

**DRAFT**  
**Thompsonville Fire District Charter Commission**  
**Regular Minutes**  
**January 28, 2016 – 6:00 p.m.**  
**Thompsonville Fire Station, 35 N. Main St.**

**Call to Order**

Chairman Helechu called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

**Roll Call**

Present: Chairman Mike Helechu, Keith Pliszka, Erline Provencher, and Secretary Vicki Rose. Jeff Cross, present at 6:08.

Mike Helechu would like to move miscellaneous discussion as the first item.

Erline Provencher made a motion to go directly to the Charter draft. Keith Pliszka seconded the motion.

Upon a show of hands, the motion carried 4-0-0.

Erline Provencher led a discussion on 4.2 (c) change to at least 7 business days of an annual or special meeting should it be 7 business days prior to?

Mike Helechu stated yes.

Erline Provencher changed it to prior to.

Jeff Cross present at 6:08 p.m.

Erline Provencher stated on 6.1 (c) the last sentence we said the office of the Chair and Treasurer cannot be held by a single commissioner, should it be offices?

Mike Helechu stated to add an s to offices and remove the before Chair.

Erline Provencher stated on 8.2 Oath of office thinks the following should have been added, A draft of a declaration of ethical behavior which, when adopted, shall be executed when a commissioner is sworn in.

Mike Helechu asked if that's a second sentence.

The sentence was under 8.1 (b). No change to 8.2 was made.

Erline Provencher stated on page 5 Candidacy for the Board of Commissioners shall be district taxpayers. Now without the car tax and if you don't own a home that may be an issue.

Vicki Rose stated she thought Carl Landolina stated you only have to live in the District and we were the ones that added the criteria to pay taxes.

Keith Pliszka stated he thought live in the district and be a registered voter.

After discussion it was decided to remove shall be district taxpayers from (b). and in (c) remove or be a taxpayer of the district.

And if you cease to live in the district you cease to be a commissioner.

Erline Provencher led a discussion on terms of office. Erline Provencher felt (c) should go to 6.4 as (c).

Now 6.2 is a, b, c, d, and e and 6.4 has a, b, and c.

Erline Provencher under removal failure to attend meetings she stated in the Somers Charter they have removal for cause.

Vicki Rose stated that's for appointed boards not voted in boards.

Erline Provencher stated the Enfield Fire Department on page 8 have Removal for Cause.

Jeff Cross stated Duties of the Board is okay.

It was decided to add as described under Section 4.1 (b) and 5.1 (a) (ii).

Erline Provencher stated in Article 9 we left one sentence.

Jeff Cross stated to look at 7.1.

Mike Helechu stated it is duplicative.

Jeff Cross they basically both say the same thing.

Mike Helechu stated we're just saying the board is responsible and if they want to delegate.

Jeff Cross asked is 9 even needed

It was decided to remove Article 9.

Mike Helechu led a discussion on the new Article 9 Fiscal Policies.

Erline Provencher suggested under 5.1 annual and special meeting to make a (6) to vote for the collector of taxes at the annual meeting.

Erline Provencher stated if it's over a certain amount we need a public vote.

Jeff Cross this should go under contracts.

Mike Helechu said we stated the board can do the labor contract. We can consider adding a statement if we want to give them that power. Right now the tax collector is not in the hands of the taxpayers. There are other entities that could collect the taxes. The important question for the charter is do we want to push them in that direction or authorize the Board of Fire Commissioners to select or require them to get competitive bids.

Jeff Cross stated in 9.10 (b) three competitive bids if they exceed \$1,000.

Mike Helechu stated that's a secondary thing. The authority to pick is what we have to decide, if we want it to be in the hands of the commission.

Jeff Cross does not have an issue putting it in the hands of the commission but needs three competitive bids. Technically we vote on the union contract when we vote for the budget. The contracts are something different. We specify the union contract.

Jeff Cross the question is could we save by going out to bid. They need competitive bids. We already eliminated the union contract for voters.

Erline Provencher stated under 9.9(c) the second sentence \$20,000 or term exceeds one year in in the budget this will be part of the budget process. It will be fully disclosed to the voters in the budget.

Jeff Cross is there a conflict with the competitive bids?

Keith Pliszka stated if you want to buy a new truck you get the bids and put it in the budget and then it gets approved or denied.

Jeff Cross stated he feels you budget a certain amount then decide what the best you can get is

Mike Helechu stated the former chief would find a better lease agreement paying less but paying longer.

Jeff Cross that would have to be disclosed now.

Mike Helechu stated before you buy a truck we want the taxpayers to approve the purchase of a truck even before that gets into the budget.

Vicki Rose stated you would get three bids take the lowest and put it in the budget.

Jeff Cross asked but what if you need it right away?

Keith Pliszka stated they would have a special meeting.

Mike Helechu said we need to make sure this document doesn't allow that to happen.

Erlin Provencher suggested what if we say fixed asset.

Jeff Cross stated there are service contracts too.

Mike Helechu stated do we want to raise the threshold.

Keith Pliszka we agreed with the \$1,000 threshold.

Mike Helechu stated the last sentence is key if there's something outside of the budget it must be approved by the voters.

Vicki Rose asked do we need to say special meeting or is it understood?

Mike Helechu 9.9 \*(c) add special meeting in the last sentence.

Erlin Provencher asked are contracts and agreements being separated.

Mike Helechu stated yes. If it's not approved at the annual meeting it will be a special meeting.

