CITY OF NORWALK
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 7, 2025

ATTENDANCE: Tyler Fairbairn, Chair; Douglas Hempstead, Vice Chair; Jo Bennett, Ed Camacho, Jim Clark, Carl Dickens, John Levine, Richard McQuaid, Tanya Rhodes-Small

STAFF: Atty. Steven Mednick, consultant; Dominique Baez, Hamden Council President; Richard Bonenfant; Lisa Brinton, Independent Party Chair; Michael DiGiovancarlo, Waterbury Board of Aldermen President; Jeff Curtis, Stamford Board of Representatives President; Gene Nocera; Al Lucas, New Haven; T. J. Clark, Hartford City Council

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Fairbairn called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called and a quorum was present.

Mr. Fairbairn said that he would like to move the discussion of the minutes to the end of the meeting in order to hear what the panel guests had to say. [3:04]

**** MR. MCQUAID MOVED TO HOLD THE DISCUSSION OF THE DECEMBER MINUTES UNTIL LATER IN THE MEETING.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The first speaker was Mr. Richard Bonenfant of Park Hill Avenue in Norwalk. [5:05]

Mr. Bonenfant came forward and greeted the Committee. He said that all Council Meetings should be in person unless there are special circumstances. If a Council Member wishes to participate from home or vacation, they should not be allowed to vote.

Mr. Bonenfant said that he did not believe the City was ready for compensation. The Council has lost touch with the constituents because they have not seen a constituent at a Committee meeting for the last four years. This has resulted in pushing through agendas rather than actual representation. He noted that those who are home waiting to speak online have no idea when their turn to speak will happen.

The second speaker was Ms. Lisa Brinton, of Shorefront Park. [6:59]

Ms. Brinton greeted the Committee. She said she was the Independent Party Chair and excited to hear the guest speakers explaining their various municipal structures and the size of each body in terms of minority party representation. When Norwalk other municipalities like Bridgeport or New Haven, Norwalk is small. She added that when the hybrid model where five At Large members effectively run with the Mayor. Then there are the five districts, each of which has two representatives. This appears to reflect the towns before it consolidated and incorporated.

She also wished to hear the speakers comments on Minority Representation. She said that the once purple Norwalk was now just one party, which is a shift due to the backlash against the Republicans in Washington. Sadly that has nothing to do with local City management. Independent and unaffiliated voters make up 43% of the electorate have no voice.

She noted that Council Members have complained about overwork and neighborhoods have complained about representation for years. During COVID, the remote Zoom meetings were a necessity but overused. Public participation with the Council has plummeted. Norwalk is not a weak Mayor, strong Council model. It is quite the opposite with a strong Mayor and weak Council. Norwalk is also one of only two or three towns out of the 169 that has no Charter provision for Minority Party Representation.

While this Commission is focused on the Mayoral term, which is the third time since 2016, it is equally important to strengthen the legislative branch. Many are concerned about political abuse and consolidation of executive power, Ms. Brinton said her concern in this area extends to local government.

Ms. Brinton said that she had a legal opinion from March 2024 detailing why this administration does not have to comply with what every town in Connecticut does. This ignores the spirit of democracy and representation and sound like the incoming President.

Ms. Brinton said that in light of transparency concerns expressed over what is or isn’t captured in the public meeting minutes, which is not going to be discussed, or Mr. Mednick’s private notes, she would like to send her comments and Mr. Coppola’s letter to have them included in this meeting’s minutes as a matter of public record. She asked where those documents should be sent.

Mr. Fairbairn said that Ms. Brinton could sent the documents to Ms. Murillo, the Assistant City Clerk, or she could send the information to him and he would forward it to everyone on the Commission.

Mr. Camacho asked what the question the Corporation Counsel was asked. Ms. Brinton replied that it was about Minority Party Representation. She added that she had been speaking about this issues since the last Charter Revision.

There was no one else from the public who wished to address the Commission at this time. [11:00]

NEW BUSINESS

A. Panel to discuss structure of Common Council (size, vacancies, minority party representation, hybrid model, ordinances, committee structure, public interactions, compensation)

Atty. Mednick greeted the Committee and said that there were a number of panelist present at the meeting. He introduced Mr. Michael DiGiovancarlo, of Waterbury Board of Aldermen. [11:46]

Mr. DiGiovancarlo greeted the Commission. [12:41]

Overview [13:05] – Mr. DiGiovancarlo said that Waterbury was a city of approximately 115,000 and has a 15 member Board of Aldermen that sits under the Mayor. In 2013, the City changed the Charter to have the Aldermen elected by District. He proceeded to give an overview of the composition of the Board and how they have included Minority Party Rule.

Compensation [14:10] – Waterbury has tried the idea of compensation, but it did not pass. If the Aldermen decided to favor compensation, they could do so through a referendum. Mr. DiGiovancarlo said he did not feel it was the right time for this change.

Controversial Questions [14:45] – In New Haven, one must be a resident for five years before the individual can be elected as Mayor. This resulted in a lawsuit and the judgement was against the City. Mr. DiGiovancarlo suggested that if there were controversial questions; they separate those questions out on the ballot.

Clarification of language [15:20] – During the revision, many of the definitions were clarified and they removed some of the double language.

Residency Requirements [15:27] – Waterbury moved away from the residency requirement for the head of the Corporation Counsel so that the City can hire the best attorney regardless of where that attorney resided.

Unfilled vacancies [15:45] Mr. DiGiovancarlo then explained a former Mayor had a minority seat vacancy that was unfilled for months. Now the sitting Mayor is required by the Charter to fill that minority seat vacancy within 60 days. Currently, two BOE members have resigned and will be replaced within the 60 day threshold. However, there is no way to enforce this requirement.

Notifications [16:43] – Waterbury is now moving towards electronic notification for meetings since newspapers are declining.

Mr. DiGiovancarlo repeated his earlier recommendation regarding separating the controversial questions out from the bulk of the changes.

Atty. Camacho asked why the Mayor was the one who could fill a vacancy rather than the political party that had the vacancy. [18:07]

Mr. DiGiovancarlo said that according to the Charter, it had always been the Mayor who chooses the new candidate. There was a discussion about this, but it was not considered by the Charter Commission.

Atty. Camacho asked about minority party role in terms of large purchases. [19:21]
He wished for clarification on the fact that one member of the minority party could defeat the will of the majority party.

