

# Charter Change Gives Tiverton Citizens A Choice In Democratic Process

September 12, 2011

After reading several letters describing problems with the proposed charter change to the Financial Town Referendum, I felt compelled to write this letter.

The first thing I notice is most of the detractors are the same people who brought Tiverton in to the serious financial situation we are in now. With a \$47 million unfunded combined pension and benefit liability, we have gave away more contractually than we can afford.

That's right! \$47 million.

The pension payment for next year for teachers, town workers and retirees is expected to increase from \$1,884,183 to \$3,317,277. That's \$1.5 million the taxpayers will have to pick up, and it's because we gave away too much in contractual obligations over the years - free health, dental, eye care for life and life insurance, along with a COLA (cost of living adjustment), every year. These costs go up every year.

Our town roads are just another example of my outrage. I can't say they hid these facts, because I found them. I say they knew the problem and continued to make it worse. That in my mind gives them zero credibility.

The committee put together to research alternatives for the financial town meeting (FTM) has spent hundreds of hours working on this proposal. Several public hearings and a group of dedicated volunteers have brought forward a proposal for people to vote on in the special election next November. I think this group has given the citizens of Tiverton a choice that will work for all who take the time to participate in our democratic process. One man or woman. One vote.

I hope people will take the time to get all the facts before voting in November. The members of this committee are so dedicated to this cause they will answer any question you have. Take the time to learn for yourselves. Please don't take the word of the people who caused the problems we have now. They clearly don't have the answer.

Joseph R. Sousa  
Tiverton