



Minutes of the Charter Review Commission from Wednesday April 16, 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 9, 2025 minutes

Motion made by Rick Charles, seconded by Nancy Binzel to approve April 9, 2025 minutes

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

Nays – None. Motion carried unanimously.

4. New Business

- **Article XXI: General Provisions**

Mr. Hooten explained this section has portions of the charter that did not really fit anywhere else within the charter, so this section was created. Section 21.01 states that no employee or officer can accept or solicit anything in regard to contract that is outside the scope of their compensation / expenses set by council. Mr. Hooten explained section 21.02 shows how officers, employees and members of boards and commissions are removed if necessary and by whom. Section 21.03, this section includes the enactment date of the Charter. For Section 21.04 Mr. Hooten clarified that this section states that if any part (section / sentence) within the charter is deemed unconstitutional by a court, if other parts of the charter do not depend on that part, the rest of the charter would be left alone.

Mr. Charles wanted clarification on what “a part” was. Mr. Hooten explained that it could be anything, a sentence, a whole paragraph, or a portion of a paragraph.

Ms. Arch wanted to know who was monitoring that and if it was not a Charter Review year. Mr. Hooten explained that the Law Department can make corrections so that if it is an off year the Law Director could make the changes if needed.

Section 21.05: Mr. Hooten explained that this states that with the charter going into effect if doesn't nullify any contracts or pending lawsuits / prosecutions, then anything started after the contract would be done in accordance with the Charter.

Christy Staats arrived during this portion of the meeting, approximately 6:45 pm

Section 21.07 explains that there are no residency requirements for employees besides for the elected officials.

Section 21.08 explains the term limits for elected officials. Mr. Hooten explained that section A is Mayor, Finance Director, and Law Director cannot serve more than two consecutive four-year terms, and no more than a total of 10 consecutive years. Mr. Hooten had explained that this section was just changed in 2022 when there were two competing charter amendments on the ballot that year.

Section B states no member of council shall serve more than 8 consecutive years in the same office or more than four consecutive two year terms.

Mr. Hooten explained that this is how Law Director Reilly's term is since he was appointed and has to run for the unexpired term in 2025.

Ms. Arch had asked if the minutes could be pulled from 2018 and 2022 as well as 2015. She would like to understand the reasonings behind not going to four-year terms. She wanted to see how the language changed from the proposed change in 2020 to the 2022 recommendation.

Mr. Charles had stated that he gets the most discussion regarding 4-year terms. He stated that he thinks there are two different discussions to have. Whether there should be term limits, changing from 2 year to 4-year terms, and the staggering of the terms.

Mr. Hooten explained that if the language was changed within this section, it would also have to be amended in the other parts of the charter where term limits are discussed under the Council section.

Mr. Reilly had explained that that if they made recommendations, they could have enactment dates so that the new changes would not affect the current sitting council members.

Ms. Binzel was expressing that if the elections are staggered correctly that each election the voters are voting on the people who would represent them by having the At-Large seats running opposite of the Ward seats.

Mr. Charles stated that he wants to keep discussing options of how to go about discussing, staggering, term length and if there is feedback from both the city council as well as the voters.

Mr. Reilly stated that municipal elections are an odd year within state law as well.

Ms. Binzel had shared her notes as an example of what she thought as an example of changing of terms and staggering.

The commission likes the idea of changing either term length or staggering the terms in that way the potential of turning over all seven council members every two years couldn't happen.

Mr. Reilly stated the Law Department will map out a few different options for terms / staggering etc.

Ms. Binzel stated that she would want to have a Town Hall regarding this as well.

Ms. Arch agreed and wanted to also consider inviting council members to one of the meetings as well as the town hall to get their feedback regarding term limits.

Mr. Charles reminded the commission that the council has turned down the changing of term length twice at this point so far.

Mr. Charles and Ms. Binzel were discussing the appeal of having wards staying at 2-year terms, and the at-large being 4 years.

Mr. Reilly stated then you could also stagger at-large so not all are up for re-election the same year.

Mr. Charles stated that it would be nice to show the voters different options, Ms. Arch would like to see visuals of the options as well rather than just the words.

Mr. Charles also wanted to discuss the term length for the finance director and law director. He wants to see possibly switching it to 3 consecutive terms rather than 2. Since the position is a learning curve etc.