Mr. DiGiovancarlo explained that at least one member of the minority party would have to join the majority regarding the large purchases. He gave a quick overview of the details and noted that it prevents the 10 majority members of the Board from passing things by a simple majority. Discussion followed.

Mr. Levine asked Mr. DiGiovancarlo what the compensation for the various positions were and when it was last changed. [21:58]

Mr. DiGiovancarlo listed them as follows:

- $4,000 for a sitting Alderman
- $5,000 for Minority Leader & Majority Leader
- $6,000 for the President

This has not been changed for quite some time. When they did try to increase it, it was not approved by the Charter Committee. He reminded everyone that they could do a referendum to increase it.

Atty. Mednick noted that there was a State statute regarding this. [23:00] He reviewed the details of the State legislation and noted that some communities have included a COLA increase. This satisfies the referendum requirement and avoids several issues.

Mr. McQuaid asked about the residency requirements for Aldermen. [24:47]

Mr. DiGiovancarlo said that an individual would have to be registered with a party. He added that Waterbury now has a four year mayor, but the Aldermen are still two year terms. The two year terms results in low voter turn-out if the Mayor is not running. He gave an example of how the Aldermen have to run on decisions that were made by the outgoing Mayor.

Ms. Bennett asked for clarification on the composition of the Board of Aldermen in Waterbury and what the population of Waterbury was. [27:20]

Mr. DiGiovancarlo reviewed the details with the Commission. Waterbury has approximately 115,000 residents. The Mayor and 10 of the Aldermen are Democrats and there are five Republican Aldermen.

Ms. Bennett asked how many legislative leaders Waterbury has. [28:30]

Mr. DiGiovancarlo said the total was 15. He gave the details of how they assign the seats.

Mr. Fairbairn thanked Mr. DiGiovancarlo for his presentation. [29:09]

Atty. Mednick then introduced Mr. Jeff Curtis, the Stamford Board of Representatives President. [29:25]

Atty. Mednick then gave a brief overview of the Board of Representative structure to the Commission members, which is somewhat similar to Norwalk's Council.

Mr. Curtis greeted the Commission members. [31:15]

Overview [31:45] – Mr. Curtis said that there were 37 Democrats and 3 Republicans on the Board. He said that he wished there were more Republicans on the Board. With such a large body of one party, there is a party split. One group is called "Reform Stamford" and they are willing to ask the hard questions.

Hybrid Meetings and votes [33:40] – Currently, the Board has a hybrid system. Mr. Curtis said that when the COVID restrictions were lifted, it became evident that their Chambers had to be renovated due to damage to the underfloor wiring when desks were moved. Now they have wireless mics. They installed a town vote system, which is not working out well. They have now returned to a voice roll call vote.

Vacancies [34:58] – When there are Council vacancies, the Board is going toe to toe with the Mayor about the issue of vacancies and expired Board and Commission terms. This has been a long term problem.

2023 Charter Revision [36:15] – Mr. Curtis said that Atty. Mednick had worked with the Board during 2023 on Charter Revision. After some discussion, they were able to form a Charter Commission of 17, which one group said was the most diverse group they had seen. They had a total of 180 recommendations, which they narrowed the items down and decided to go with an omnibus question.

Land Use Restrictions and Vote campaign [38:36] – Mr. Curtis then gave a brief overview of how the Mayor had gone to Hartford and spoken with the Governor about Planning and Zoning reforms. This bill prevented any municipality in the State from making changes to Land Use. He gave a summary about how the two groups campaigned on the Charter Revision.

Compensation [40:55] – The current Charter is vague in terms of compensation and gave an example of how Mr. Curtis had served as Acting Mayor when the Mayor was out of town for 48 hours, but could not be compensated for serving.

Vacancies CONT'D [43:37] – Mr. Curtis said that in the last four years, the Board of Representatives has replace at least 10 vacancies. The person vacating the seat is allowed to nominate someone to fill that seat. That has worked well so far.

Board Committees [44:19] –There are numerous standing committees such as Rules, Personnel, or Public Safety. There are other special committees such as Charter Revision, Redistricting, and Outside Counsel. These are formed by the Board as needed.

Constituent Interactions [45:07]–The Representatives receive a lot of communications from their constituents. Mr. Curtis went on to give an example where they addressed issues concerning large sound system speakers in vehicles and the use of off road motor bikes.

Atty. Mednick thanked Mr. Curtis f for his presentation. [46:30]

Atty. Mednick announced that Ms. Dominique Baez, the Council President from Hamden would be the next Panel member to speak. [46:43]

Atty. Mednick noted that the Norwalk Council and the Hamden Council were almost mirror images in size. Hamden is smaller than Norwalk, they faced many of the same issues that Norwalk does.

Ms. Baez greeted the Commission. [47:41]

Overview [47:55] – Ms. Baez said that Hamden had approximately 60,000 residents. Their Council has 15 members with 9 different District representative and six that are At Large. Two of the At Large representatives are Minority Party Representatives.

Hybrid Meetings [48:33] – The Hamden Charter now includes hybrid meetings and includes both the Council and Committee meetings. The Town Boards and Commissions are not 100% hybrid. Hybrid meetings allow those who might not be able to attend and participate the meetings. Residents can submit written comments or give them verbally. They also broadcast on Facebook Live.

Minority Representation [51:53] – Ms. Baez said that with the six At Large seats, two of which are minority seats, was already in the Charter and did not change. Having Minority Representation required in the Charter does not allow for the top voter getter to get the seat. While she loves the Minority Representatives, she noted that this was not a true representation of the voters in town regarding who they wished to having in those At Large seats. There is often a wide range in the conversations that happen even among just the Democrats on the Council.

Committee Set Up [53:36] – The Committee structure is in the Legislative Council Rules rather than the Charter. Recently Hamden reduced the number of Committees and put more of the work in the Departments. They are looking to have the Chair and Vice Chair work more in tandem in leading the Committee. This is the first year that they will be trying this.

Compensation [54:21] – This is not included in Hamden's Charter. The Charter says the Legislative Council will set the compensation during the Budget season. Council Members receive approximately $1,000 per year as a stipend. This is not enough to cover the workload and it lowers the amount of competition for the seats.

Council Vacancies [55:51] – Each Town Committee makes recommendations and the Legislative Council affirms it.

