

Present: Patricia Adams (arrived at 7:30 pm), Anthony Arico, Jeffrey Brenner (arrived at 8:00 pm), Paul Dulchinos, Mary Alyce Gasbarro, Joel Hellmann, James Jackson, Timothy Sweetser, Joan Warren and Town Clerk Meredith DeSisto

Absent: John Cregan and Allan Klepper

Timothy Sweetser called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 27, 2014**

Motion by Mr. Arico and seconded by Mr. Hellmann to accept the minutes of January 27, 2014. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **DISCUSSION ON WORDING OF EXISTING TOWN CHARTER WITH TOWN MANAGER AND DEPARTMENT HEADS**

Due to the unavailability of the Town Manager and Department Heads, Mr. Sweetser tabled the discussion to a future meeting.

#### **DISCUSS ISSUE OF NON PARTISAN ELECTIONS**

Mr. Hellmann stated he is in favor of non-partisan elections. Mr. Hellmann stated the master lever creates a partisan issue; 35% vote straight party line. If there were a non-partisan election the independents would have a fair chance. Mr. Hellman explained there are 52% of unaffiliated voters in Barrington; more people have chosen not to be a member of a party. For an independent to win in a 3 way race, the independent must get 65% of the unaffiliated vote and the competition would split the remaining 35%. Mr. Hellmann stated by making the elections non-partisan it would level the playing field and accommodate the majority of people in Town.

Mr. Dulchinos is in favor of non-partisan elections. Mr. Dulchinos commented on the Hatch Act (a law which prevents federal employees from running in a partisan election) stating it prevents good candidates from participating.

Mr. Jackson stated he believes in a 2-party system and is not in favor of non-partisan elections. Mr. Jackson believes the 2-party system has resulted in good government for the Town of Barrington.

Mrs. Gasbarro stated the 2-party system acts as a clearing house, recruiting, screening and endorsing candidates.

Mr. Arico stated he is clearly opposed to non-partisan elections. Mr. Arico stated there is no prohibition from running as an independent; one can leap frog over the primary and participate in the General election.

Mrs. Warren stated she is on the fence and sees positives in both types of elections. Mrs. Warren commented that finding candidates to participate is difficult.

Mr. Sweetser stated the non-partisan election would invite more candidates to participate.

Ms. Adams prefers non-partisan elections.

Mr. Brenner stated he has thought about whether there should be non-partisan elections over the years. Mr. Brenner believes that the partisan system is useful because it serves a roll to screen, support and endorse candidates. However, it is also a hindrance because it prevents qualified people from seeking elected positions. Overall, he is in favor of keeping partisan elections for the Town Council but would consider making School Committee elections non-partisan.

**DISCUSS AND ACT ON FUTURE DAY/DATE/TIME OF MEETINGS**

The Charter Review Commission scheduled future meetings on Monday, March 10, 2014 and Monday, March 31, 2014.

**DISCUSS AND ACT ON AGENDA TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Correspondence from Paul Dulchinos and Patrick Guida will be included on the March 10, 2014 meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**ADJOURN**

Motion by Mr. Hellmann and seconded by Mr. Dulchinos to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 P.M. The motion passed unanimously.

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Meredith J. DeSisto, Town Clerk