

**TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT  
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING**

**April 13, 2022**

**\*To view the recording, please click the following link and observe the instructions when/if prompted:** [https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/H2T7JEkOrAhhqjJ2zxmjGHQaQVDOshLtoQFhqAJqfU-Jxz5pciYqIo\\_SU5UgCAOyl8-FIG7RCoZef-z31.3\\_m11wj2H6VC6mcC?continue-Mode=true&\\_xzm\\_rtaid=w6C94nVVQM-MQCfkfyo-aBw.1651165268222.bb7da5c48698070561a78f56b5af38cf&\\_xzm\\_rtaid=428](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/H2T7JEkOrAhhqjJ2zxmjGHQaQVDOshLtoQFhqAJqfU-Jxz5pciYqIo_SU5UgCAOyl8-FIG7RCoZef-z31.3_m11wj2H6VC6mcC?continue-Mode=true&_xzm_rtaid=w6C94nVVQM-MQCfkfyo-aBw.1651165268222.bb7da5c48698070561a78f56b5af38cf&_xzm_rtaid=428)

**\*\* If you are reviewing a print copy of these minutes and wish to view the meeting recording, please visit the Agenda Center at [www.hamden.com/agendacenter](http://www.hamden.com/agendacenter) and click the MEDIA icon found next to the agenda listed under this date OR download these minutes and click the link above.**

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A meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was held on Tuesday, 13 April 2022 via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

**1. Call to Order: 7:04 PM** by the Chair, Sarah Gallagher.

**2. Roll Call**

Present: Sarah Gallagher, Chair; Frank Dixon, Vice-Chair; Jackie Downing; Jay Kaye; Y’Isiah Lopes; Patricia C. Vener – Saavedra, Secretary.

**Also in attendance:** Steve Mednick, Counsel to Commission

**Approval of Minutes: March 29, 2022** - Motion made: Downing, Seconded: Kaye

**Agenda:**

**4. Public Testimony:** Written comments can be viewed here:

<https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/5726/04-13-2022>

- Anthony Dattilo - concerned about budget and charter revision - "there are a lot of concerned citizens out there" and mentions budget concerns as well. "Older people's input is important." Not happy about the way things are in Hamden. Especially people who can't meet their bills. Everybody needs a voice and charter as it is, does not do that. For 20 years we had a charter with a referendum and now we don't and it would be better to have that again after 52 years and 1.4 billion dollars of debt. "Hamden has been on a steady trip downward since 1970."
- Mednick - Charter does have petitions for overrule which is a referendum.
- Elaine Dove - (member of the Police Commission) - Compliments CRC on our foresight that Hamden is not the town of the 50s or 60s but the town of the future. The CRC is doing a great job thinking of the future of Hamden. Hopes this Charter stands for next 20 years. Don't look back.
- Mednick - Re: question emailed in about training for commissioners – Training will be once every two years—when appointment starts and when a new term starts. There is a list of possible trainings and the Police Commission needs to sit down with Chief to decide what is needed beyond co-department training.

- The charter is complex and CRC is doing a great job listening and working for the future.
- Gallagher - hopes the document is informed by the town's residents.
- Kaye - It would be helpful regarding referendum if we took a look at that so that the public knows it's there, how it works, if it works, where it is.
- Mednick - It's in Section 4-9 for Legislative ordinances and 10-5 for budget.

**Public Comments for CRC can be sent to: [CRC2022@hamden.com](mailto:CRC2022@hamden.com)**

## 5. Discussion of Background Item # 6 Police Commission

<https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/5684/Hamden-2022-Background-Document-6March-29-2022Chapter-VIIPolice-Commission-1>