Ordinances [56:00] – Ordinances are ratified by a 2/3rds vote.

Atty. Mednick thanked Ms. Baez for her presentation. [56:07]

Atty. Mednick introduced Mr. Gene Nocera, the Middletown Common Council President. [56:18]

Atty. Mednick noted that until the last Middletown Charter Revision, there was no Council President position and the Mayor presided, effectively serving as the head of the body with a Deputy Mayor as an alternative presiding officer. This was a major change in their Charter.

Middletown is also one of the few remaining municipalities that had an At Large system but have moved to a District system.

Mr. Nocera greeted the Commission. [57:23]

Overview [57:40] Middletown has approximately 50,000 residents with an At Large set-up. There are 12 Council Members and a guaranteed Minority Party Rule. Currently there are eight Democrats on the Council with the 4 remaining seats filled by Republicans. Middletown has a strong Mayor. Mr. Nocera said that Atty. Mednick was able to assist them greatly during the Charter Revision.

Terms [59:20] The Council and Mayor now have four year terms.

Meetings [59:23] – It is a hybrid situation for attendance. In Middletown the residents are finding the hybrid meetings more convenient. The participation is there. At the last meeting there was an important issue on the table and there were people present via hybrid that might not have wanted to go out in the freezing cold.

Council Structure [1:00:25] – Mr. Nocera explained this was his second term as President and that the Mayor no longer has a vote. Like Stamford, Middletown also has a similar paradigm with their Democratic Council Members where a group will support the Mayor and others that are committed to doing the best job they can.

Charter Revision Accomplishments [1:01:32] – Mr. Nocera said that they had revised the Charter five years ago. At the time, there were only two communities in Connecticut where the non-certified BOE staff did not do the hiring. It was done by the City. This became a major problem between the City and the BOE, particularly in union situations. This was resolved by separating the City staff from the Board staff.

Term Limits [1:03:35] – Previously there were no standards for term limits for Committees and Commissions and volunteers. This prevented other residents from becoming involved. Now there is a three term limit for volunteers for Committees and Commissions.

Charter Revision Process [1:04:27] – The Charter Revision Commission reviewed every section and edited the document. This took much longer than they anticipated. Atty. Mednick was excellent in creating the language to make the document flow better for the residents.

Public Involvement in Revision [1:05:35] – Mr. Nocera said that he was not a voting member of the Commission but often sat in to observe. He was impressed with the amount of conversation that happens during the process such as the focus on resolving the issues in a matter that people could understand and articulate. They were able to avoid becoming bogged down in side bar issues that would accomplish nothing.

Compensation [1:06:59] – Middletown does have compensation. It was $8,600 and was just recently increased to $9,600 for all the Council Members.

Atty. Mednick thanked Mr. Nocera for his presentation. [1:07:30]

Atty. Mednick then introduced Mr. T.J. Clark, the former President and currently the Assistant Majority Leader for the City of Hartford Common Council. [1:08:00]

Mr. T. J. Clark greeted the Commission. [1:08:49]

Overview [1:09:13] – Mr. T. J. Clark stated that the Capitol city of Hartford has approximately 120,000 residents and has a strong Mayor form of government. There are 9 Council Members who are all At Large.

Charter Review [1:09:30] – Hartford completed their Charter Review process two years ago. The elections are now scheduled for even years. During the Charter Revision, the language was clarified. The City Clerk and Town Clerk departments were placed under the Council as the Council's administrative arm. Both Clerks are appointed by the Council for an indefinite term.

Board of Education [1:10:39] – BOE elections are scheduled for the off cycle years, but starting in 2027, their elections will occur on the even years with the Council and Treasurer. The Mayor appoints five BOE members and the remaining four seats are elected positions.

Boards and Commissions [1:11:27] The Mayor appoints members of the Boards and Commissions and the Council confirms the appointments. The Council has the power to appoint some Boards and Commissions such as the Internal Audit Commission and the Metropolitan District Commission (Water).

Meetings [1:12:13] – The Council did try a hybrid meeting but it did not work, so the Commission did not move forward with that item.

Stipend [1:12:29] – The Council receives a yearly stipend of $15,000. During the previous Charter Revision in 2011 or 2012, the Commission did approve an increase for the Council, but was never presented as a referendum question.

Council Aides [1:13:19] – Each of the nine Council Members has the ability to appoint a legislative aide. The Council President can appoint the number of staff that they feel is needed as long as it within the budget constraints.

Corporation Counsel [1:14:09] – There is a Corporation Counsel appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council. There is a residency requirement for the Corporation Counsel who can be a non-resident at the time of appointment, but must then become a Hartford resident.

Residency Requirements [1:14:38] – Department heads who are not currently residents have six months to relocate into the City as residents. There are department heads that are not residents and they must have a Council waiver and their salaries are reduced because they are non-residents.

Terms [1:15:20] – The Council terms are four years with a strong Mayor form of government. The Mayor has a Chief of Staff with support staff. There is a Chief Operating Officer equivalent to a Town or City Manager. The Treasurer is elected.

Council Support Staff [1:15:58] – The Council has a provision for retaining their own legal advisor. While that legal counsel can speak for the Council, the counsel does not represent the City of Hartford because only the Corporation Counsel can speak on the City's behalf. The Council can also hire a budget analysis as well.

Meeting Schedules and Budget process [1:16:37] – The Mayor's State of the City address is the Council's second meeting and the Council meets twice a month on the second and fourth Monday of every month. Public comment is scheduled for the first meeting of the month. He gave the details of the meeting schedule including the budget hearing adjustments and subsequent process. The budget deadline is May 31st. The Mayor has veto authority. The Council does have the ability to override the Mayor with seven votes.

Staffing [1:18:30] The Council has the authority to fire a Department head with a vote count of seven.

Atty. Mednick thanked Mr. T. J. Clark for his presentation. [1:18:44]

Atty, Mednick announced that the next speaker was Mr. Al Lucas, the New Haven Board of Alders Legislative Services Director. [1:19:03]

Atty. Mednick spoke about the various cities that have legislative staff. Mr. Lucas was unavailable for the call due to a scheduling conflict, so Atty. Mednick encouraged the Commission to go to the Question and Answer portion of the meeting.

