



Minutes of the Charter Review Commission from Wednesday April 9, 2025, 6:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Charter Review Commission Members Present: Denny Mariola, Amy Jones, Rick Charles, Nancy Binzel, Janice Arch

Charter Review Commission Members Absent: Dennis Campbell, Christina Staats

City Officials Present: Drew Reilly, Hannah Morris, Kyle Herman, Steven Hooten

3. Approval of Minutes

- Approval of April 1, 2025 Town Hall minutes

Motion made by Nancy Binzel, seconded by Dennis Mariola to approve Town Hall minutes

Vote – Yeas: Denny Mariola, Rick Charles, Nancy Binzel, Amy Jones, Janice Arch

Nays – None. Motion carried unanimously.

- Approval of April 2, 2025 minutes

Motion made by Nancy Binzel, seconded by Dennis Mariola to approve April 2, 2025 minutes

Vote – Yeas: Denny Mariola, Rick Charles, Nancy Binzel, Amy Jones, Janice Arch

Nays – None. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Old Business

- **Second draft of adding language of incapacity of The Finance Director within Vacancy Section: 6.08**
- **Second draft of adding language of incapacity of The Law Director within Vacancy: 9:07**

Mr. Reilly explained that during the last meeting there was a desire from the commission to add language in the event there was not an assistant director of finance of the general division or a deputy law director. Mr. Reilly explained that he had added a sentence to both previous versions requested by the commission.

For the Finance Director change version two it now reads “In the event that the Assistant Director of the General Division is vacant at the time that the Finance Director is temporarily unable to perform their duties pursuant to this section, the Mayor shall appoint an Acting Finance Director from within the Finance Department, until such time as the Finance Director is able to resume the performance of their duties.”

He added that this is a temporary change if the finance director becomes temporarily incapacitated for medical reasons, vacation or inaccessibility. Not for a permanent change.

Mr. Reilly clarified that he added the language of appointing someone within the finance Department so there is never a question of the mayor appointing someone that is not within the city, or someone with no financial background for the temporary role.

For the Law Director change version two now states: “In the event that the position of Deputy Law Director is vacant at the time of the Law Director’s temporary inability to perform their duties under this Section, the Mayor shall appoint an Acting Law Director from within the Law Department until such time as the Law Director is able to resume performance of their duties.”

Mr. Reilly asked if there were any questions based on these changes for version two, there were none.

Mr. Charles stated that since there was a quorum that they could vote on these changes tonight to go before council if the commission decided to.

Mr. Hooten had pointed out that prior to them voting on these changes, he noted that there was a typo in version two of Section 6.08 that it states to “Amend Article 20” where it should be amended first to stated “Article 6”

Ms. Binzel motioned to amend version two to change to “article 6, where it currently states article 20”

Ms. Arch seconded the motion to amend version two.

All were in favor of the amendment, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Charles then moved to submit article 6.08 version 2 with the amendment change to council, Ms. Binzel seconded the motion.

All in favor of the motion, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Charles then moved to submit article 9.07 version 2 as it reads to council, Ms. Arch seconded the motion.

All were in favor of the motion, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Reilly stated these would be presented to the April 24th meeting. He stated that he had spoken to Council President Feldman. He stated that President Feldman that there is an agenda item to discuss the process that the Charter Review Commission is wanting to proceed with on the Council Meeting April 10. He then stated that Mr. Charles would still be planning on going to the council meeting April 10 to discuss the Commission and their processes and then at April 24 there would be five charter amendments introduced.

Mr. Charles stated he would be at the meeting to explain the rationale and also answer questions if the council members had any or had feedback from anything as of the process etc.

5. New Business

• Article XII: Civil Service Commission

Mr. Reilly gave an overview of the Civil Service Commission stating that this was created as a method to create a professional workforce in the government that could be stabilized and run through regardless of who was at the top of the political ticket. He explained that the Civil Service commission has its own rules for employment that its separate from collective bargaining. Mr. Reilly explained that there are three types of employees that work for public government excluding elected officials. Those include classified (civil service positions), unclassified (Political hires, cabinet level) and bargaining (Unions).

He explained that civil service commission are the people that run the city's nonpolitical hires, including police, fire, service jobs, more front line working with people.

Mr. Charles had asked if there were positions that were classified bargaining or classified non-bargaining. Mr. Reilly had explained that yes, there are both.

Ms. Binzel had stated that the charter doesn't specify how many people or terms etc. Mr. Reilly stated all that information is in the codifies. He also stated that if something is not in the charter or the codified ordinances, they automatically fall back to state law.

Mr. Reilly stated that there has not been many changes since the Charter came into effect and this is the bare bones but it allows the city to write their own rules as they see fit with the checks and balances of Civil Service Commission approves it, council then also approves it and then the mayor still has to sign off on things.

- **Article XIII: Parks And Recreation Board**

The Director is appointed by the Mayor, and confirmed by Council. in the event of death, resignation, recall or removal of the Director, the Mayor shall appoint, and council shall confirm a successor within one year.

Mr. Charles clarified that if the Mayor appoints, they then have the power to fire a Director without council approval. Mr. Reilly confirmed that.

For the Parks and Recreation Board, there are 5 members, one from each of the 4 wards and the last member is appointed by the School Board. They serve a term of 2 years or until a successor is elected and qualified.

The Parks and Recreation Boards duties are they recommend general policy to Council and Mayor for the control, equipment, and management of playgrounds, playfields, gymnasiums, swimming pools, indoor recreation centers, and lands or buildings owned by the City for park and recreation purposes.