Vicki Rose stated the taxpayers can ask questions at the public hearing for the presentation of the budget.

Jeff Cross stated they have to disclose when they're initiating a contract. They can't bury it in a budget number.

Mike Helechu what if there is no contract. The voters approve the purchase.

Mike Helechu we need to say something somewhere else having the same requirement for a contract. We should add a purchase that exceeds 20,000. There will be expenditures that are not contracts.

Jeff Cross stated a purchase agreement is a contract.

Mike Helechu do we need to add that.

Jeff Cross stated we could say contracts, purchases, and expenditures.

Jeff Cross stated if it's part of the budget they have to disclose it and through that process the voters approve it. Then any expenditure that's not part of the budget , the voters have to approve it.

Mike Helechu stated but if you have a \$700,000 truck that could be a line item but you're saying there's not going to be a vote on the truck because they move money around.

Jeff Cross but they have to disclose it because it's over \$20,000.

Mike Helechu stated he feels the taxpayers wanted more of a say on a big-ticket item rather than showing up on the budget.

Keith Pliszka stated they can vote the budget down.

Vicki Rose asked if they can vote on a line item at the annual meeting.

Mike Helechu stated no.

Mike Helechu stated he doesn't think the commission would not try to hide a truck in the budget but it could happen.

Mike Helechu stated contracts are in its own section. We need to spell out the voters' right to approve expenditures or do we have it covered by the contracts section? Is it clear that the voters will have the opportunity to vote on a truck?

Jeff Cross suggested under Contracts (d) saying any expenditures that exceed 20,000.

Jeff Cross suggested saying (d) contracts, purchases and/or agreements that exceed 20,000 that are not part of the budget process must be approved by the voters at a special meeting.

Jeff Cross led a discussion on competitive bids and added contracts, agreements, and/or expenditures that exceed a 1,000 except in an emergency as described in Section 9.8.

Mike Helechu led a discussion Under 10.2 receipts add or his/her designee.

Vicki Rose stated Pat Gaskell was concerned will all activity. There are confidential payments. Not all activity can be made public.

Jeff Cross stated they can just put a check number and an amount. We're not asking for payees.

Mike Helechu we can add a sentence after all activity.

Vicki Rose suggested stating redacting any confidential information.

Mike Helechu suggested adding some wording with consideration to -

Jeff Cross stated the point of a bank reconciliation is to show the difference.

Erline Provencher stated a bank reconciliation doesn't give the payee.

Erline Provencher suggested removing the second sentence,

Mike Helechu stated it calls for it to be available.

Erline Provencher can't you say at the end of the first sentence at the monthly meeting.

At each monthly Board meeting, the Treasurer shall produce a bank reconciliation tracking all financial activity for the District and shall be documented and available for public discussion at the monthly meeting, add to end of first sentence.

Mike Helechu stated the other concern was the confidentiality.

Erline Provencher stated a bank rec is the check number and amount.

Jeff Cross stated the purpose of the bank rec insures all activity recorded on the books. Check writing is approved before it's issued.

Vicki Rose stated Karen Laplante suggested putting a percentage instead of a dollar amount under 10.3 Bonds and Notes (b).

Mike Helechu stated they're borrowing money in anticipation of taxes.

Jeff Cross noticed it doesn't say how many times they can borrow the money.

Mike Helechu but it is in anticipation of the disbursement of taxes.

Jeff Cross suggested 10%. We should state once if that's what we mean.

It was agreed to change it to 10% of the total budget.

Jeff Cross stated it's to cover the first two months. By not putting a limit on it, they may have to borrow again if they don't get the money from the Town.

Mike Helechu suggested taking out the amount and the term. Under the circumstances of the what ifs, we can say one time in anticipation of disbursement of taxes.

Jeff Cross stated what if the 10% covers two months and the money doesn't show up for six months?

Mike Helechu stated do we want to keep in the limits?

Jeff Cross suggested up to 25% and not to exceed 120 days.

Mike Helechu stated we could specify when the tax money is received.

Mike Helechu stated we'll put it in and if the board and legal counsel feel it shouldn't be there, they'll take it out.

Keith Pliszka doesn't want accrued interest.

Article 11 (b) add at other designated places.

Article 12 replace of the board to by the board and add district property after building under (a).

Jeff Cross asked what the process is to deliver the charter.

Mike Helechu stated he will deliver it to the Town Clerk with a cover letter. It wasn't in Carl Landolina's summary but it's in the state statutes.

Erline Provencher said if we're our own municipality why does it have to go to the Town?

Mike Helechu stated we haven't designated a clerk yet.

Jeff Cross would like it dispersed one last time to us.

Mike Helechu stated the commission will receive it at as a board together he believes.

Jeff Cross made a motion to accept the final version of the Charter draft as written. Keith Pliszka seconded the motion.

Erline Provencher stated the word must and shall throughout the document but we will have the attorney take care of it. Steve Cogtella stated now a days must is used instead of shall.

Jeff Cross hears what she's saying.

Vicki Rose would like to keep shall in.

Jeff Cross stated our intent is for shall to mean must, leave it in Carl Landolina's hands. If it's more appropriate to use must, we'll use must.

Mike Helechu will mention it in his cover letter.

Upon a show of hands, the motion carried 5-0-0.

Mike Helechu stated we'll have a special meeting to approve all the minutes.

Jeff Cross made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Keith Pliszka seconded the motion.

Upon a show of hands, the motion carried 5-0-0.