Ms. Bennett had a question about the population and the legislative, but the information was provided during the presentation. [1:21:43]

Mr. Hempstead asked for clarification about Hamden election process works with nine districts and six At Large seats, two of which are designated for Minority Representation. [1:21:50]

Ms. Baez explained that six candidates from the Democratic Party campaign and two candidates from the minority party also campaign. Two of the six Democratic candidates are usually not elected.[1:22:35]

Discussion followed about the number of minority party candidates that could campaign for election.

Mr. Hempstead asked Mr. Nocera about the 8/4 mix for minority party seats. [1:23:28]

Mr. Nocera said that the 8/4 split was just the way the votes turned out. [1:23:38] The top eight majority candidates are sworn in and the four minority candidates are automatically slotted in since there are guaranteed minority seats. Discussion about the details followed.

Atty. Camacho asked if Stamford or any other city had a Board of Finance or Board of Estimate and whether they were appointed or elected positions. [1:25:22]

Mr. Curtis said that as far as Stamford goes, they have a Board of Finance and a BOE, all of which are elected positions. [1:25:46]

Atty. Camacho asked if these positions were At Large seats and if the District seats were presented on the Board. [1:26:04]

Mr. Curtis explained said that both Boards are city wide elections. [1:26:26] The candidates must decide if they are representing the entire City or only a portion. There is nothing in writing about this.

Atty. Camacho asked what the duties of the Board of Finance as compared to the Board of Representatives in regard to the overall budget. [1:27:10]

Mr. Curtis said the Board of Finance works on the budget and approves it. [1:27:20] The Board of Representatives are the last ones to receive the budget and can make recommendations to reduce or remove items, but they cannot add or increase items.

Atty. Camacho said Mr. Curtis had stated earlier that he wished that there would be more Republicans on the Board. [1:27:57] He added that there appears to be two factions in the Democratic Party. Atty. Camacho wished to know if Mr. Curtis felt that adding more Republicans into the Board of Representatives would make it less divisive.

Mr. Curtis replied that this was a good question. [1:28:30] He thought that there might be a slight advantage of one or two seats for the Reform Stamford group. The split is very close.

Atty. Camacho said that Mr. Curtis had mentioned that a vacating member nominates his or her replacement. [1:29:41] He wished to know what would happen if the nominated replacement was not approved.

Mr. Curtis explained that there was a stipulation in the Board rules which says that if it is a City wide seat, every member of the Board of Representatives can name one candidate. [1:29:54] An election will then be held. There was a Board of Representatives who apparently moved out of the District and ended up being caught. She resigned and nominated someone to replace her seat. Board of Representatives decided that they would not honor her request because of the deception and another member was appointed as a replacement.

Mr. Jim Clark asked those who had four year terms if they had received any pushback. [1:32:23]

Mr. Nocrea said in Middletown, the longer terms were well received because of the confusion of overlapping elections. [1:32:35] As far as the public is concerned, it has mostly been positive. Four years is a long time and if there is a great team, it works well. However, if it is not a good team, the public is aware of it.

Mr. Curtis said that Stamford went to a four year term for both the Mayor and the Board of Representatives in the 1990s. [1:33:53] It was a hard sell during the time when Governor Malloy was in office. He said that he did not know what anyone would say. Like any political office, when someone is elected, they need time to get used to the system and learn the issues. With two year terms, the representative has just figured out the processes when they have to run for re-election. He personally prefers the four year terms.

Mr. Levine asked Mr. Curtis about when a Representative leaves their seat. [1:36:13] He wished to know who nominates the replacement and who elects or selects or votes on that nomination.

Mr. Curtis said when a member of the Board of Representatives is stepping out by resigning their seat, they must send a resignation letter to the Mayor, to the Board President and to the Town Clerk. [1:36:36] The departing Representative is given the opportunity to name their replacement. The entire Board of Representatives will vote to approve or deny that replacement candidate.

Mr. Levine said that Mr. Curtis had described the process if the replacement is not approved, which sounded quite convoluted. [1:37:17] He asked if this was described in Stamford's Charter.

Mr. Curtis said he did not believe it was described to that degree. [1:37:32] The Charter leaves a lot to be desired. The premise whereby people name their own replacement is more of a long term honorary practice. As far as he could remember, there was only one incident where the Representative was disingenuous and the Board decided not to confirm her nominee. The other representative for that District was then asked to recommend a candidate.

Atty. Mednick stated that he believed it was a more of a custom where the departing individual submits their replacement. [1:39:22] He said that he did not believe this was in the Charter. Mr. Curtis agreed.

Atty. Mednick said that Atty. Camacho had asked about difference between the Mayor appointing and a political party appointing. [1:39:43] He said that the general rule throughout the State was that the appointment for Boards and Commissions either comes from Mayor but could come in some cases from the Council. He gave the details of the honored tradition. Naming of political parties is unusual.

Mr. Curtis added Stamford has a Democratic City Committee and an Republican Town Committee. [1:40:26] They are responsible for submitting names to the Mayor for various Boards and Commissions and endorse candidates for elective offices. In trying to solve the vacancy and expired term issue, Stamford created an Appointments Commission. The Commission's positions were filled and some of the Commissioners resigned, so Stamford is just now getting that Commission back up to speed.

Mr. Levine said that forty Representatives on the Board seems very high and very unwieldy. [1:41:51]

Mr. Curtis agreed. [1:42:01] He said there have been discussion about this during the Charter Review process. There were suggestions that the City go to a City Manager and a City Council but this did not gain any traction. While 40 people is sometimes like herding cats, it has been that way for a long time, possibly since the town of Stamford and the City of Stamford merged in the 1940's.

Atty. Mednick said that Mr. Lucas in New Haven, the second largest city, has 30 members on the Board of Aldermen. [1:43:12] Greenwich has 232 members of their RTM and Darien has 100 members of the RTM. Fairfield has 40 members as well.

Mr. Levine asked what was the most overriding issue during the last tumultuous Charter Revision. [1:43:59]

Mr. Curtis said that one issue was Land use and the other was the holdovers. [1:44:28] Of the two issues, the land use discussion were the most contentious. He reiterated that the Mayor had contacted the Governor about this, resulting in a statewide land use ordinance.

