

TOWN OF
EAST MONTPELIER, VERMONT
SELECTBOARD

Casey Northrup (2014 – 2017)

Gene Troia (2016 – 2018)

Chair, Seth Gardner (2015 – 2018)

Kim Swasey (2015 – 2017)

Carl Etnier (2016 – 2019)

MEMORANDUM

To: East Montpelier Charter Committee

From: East Montpelier Selectboard

Re: Response to September 27, 2016 Charter Committee Memo on Progress to Date

Date: October 10, 2016

The board very much appreciates the diligence with which the Charter Committee members have set to work on a major project after being given very little notice and a short timeline. Our comments on your progress report:

There is concern that the goals used for the initial charter development may be too restrictive for the maintenance of what is supposed to be a living document. In particular, goals 5 & 6 may not be conducive to growing the charter in an effective manner.

The issue of appointment through town meeting vote as opposed to by charter provision is an example of the above concern. The board would prefer that any additional appointed positions be included in the charter. It may be time to consider the inclusion of a set of charter provisions that lay out which town offices are elected and which are appointed. Relying in some cases on charter elements and other times on the vagaries of state statute leads to confusion and frustration for both the electorate and the governing body. It should be made clear that appointees are town employees, which would make them subject to the personnel policy (an issue with the treasurer position that was corrected by contract). We're trying to avoid the situation where we adjust the method of installation into office, but not the office itself. The desire is to eliminate positions that are powers unto themselves, so that every position has supervision and a job description guiding the work even if the position's duties and responsibilities remain basically the same as under the statutory scheme (as is essentially true for the town treasurer and would be for the town clerk). This is a long-winded way of expressing the board's desire that the collector of delinquent taxes position should only be switched to an appointed position by way of a charter provision. The same is true of the town clerk position regardless of whether the legislature moves forward with the concept of voter choice (elected or appointed) for that position.

The board agrees with the idea that the tax provision options be examined in depth by a separate committee and withdraws that element of the original charge to the Charter Committee. If the committee would like to provide some guidance for any future effort to adjust the town's tax policies, the board would appreciate the insights.

Again, thank you for jumping back into the fray with such energy and commitment. We look forward to seeing the results of this effort.