been updated.

**Section 8.10 (New Section) Reductions in Town Budget:** This new section allows the Town Council under certain circumstances to reduce the approved budget. (Flexibility built in for the Council).

**Section 9.01:** Town Meetings and Public Hearings: Updated to allow Town Council to enter into lease/purchases of vehicles or equipment (Cannot exceed amount).

**Section 10.05:** Amendment: Updated to evaluate the need for having a CRC at least every 12 years.

**Section 11.01 (New Chapter): Conflict of Interest:** Section 3.06 is moved to section 11.01 and applies to any elected or appointed Officer or any employee of the Town. It is also updated to include “personal interests”, not just “financial interests”, whereby these interests shall immediately be disclosed to the appropriate Town Board, Commission, Council or Mayor.

**Section 12.01:** (New Chapter): Online Notifications of Boards and Commission Activities: All Boards, Commissions and Town Council shall post their activities on the Town Webpage.

D. Merriman commented on several observations including Section 5.04 Death of the Mayor. D. Merriman also commented on appointing the Treasurer and Tax Collector or Town Clerk, stated that this poses losing compassion and the personal touch. J. Slapikas questioned when the Mayor takes office. Council members noted that it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday after the Mayor is elected.

### **Public Participation:**

T. Graveline commented that the Mayor should be sworn in no later than 8:00 p.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday after election. T. Graveline also commented on Section 3.02 Presiding Officer and asked the CRC to remove Vice-Chairman if a new Chairman is ‘selected’ as the Vice-Chair’s position is not compromised and only reference the Chairman. T. Graveline also commented that there needs to be more focus on the difference between a hired employee and an appointed employee and asked what happens when a new Mayor comes in, is there job security for one and not the other. T. Graveline commented that this could be addressed by ‘identifying by contract’.

Prospect Police Lieutenant Nelson Abrazua commented on Chapter 7 including the State Police Hearing Board, P.O.S.T. and Police certifications.

Fred Bonyai, 18 Woodcrest Dr. commented on the elected positions vs the appointed positions as the Town currently has three good people doing the job of Tax Collector, Town Clerk and Treasurer.

T. Galvin advised that there would be a Special meeting of the Prospect Town Council on May 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 @ 7:00 p.m. at the Prospect Town Hall and the Public Hearing would be @ 7:00 p.m. on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 at the Prospect Town Hall. Council members thanked the Charter Revision Commission for their hard work.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion** made by D. Merriman, seconded by J. Slapikas to adjourn the meeting. **Unanimous.**  
The meeting adjourned @ 9:00 p.m.

Thomas J. Galvin  
Chairman