Mr. Levine asked for clarification on the land use changes. [1:45:36]

Mr. Curtis replied that there were several issues. [1:45:37]

Atty. Mednick explained that Stamford has a Special Act Charter and a petitioning process that is different from almost every other town, except for Westport[1:45:39]. This process involves the ability to appeal a land use decision to the Board of Representatives. He went on to give the details of the issues.

Mr. Levine asked for clarification on Hamden Council Members' compensation and wished to know if there had been any effort to change or improve it. [1:46:39]

Ms. Baez said that there had not been. [1:46:53] It was not brought up during the Charter Revision or any budget discussions.

Mr. Levine wished to know what the length of a term for the Hamden Council Members. [1:47:13]

Ms. Baez replied that it was two years. [1:47:14]

Mr. Levine asked about the MPR procedure for the six Hamden At Large members. [1:47:24] He wished to know if there had been any other effort to explore alternatives for a permanently disenfranchised electoral minority other than reserving two seats. He suggested cumulative voting or a more democratic alternative selection process.

Ms. Baez said there were different styles that might be able to represent the voters and the minority party but that was not a conversation she was part of. [1:48:11] Ms. Baez asked Atty. Mednick if he remembered anything about that type of conversation.

Atty. Mednick replied that he believed everyone just stuck with the status quo. [1:48:35] It had not come up in the other Charter Revisions he did.

Mr. Levine asked how Middletown managed to increase the compensation for the Council Members. [1:48:58] He wished to know what the process was.

Mr. Nocera said when he started, he was the Board of Education Chair and there was no compensation for the BOE. [1:49:17] When Mr. Nocera moved to the Council, the compensation was $7,200 and it was increased. During the Charter Revision, a provision was included in the budget process to review compensation yearly. He described the review process.

Mr. Levine said that Atty. Mednick had indicated there was a State statute that prevents increasing the Council compensation without a referendum. [1:51:00]

Mr. Nocera said that they had not discussed this. [1:51:14] It is included in the budget process.

Mr. Levine asked Atty. Mednick to address this. [1:51:29]

Atty. Mednick said that he would speak with Mr. Nocera about this. [1:52:05] It did not come up during their Charter Revision and he would have to take a look at this more closely. It is not governed by their Charter. He said that he would prefer not to speak about it right now.

Mr. Levine said that he would like to circle back because Middletown appears to have solved their problem. [1:52:45]

Mr. Nocera said that the issue does come up when they present their budget each year. [1:52:59]

Mr. Levine asked for the party affiliation and minority breakdown in the nine member Hartford Council. [1:53:15]. He wished to know if there was a minority representation requirement.

Atty. Mednick said Mr. T. J. Clark did not appear to be on the call [1:53:47] Atty. Mednick went on to explain that there were two members of the Working Family Parties and one Hartford Party Independent member that had the three non-Democratic seats. The cap is six for the majority party.

Mr. Levine asked how the three other seats were selected. [1:54:11]

Atty. Mednick explained that all the parties can nominate up to six people and those with the highest number of votes are selected for the Council. [1:54:20] The Democrats have six seats. He gave the details.

Mr. T. J. Clark confirmed that the maximum number that the Democrats can have is six. [1:55:05] He explained that when a former Democrat did not get the nomination, that individual formed their own party, the Hartford Party. The Hartford Party has won one of the three seats for the last two consecutive election cycles.

Atty. Mednick noted that Hartford had not had a Republican on the Council for a number of years. [1:55:31]

Mr. T. J. Clark said that Republicans have run, but they have not been able to win. [1:55:38]

Mr. Levine said that Hartford seems to be unusual in that there is an allowance for a legislative aide for each of the nine Council Members. He asked how the legislative aides were paid. [1:55:43]

Mr. T. J. Clark explained that it was part of the normal process. [1:56:02] He said that the majority of the Council Budget was for staffing salaries and they budget for nine legislative aides.

Mr. Fairbairn asked Mr. Curtis if he had to leave. [1:56:57] Mr. Curtis said that he had to leave by 8:00 p.m. [1:57:08]

Mr. Fairbairn asked Mr. Curtis about increasing the size of the Norwalk Council, which is currently 15. [1:57:13] Mr. Fairbairn wished to know if Mr. Curtis felt that 40 members of the Council was too many and if he had the ability to , would he shrink it.

Mr. Curtis said it was a good question. [1:57:57] He said that he was used to having a two year term rather than a four year term and a Council that has 40 members. He doesn't have a problem with that. There are those who would like to see the Council reduced by half. This was discussed during the last Charter Revision.

Mr. Hempstead asked if the Board of Finance or the Board of Education had any requirements for Minority Party Representation. [1:59:04]

Mr. Curtis said that he believed the BOE did, but would have to verify this. [1:59:15]

Mr. Fairbairn thanked Mr. Curtis for his time. [1:59:27] Mr. Curtis said that it was an honor to get to know the Charter Review Commissioners.

Atty. Camacho asked Atty. Mednick about an earlier statement about Council Members who were paid a stipend. [1:59:47] He wished to know if it would make a difference as to whether a Council could vote for compensation in the form of a stipend or if this would move it outside of the State statute that requires approval by referendum.

Atty. Camacho also asked about Greenwich and Darien, who have sizable Representative bodies, in regards to Minority Representation. [2:00:30]

Atty. Mednick said that regarding the stipend issue, there was some law on it and he would prepare that for their next meeting. [2:01:08] Reimbursement is not part of the compensation category. He gave the details.

Atty. Mednick said that he would also include Westport in the discussion about Minority Representation because they have a substantial body also. [2:01:48] He believes that all three towns do have Minority Representation but will confirm this at the next meeting.

He stated that at the next meeting would provide the Commission with comparative data on a chart. [2:02:09] He listed the various categories that would be included.

Atty. Camacho then asked Ms. Baez about having a District system along with Minority Representation. [2:02:43]

Ms. Baez explained that they have nine districts and six At Large seats. [2:03:03] The two Minority Representation seats are in the At Large category.

Atty. Camacho asked if there was a chance that a Minority Party candidate could be elected in one of the nine Districts. [2:03:13]

Ms. Baez said that one of the Districts does have a Minority Party Representative. [2:03:24] This is not included in the Charter, it is because that is who the District chose. The required Minority Party Representation is only for the At Large seats and they are not affected by the District elections. Discussion followed about the details.

