

The Sprague Charter Commission is continuing its work on a new Charter. The goal of the Commission is to put in writing the way that we govern in Sprague. Much of what happens in town government has been done because we all know how to do it. Yet we haven't taken the time to write it down.

In writing the Charter the Commission has chosen to make only a few changes. One of the ways that Town government would change if the Charter is adopted is to add two members to the Board of Selectmen. This would make the total number of Selectmen five (5) including the First Selectman. The proposed Board would have up to three (3) members of the majority party and up to two (2) members of the minority party.

The increased size of the Board will give an opportunity for a greater range of opinions and more expertise. In addition, the First Selectman can ask one or two members of the Board to accompany him/her to meetings without the limitation of a quorum.

Some of you have expressed concern that we may not find more candidates to run for the Board as it sometimes hard just to fill the current three-member Board. Another way of looking at this concern is whether individuals are discouraged from running for the Board of Selectmen because they are afraid they will be the only one with a viewpoint.

Learning the jobs of First Selectman and Board of Selectman is a time-consuming process. And just when it is getting easier, it is time to run again for re-election. So the Charter Commission is also proposing that the terms of office for the First Selectman and the Board of Selectmen is increased to four years.

At the public hearing, there was general support for these ideas. Tell us what you think. You can send comments to spraguechartercommission@ctsprague.org. Or you can come to our meeting. Our December meeting is Tuesday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall.

A new draft of the Charter revised for the comments we have received to date will be available shortly. You can find a draft of the charter on the Town of Sprague website www.ctsprague.org. The Charter Commission has its own tab on the left.

There will be one more public hearing in January before the draft charter is given to the Board of Selectmen.

In November 2009 the charter will go to town election.

Look in next month's Our Town for another article about the proposed charter.

Commission members are Dick Douville, Acting Chair; Susan Zimmerman, Secretary; Joe Osowski; Dennison Allen and Kord Jablonski.

Susan Zimmerman
Sprague Charter Commission