Section 21.09 is the transparency in government- this section is relatively new to the charter. The section just explains that audio and video must be broadcasted for the public for any public meetings.

- **Article XXII: Budgeting Procedures**

Mr. Hooten states that this whole section was enacted in 2022. States that the mayor along with the Department of Finance will prepare and submit an operating budget to the council. The operating budget will provide a financial plan for all City funds and activities.

The mayor along with the Department of Finance, will also prepare a five-year capital improvement plan and be submitted to council.

Council must adopt the budget as well as the capital improvement plan on or before the last working day in December of every year.

Mr. Reilly stated this section is for the administration's way of forward thinking and planning ahead.

Before starting the last two sections, the commission had decided that they would only move on to Article

Amy Jones made a motion to pause the discussion on new business and move Articles 16 and 17 to the next meeting on April 29th. Rick Charles seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

- **Article XVI: Nominations and Elections**
- **Article XVII: Initiative, Referendum and Recall**

5. Public Comment

Christopher Enrick was sworn in by Amy Jones. He gave a public comment regarding Ranked Choice Voting. He was explaining to the commission different types of tallying the votes within Ranked Choice Voting.

Mr. Charles wanted to know if he knew of any places using the method (Condorct) that he prefers, Mr. Enrick did not know of any municipalities utilizing that currently.

Ms. Arch wanted to see visually how the voting would work. Mr. Enrick insinuated that Mr. Herman has one that he could show.

Mr. Herman was sworn in by Amy Jones. He let the commission know that he could confirm the amendments that the commission has submitted to council that they are there for council to review and give feedback on them at this point. He explained that council president Feldman would like to see the commission prioritize the amendments as well. He continued to the Ranked Choice Voting email that he sent to the secretary to forward to the members of the commission. He would like the commission to also do studying in regard to Ranked Choice Voting to see if they would consider recommending to council for the upcoming election to implement Ranked Choice Voting. He also liked the commission is wanting to discuss at a Town Hall meeting to let the citizens ask questions and learn more about what Ranked Choice Voting is.

Mr. Mariola had stated that he doesn't know what the secret is to get everyone educated and he fears that if even at a Town Hall he fears only 10-15 people would show up and he's not sure how to get more people educated and if they aren't, then he doesn't think it would pass.

Mr. Charles had asked Mr. Herman what type of feedback he has gotten from citizens when he has discussed RCV at events. Mr. Herman stated that most younger people are in the mindset of "why don't we do this already" and are enthusiastic about it. Where as older residents are more along the lines that it is interesting but they don't want to have to learn a whole new way to vote or totally change it.

Daniel Schneider was sworn in by Amy Jones. He stated that he is one of the younger people Mr. Herman was referring to in regards to feedback about RCV. He states that he sees this having an appeal and bringing out an enthusiasm where otherwise people have jaded feelings about the current political system. Mr. Schneider stated that a lot of people will either only vote if they feel like they are voting for a lesser of two evil situations, or did wouldn't even vote in a primary. But he states when he brings up RCV that people seem to be very enthusiastic about it. He felt that this encourages candidates standing up on their own merits rather than slinging mud at their single opponent. He feels that RCV would give voters more confidence in the election process.

Mr. Mariola wanted to know what sort of negatives or hurdles he has heard regarding RCV. Mr. Schnieder stated that it's a reluctance in regards to change or what the status quo has been for such a long time.

The commission thanked the residents for their comments and for coming to the meeting.

6. Other

Mr. Charles stated that he has personal relationships with a few members of Hudson City Council and they are also discussing Ranked Choice Voting, he states that they

would be willing to come to the commissions meeting to give their feedback and thoughts on RCV. He stated he could arrange for them to come if that is what the commission would want.

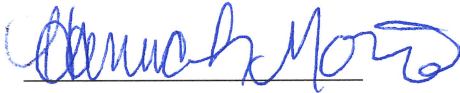
Mr. Charles had given the commission a recap of when he spoke at the council meeting regarding the Charter Review Commission process and reasonings behind wanting to submit recommendations to allow for collaboration between the commission and the council members.

The commission had decided to keep submitting their recommendations to the council and then when council is ready to go through them they will already have them. They wanted to keep encouraging the council to come to the meetings and keeping communication open between them.

7. Adjournment

Motion made by Janice Arch seconded by Nancy Binzel, to adjourn.

Motion carried unanimously.



Clerk



Chairman