Ms. Bennett commented that Norwalk has their five At Large seats and five District seats. [2:05:19] She said that there was the possibility for the District seats to not have equal representation. She said that this needs to be considered.

Atty. Camacho commented that it seemed odd to him to have an 8 to 7 party split on the City Council that the mandatory Minority Party Representation could flip the Council majority. [2:06:17]

Ms. Bennett pointed out that Atty. Camacho was speaking about political parties versus District representation. [2:07:11]

Atty. Camacho pointed out that mathematically it was possible that the Minority Party Representation could flip the Council if the vote was that close. [2:07:30] Discussion followed.

Ms. Baez said she would like to comment about Ms. Bennett's earlier statement about having the At Large representatives disproportionately represent specific districts. [2:09:16] She said that this was a real issue and could happen when there is a mix of District and At Large Council Members. She then went on to give an example that occurred in Hamden because of compensation. This was because of higher income level, so one portion of the Town was more highly represented than another portion. This situation continued until recently when the Party Town Committee addressed it. Ms. Bennett's observation was accurate.

Atty. Mednick noted that Mr. Lucas from New Haven had joined the call. [2:10:52]. Atty. Mednick gave a brief summary of his earlier New Haven comments. He also mentioned that he had been working on a Charter addition regarding having staffing with specific knowledge rather than a type of aide-de-camp.

Mr. Lucas greeted the Commission. [2:12:26] He said that he had known Atty. Mednick for a long time.

Mr. Hempstead asked about Minority Representation in the terms. [2:12:45]

Mr. Lucas replied that they do not have any minority representation requirements for the Board of Alders. [2:12:46] Their elections use a District system. Currently, the 30 Aldermen and the Mayor have two year terms. However, this will change in 2027 to four year terms.

Mr. Fairbairn said that the questions that he had were already answered. [2:13:30] He wished to know if any of the municipal representatives had switched from two year terms to four year terms through Charter Revision.

Mr. Nocera stated that Middletown had. [2:13:59]

Mr. Fairbairn asked if it had any impact on their ability to attract candidates to run for office. [2:14:00]. He noted that a four year commitment was a big ask particularly since the Norwalk Council Members are not paid a lot.

Mr. Nocera said that they had not seen the phenomena of less interest in Middletown. [2:14:22] However, they did notice that the candidates were more acclimated along with being properly mentored. There was a reduction in preparing for the re-election campaign. There was less negativity with the four year term.

Mr. Fairbairn wished to know if there were any other Commissioners who had questions. [2:15:20]

Mr. Hempstead asked for clarification about the Hartford party structures. He wished to know if the Working Families Party was cross endorsed by the Democratic Party. [2:15:33]

Atty. Mednick replied that there was no cross endorsement. [2:15:55] He said all the candidates ran independently of the Democratic Party and were not cross endorsed.

Mr. Farirbairn asked if the candidates would be allowed to cross endorse. [2:16:24]

Atty. Mednick said that they would be allowed to cross endorse but noted that it would complicate the Minority Party Representation. [2:16:25] In Waterbury, there was an Independent Party and many of the candidates that were running in the Independent Party were Democrats. However, they ran as part of the Independent Party. He gave the details of how it worked and noted that this was also true in New Britain. The rules are very goofy in Connecticut and there are a lot of anomalies.

Mr. Fairbairn wished to know if there were any other Commissioners who had questions. [2:17:56]

Ms. Rhodes-Small asked Ms. Baez about the low compensation. [2:18:01] She wished to know if they had two year terms or had four year terms.

Ms. Baez indicated that the Council Members have two year terms. [2:18:10] She added that the Mayor has four year terms.

Ms. Rhodes-Small asked if there was turn over after the two year term ended. [2:18:15] She also wished to know if the level of compensation had any effect.

Ms. Baez replied that she did not know if the compensation had any effect. [2:18:22] She explained that she was the longest serving Council Member but this is because there has been a major turn over in the Council membership. Last term, nine of the 15 members switched. She said that she didn't think it was having an affect now, but noted that it could in the future.

Mr. Fairbairn wished to know if there were any other Commissioners who had questions. [2:19:19] He then thanked the panel members for their input and said it had been tremendously helpful. If the Commission members have more questions, they will contact Atty. Mednick with them. This was agreeable to all.

<u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</u>:

Mr. Fairbairn said that there were two sets of minutes waiting for approval. [2:20:04] He said that the December 3rd minutes had been deferred and the December 17th meeting. He asked if anyone had any comments, revisions or additions they would like add to the December 3rd. He explained that Esther had told him that corrections would be included in the minutes for this meeting. They would not go back to revise the ones that had been completed but if there was anything that people believed needed to be added to those minutes, it would be noted in this set of minutes as part of the record.

- **December 3, 2024**
- **Public Hearing: December 17, 2024**

**** MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 3, 2024 MEETING**.

Ms. Bennett said that she was not sure which meeting was involved, but Council Member Dunn had made some comments that had not been included in the minutes. [2:21:25]

Mr. Fairbairn said that those comments had been circulated among the Commission members. [2:21:32].

Ms. Bennett said that they should be part of the public record. [2:21:37]

Mr. Fairbairn said he would check the website to find out how this works mechanically. [2:21:39] The intention was to make every comment that the Commission received whether it was in person or received in writing, like the comments received from Ms. Diane Lauricella earlier in the day will be made public. He said that he would check into how the administration handles this. He said that when there is a comment, it is often tacked on at the end, but he would verify this. He said that he did not remember how it was handled last time and spoke about a running tab located on the website.

Ms. Bennett said that she understood and appreciated that this was a work in progress. [2:22:46]

Mr. Levine said that he had sent a long list to Mr. Fairbairn. last month, last year. [2:22:57] Regarding the December 3 minutes, he stated he wished to replace the following paragraph on page 1, under Acceptance of the Minutes:

> "Mr. Levin expressed the desire for more detailed minutes. He was told that in a perfect world they would have a court reporter taking the minutes; however, that would result in a significant expense. Mr. Levin was told the recordings of the meetings are available and his comments were duly noted. Mr. Levin said that in the interest of transparency he needs more details in order to make the minutes more useful."

with:

> "Mr. Levine declined to offer specific revisions but instead echoed comments by Mr. Clark at the prior meeting that the CRC minutes should contain more relevant details so that the relevant information is not lost but is available to the public. Mr. Camacho

commented that in a perfect world, they would have a court reporter spontaneously transcribing everything said at the meeting but that would result in quite a significant expense. Mr. Levine noted that his request like of the previous meeting was not for a verbatim transcription but rather for relevant information to be included rather than omitted if only to provide improved transparency of the Charter Revision Commission's activities.