They are also still subject to approval by council in regards to purchasing and financial appropriations.

- **Article XIV: Cemetery Board**

The Cemetery Board consists of 3 electors, appointed by the Mayor and approved by Council. They have a term of 3 years and are staggered. They have general policy making, planning and administrative power over all municipal cemetery, determination of work and supplies needed.

- **Article XV: Finances**

Mr. Reilly explained that the first section describes property tax within the city and it states that we can only do a maximum of 7.2 mills in one year with an additional 2.3 mills but that 2.3 mills go towards specifically EMS / Fire protection.

In section 15.02 states that the Finance Director and the Mayor have to sign all checks, so two signatures are required, and if the Mayor is unavailable, the president of Council can sign on their behalf.

Ms. Binzel stated that then for this instance it's a good thing they have the recommended change going before council for the succession plan if the Finance Director is incapacitated for any reason.

Mr. Reilly states that the last section states that the City cannot increase the income tax rate without an affirmative vote of the voters.

- **Article XVIII: Franchise**

Mr. Reilly explained that if this section was not in the charter then they would defer to state law.

He stated that this is why there has been no changes to this section and it is in the charter for us to have the right to grant franchises to public utilities. He added that he did not recommend making changes to this section.

Mr. Charles had asked what happened when a change of ownership of a company happens, do they need to apply for a new franchise.

Mr. Hooten stated that it depends on what took place, whether they became a successor entity of the company or if they have only taken over portions of it.

Mr. Reilly stated if they inherited the company, they would also take over the franchise, but if they were to sell to a smaller company then yes, they would have to apply for a new franchise within the city.

Mr. Charles had asked if they have to renew every 25 years, Mr. Reilly stated that yes and some are shorter. But they renew their own franchises.

There were no other questions regarding this section.

6. Public Comment

Andrew Brantsch was sworn in, he gave a speech regarding Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) to the charter review commission and hoping the commission would consider a recommendation to implement Ranked Choice Voting in Stow Municipal elections. Mr. Brantsch explained what Ranked Choice Voting was, when it was adopted and what current locations utilize it. He explained the benefits of Ranked Choice Voting over traditional voting. He stated that a research paper done by the American Bar Association found that with the implementation of RCV overall representation, campaign quality, mobilization of voters and voter turnout increased and saw benefit. He urged the commission as members of the commission but also stow residents to consider amending the charter to include Ranked Choice Voting.

The commission let Mr. Brantsch know that he wasn't held to only 3 minutes of speaking and if he had anything else he wanted to explain that he could. Mr. Brantsch then continued and stated that he is in favor is because it requires candidates in order to do well they must be broadly popular and they must appeal to everyone not just their specific voting block or one side of the political spectrum.

Mr. Charles asked if he was aware of any cities that utilize this currently.

Mr. Brantsch did say that Cleveland Heights, University Heights and Lakewood he believed.

Mr. Charles asked if there were any place nationally that utilizes this. Mr. Brantsch stated that Maine and Alaska do

Mr. Reilly added that New York City uses for their Mayoral election as well.

Mr. Mariola stated that it makes 100% sense but- he has to challenge himself and ask why it hasn't been more accepted. He stated that it doesn't seem to be hitting home where we would expect it to be.

Mr. Brantsch explained that is because people on both extreme sides of the political aisle benefit by not having it.

Mr. Mariola expressed that he would think there would be more that want it though that do not want it.

Ms. Binzel stated that it's a big change and it takes time for people to make sense of it and think it all through and stated there will always be some sort of resistance.

The Commission thanked Mr. Brantsch for coming and speaking tonight.

Mr. Kyle Herman was sworn in and stated that he wanted to second what Mr. Brantsch stated regarding Ranked Choice Voting. Stated that he was also one of the co-founders of Rank the Vote Ohio and that he would be happy to connect the commission to any expert or resources to answer questions regarding Ranked Choice Ohio during any conversation regarding it. Explained how Ranked Choice Voting can solve issues because it incentivizes politicians to cooperate for the common good in order to win the majority vote. He stated he has gone to other cities charter review commissions to speak on Ranked Choice Voting to them to possibly consider adding to their charters as well.

Mr. Mariola had questioned how we get the community members, the voters to get on board with something that is 180 degrees different of what they are used to or always done. Stated he wanted to be sure to have the community support before recommending things because he doesn't want to have it go in and fail right off the bat. Stated that he would be anxious about presenting it to the community and the community just not being there yet in backing this.

Mr. Herman reiterated on how he would want to get the community engagement on learning about it and that he knows it is easier to educate voters at the local level. And he would be optimistic if it would get on the ballot that the citizens would be able to educate the voters on it.

Ms. Jones suggested to possibly do a Town Hall meeting discussing Ranked Choice voting just to educate the voters on it.

Ms. Arch had asked if that if this would be something to be implemented that it would only affect the local elections, not the national elections.

Mr. Reilly stated that yes, it would be for City elections not for the national elections.

The Commission thanked Mr. Herman for his comment at tonight's meeting.

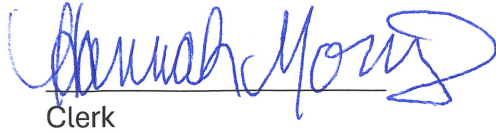
7. Other

The commission reiterated what the next meeting discussion would be. For the April 16th meeting they will discuss Articles 21, 22 and start 16 and 17.

8. Adjournment

Motion made by Janice Arch seconded by Rick Charles, to adjourn.

Motion carried unanimously.


Clerk


Chairman