Mr. Levine said that the December 3 minutes stated the following motion: [2:24:51]

**** MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS REVISED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

He stated that there were two Commissioners who abstained to approve.

On page 4, Mr. Levine wished to replace the following motion: [2:25:10]

**** MR. CAMACHO MOVED TO ADOPT THE 2025 MEETING CALENDAR AS PRESENTED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

with the following correction:

**** MR. HEMPSTEADMOVED TO ADOPT THE 2025 MEETING CALENDAR AS PRESENTED BY MR. CAMACHO.**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

In paragraph 6, Mr. Levine wished to replace the following paragraph: [2:25:30]

As far as term limits are concerned, the City of Norwalk is not in a special act regiment. The job of the Charter Revision Commission is to revise and pass the Charter and not enact special acts. The four year term would be an issue. In addition, they need to discuss the issue of Common Council vacancies.

With :

Mr. Mednick reminded that with respect to term limits, Connecticut is not in a Special Acts regimen and that the term limits in his view would require permission by Special Act or a General Act of the legislature which in his view is politically unlikely and should not be considered by the CRC.

On page 5, Mr. Levine said he would like to amend the following sentence: [2:25:59]

Mr. Camacho pointed out two issues that were raised by the public this evening.

to:

> Mr. Camacho inquired whether the Commission could dispense with any discussion of two topics raised that evening by public comment commentors, specifically, Taxing Districts and term limits.

Mr. Levine said he would like to amend the following sentence on page 5: [2:26:45]

> Mr. Levin said the taxing districts were retained because at the time of the 1913 merger it was a pain to dissolve them.

to:

> Mr. Levin said the taxing districts were retained because at the time of the 1913 merger it was a pain to dissolve them and they are an anachronism and provide no function – no functions that would not be fully undertaken by the City government – that could not be fully undertaken by the City government.

Mr. Levine said that he would like to replace the following sentences: [2:27:21]

> Mr. Levin said if they got the right solution, the taxing districts would be dissolved. Mr. Mednick asked if it would be reasonable to task the next Charter Revision to review the feasibility of taxing districts.

with:

> Mr. Levine asked if a solution could be developed, whether it might be reasonable to task a future Charter Revision Commission with reviewing the possible dissolution of the Taxing Districts.

In paragraph 6 on page 5, Mr. Levine said he would like to replace the following: [2:27:50]

> Mr. Levine said he was not proposing eliminating taxing districts, but pointed out that they are unnecessary and better governments exist without them.

with:

> Mr. Levine reminded the members that he had not proposed eliminating Taxing Districts but rather had observed that they were unnecessary anachronisms and that Norwalk City government would be improved by their removal and the future may reveal a pathway to get there.

In paragraph 7, Mr. Levine requested that following unattributed statement be removed: [2:28:25]

> "Term limits are off limits."

On page 6, paragraph 2, please replace the following: [2:28:26]

Mr. Levin suggested a rate of $100 per month with the additional cost of living adjustment. It was noted that is not much different from the current $60 per month.

with:

Mr. Levine suggested removing member compensation entirely from the Charter, allow the Council to set the compensation of next elected Council with the Charter perhaps only setting a minimum amount of perhaps $100 per month. Mr. Camacho pointed out that Council changes to compensation under State law require a voter referendum to change.

Atty. Camacho pointed out that Mr. Levine had pointed out that if a person looks at the YouTube minutes, they can get a very accurate read of what happened. [2:29:25]

Mr. Fairbairn said that there needed to be a vote to approve the December 3, 2024 minutes with Mr. Levine's proposed revisions. [2:29:45] He stated he would abstain on the amendments because he could not be sure of all the details.

Atty. Camacho said that he would also abstain. [2:30:05] He said he could not be sure, either.

Mr. Clark said his question was at times, when Mr. Levine was reading the revisions, he was speaking for Atty. Camacho and Atty. Mednick. [2:30:14] Mr. Clark said that he wished to make sure that both Atty. Camacho and Atty. Mednick were fine with how their comments were characterized.

Atty. Camacho replied that he was not sure because he had not gone back to watch the video. [2:30:34] He said that he had indicated before that the minutes were not to be verbatim, but if anyone had questions, they could go back and check the YouTube recording. He said he assumes what Mr. Levine said was true but would not be voting for those amendments simply because the YouTube video does exist and provides an entirely accurate depiction of what happened with the assumption that the video has not been doctored in some way.

Mr. Levine said that the minutes that the Commission approves without people visiting tor revisiting the video itself. [2:31:20]

Mr. Fairbairn said that it was not necessary. [2:31:36]

Mr. Levine said that they do not want to discuss this, but Telesco is presenting minutes that contain both errors and omissions for this Commission. [2:31:41]

Mr. Camacho said that they could be fact checked. [2:31:56]

Mr. Levine agreed, but asked the Commission if they wanted minutes with errors and omissions or did they want them corrected. [2:32:02].

Atty. Camacho said that in a perfect world, they would have verbatim minutes. [2:32:05] However this is the imperfect world where they exist, no one would go back to the YouTube video to make sure that the minutes were taken absolutely accurately. It is asking too much of Telesco and the process.

Ms. Bennett said that AI could transcribe the minutes. [2:32:34] There are plenty of programs that would transcribe your text of meetings and calls.

Mr. Fairbairn said that if the issue was transparency, and encouraging transparency, one could not be more transparent than having a recording of the entire meeting available on the same webpage that has a link to the minutes. [2:32:54] If someone has a doubt about something that happened or not able to attend the meeting in person, the entire meeting is right there. This has been discussed repeatedly. The Commission needs to vote on Mr. Levine's revisions and then move on to the other December minutes. He said that he did not wish to spend additional time on the concept of the issue.

Mr. Levine added that his goal was to only correct errors. [2:33:29]

Mr. Fairbairn said that the Commission would not be able to get anything done if each meeting was a discussion of the prior meeting's minutes, what the minutes should be and whether Telesco is doing the right thing. [2:33:43]

Atty. Camacho said he wanted to change his vote from an abstention to a no vote. [2:32:03]

Mr. Fairbairn said that he would abstain and Atty. Camacho was a no vote. He asked the other members what their votes were.

Mr. Hempstead asked if they were voting on the minutes as amended. [2:34:10]

Mr. Fairbairn said they were considering the December 3, 2024 minutes with Mr. Levine's proposed amendments. [2:34:15]

Atty. Mednick pointed out that the Commission should vote on the amendments and then vote on the minutes. [2:34:20]

Mr. Fairbairn asked the Commission members if they wished to accept Mr. Levine's amendments to the December 3, 2024 minutes before approving the minutes. [2:34:30]

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE DECEMBER 3, 2024 MINUTES WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR (BENNETT, CLARK, HEMPSTEAD, AND LEVINE); TWO (2) ABSTENTION (FAIRBAIRN AND RHODES-SMALL) ONE (1) OPPOSED (CAMACHO). [2:35:27]**

Mr. Levine stated that Mr. McQuaid was not available at this time. [2:35:28]

Mr. Fairbairn asked for a motion to approve the December 3, 2024 minutes as amended. [2:35:45]

Mr. Hempstead said that he would like to table the December 3, 2024 minutes in order to allow those who wished to fact check the minutes could do so. [2:35:46]

Atty. Camacho reminded everyone that a motion to table was not debatable. [2:35:55]

Ms. Bennett said that she liked that motion. [2:36:00]

Mr. Hempstead said that he was very careful not to make a motion to table and had not moved to table. [2:36:10]

Mr. Fairbairn said that they had already tabled the minutes once. [2:36:11] he suggested that with both the December 3rd and December 17th, they have Mr. Levine send his revisions so that the members could compare them to the YouTube video.

Mr. Hempstead said that as a former Council Member with 26 years of experience, the minutes were to get the sense of the discussion. [2:36:25] The only factual parts are when there is an active vote on a particular item on the agenda. The vote should list how people voted and if there is a comment. It's a sense of the meeting and not even close to be verbatim.

Mr. Levine said that this would be applicable if they were a legislative body voting to approve appointments, allocating funds or approving ordinances. [2:37:02] The reality is that in the beginning portion, a Charter Revision Commission has a lot of discussion.

Mr. Hempstead and Mr. Fairbairn pointed out that there is an actual video of the meetings. [2:37:22] Mr. Fairbairn asked why someone would want to read the minutes and see Mr. Levine's take on the event rather than just watching the video.

Mr. Levine said that was a really good question and he was glad Mr. Fairbairn asked that. [2:37:33] If the Commission members knows anyone who is a journalist that actually want to report on City and they have a lot of City meetings to review, they will actually turn first to the minutes because the cost of watching a lengthy video is expensive. If the minutes are inaccurate or contain material omissions, then the journalist will not be able to do the job they are trying to do.

Atty. Camacho pointed out that the journalist was relying on hearsay.[2:38:15]

Mr. Fairbairn asked why a reporter would report on an event they did not observe. [2:38:30]

Mr. Levine replied that what he was hearing was that the Commission would prefer to have minutes with errors and omissions because there is a video. [2:38:25]

Atty. Camacho said that he would prefer not to have to rely on Mr. Levine's interpretation of the video. [2:38:37]

Mr. Fairbairn asked Mr. Levine if he saw how challenging this would make the process. [22:38:43] Mr. Levine reviewed the video line by line and now the other Commission members must do the same since they have not made the exact same observations that Mr. Levine had. This would end up with people commenting on others' comments. This is not the purpose of the minutes.

Ms. Rhodes-Small said that she had concerns about the fact that the Commission was spending time discussing the minutes rather than the work they were there to do. [2:39:13] She said she was also concerned whether they would be able to get the work done in the time that they need to be done if they spend 30 minutes talking about the minutes. She said that people watch the video and if they hear something important they send one another the link. She said that she appreciated that Mr. Levine is going through everything with a fine tooth comb, but at the end of the day, the goal is revise the Charter. Spending 30 to 40 minutes each meeting talking about the dictation of the minutes is not realistic. This doesn't help the people that the Commission is attempting to help.

Mr. Levine said he agreed with Ms. Rhodes-Small but was pointing out that the minutes that were prepared by and presented by Telesco contain errors and omissions. [2:40:16] he said that he reads them carefully.

Mr. Fairbairn suggested that Mr. Levine vote no on the minutes. [2:40:40] He noted that on the last Commission, there were significant Charter changes that he, Mr. Dickens, Mr. McQuaid and other would have liked to have seen, but they realized that the group did not want that, so they moved on. However, this Commission has not moved on from the minutes yet and not gotten in to the actual work. He repeated his earlier suggestion that if Mr. Levine was unhappy with the minutes, he should vote no. If Mr. Levine's point is transparency, it cannot be more transparent than the recording of the meeting.

Mr. Levine said he had sent the changes along to Mr. Fairbairn. [2:41:18] He said that he would be happy to send the changes to the Committee members before the meeting so that people could review them and decide on them for themselves. Realistically, he said that he thought some people probably vote on the approval of the minutes without ever having read them.

Mr. Fairbairn said that this was Mr. Levine's interpretation. [2:41:47] He said that he does review the minutes but does not compare them to the video. He asked for a motion to table the December 3, 2024 and December 17, 2024 minutes so that other can review Mr. Levine's comments.

**** MR. LEVINE MOVED TO TABLE THE MINUTES THE DECEMBER 3, 2024 AND THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 17, 2024 TO ALLOW THE COMMISSION MEMBERS TO FACT CHECK THE MINUTES**.
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Fairbairn said that they would be discussing the December minutes in late January. [2:42:25]

DISCUSSION

Mr. Fairbairn said that their next meeting would be in two weeks. [2:42:47]

Atty. Mednick said that he would have an outline chart for the Commissioners with all issues and the comparisons at the next meeting. [2:42:48]

Mr. Fairbairn said that he would double check with Esther if there are any issues with the website and about having the submitted comments included on the website. [2:43:07] He spoke about a test email and noted that Ms. Lauricella had sent an email through the portal.

ADJOURNMENT

**** ATTY. CAMACHO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

Mr. Levine asked when they would be discussing the information they had received earlier in the meeting. [2:44:10]

**** THE MOTION TO ADJOURN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services