- In 7.2.d.1, the CRC make it clear that the police commission has traffic authority as well as police in accordance with statutory requirement. Also says Commission MAY act as a civilian review board with authority to issue subpoenas. We can have a broader community wide representation on the Police Board with a 9 member commission.
- Paragraph 2 clarifies that police commissions are civilian and ensure a platform for residents. Continues to say PC does not provide day to day management of the Police Dept but rather oversight.
- Downing - mentions typo that needs to go. Does union/collective bargaining agreement supercede charter? Yes it does.
- Kaye - Is it possible the LC could create a Review Board? Yes.
- Mednick - This document can build up community relations, interactions, collaborations, public comment to meet mandates of police reform as it is growing nationally as well as locally.
- Downing - Would it make more sense to have the bit about "act as civilian review board" here as it makes more sense here than elsewhere.
- Mednick - Subsection C and D concepts of oversight and general management are mentioned again. Day to day management was referenced and deleted. We are all ok with that.
- Mednick - Subsection i deals with transparency - information sharing should be done as quickly as possible consisting as law and collective bargaining agreement.
- Vener-Saavedra - can collective agreement override state statute? No. But legislative bodies don't always get a chance to read these in a timely fashion so they don't always know what they need to know when they need it.
- Mednick - Subsection e - policies, rules and regs, f - Budget Review is new and requires commission be part of the process; same for g - collective bargaining. h - personnel added language that explains commission's personnel powers. Other new language offers exceptions (chief and other Mayoral appointments).
- Recruitment is new - but a lot of the language was not acceptable by chief so they changed it to "in accordance with nationally accepted best practices." Vener-Saavedra wants "employment history and psych testing" returned to recruitment list. Kaye - would to make training and recruitment be the same without the long list.
- Downing - leave the long list in the training section.
- Vener-Saavedra - argues against loose language. Downing asks to see list of groups who issue "best practices." Vener-Saavedra argues for prior employment and psych testing. Gallagher would like to focus on residency and diversity
- Mednick explains the g focus points came out through Presidential Report.
- Downing - we are talking recruitment - how would we do a psych eval for recruitment?
- Gallagher agrees that this is the section on recruitment and should be adjusted as such.

- Kaye - questions wording of "should" vs "shall." in Recruit and Training sections.
- Civilian appeal does not exist unless it goes to court. But they should have the same rights as a cop making an appeal.
- Downing - Qualifications has a typo. (LGBTQ needs a "+")
- Gallagher - given there is a list of sources of "best practices" is several sections recommends having one place can we just have other sections refer to this list.
- Vener-Saavedra - moves for the adoption of all parts of the document except 7-2d 2h Personnel section; Downing seconds. Passes.

## 6. Discussion and Action of COO as a discretionary appointment

<https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/5685/Hamden-2022-Background-Document-7April-12-2022Chapter-VCOO>

- Gallagher - Mednick made some changes to streamline it, make discretionary to Mayors.
- Mednick reviews the section.
- Kaye will not vote to change "shall" to "may"
- Downing - agrees with Kaye, by changing the "shall" to "may" you negate the whole position. Need to add not being an officer of a political party at the same time.
- Lopes - if we require the mayor to appoint a COO the mayor may be forced to appoint this person but the mayor still has the right to say "I want this person to only oversee recycling." People can always vote out the mayor at end of term.
- Dixon - Agrees with Downing and Kaye. Some of the original feedback we got included a lot of call for a COO who is a hire, not an elected position.
- Vener-Saavedra - won't support "may"
- Gallagher agrees with Lopes that a discretionary position creates the position but does not force a position that a mayor will not use, they won't. Believes the Finance Commission is a the best safe guard to ensure financial transparency and accountability as requested by the public. If we want to move towards Town Manager we should consult a study and have a longer term process to make that decision not in the short charter timeframe.
- Gallagher moves to accept the new version of COO, I second it and offer another word (should) instead of (shall).
- Kaye - this could have been done by any mayor at any time. "May" does not add any teeth to this section.
- Mednick does not see any way of fudging it without changing the language.
- Lopes - mentions "receive direction from the mayor."
- Kaye - given the motion on the floor - does not recommend the new language and will still vote "no"
- Downing - As well thinks its so vague - if mayor does not appoint COO is this defensible? Mednick - It's vague but makes an attempt to establish the position but a court would not force the Mayor to make the appointment. Would hope any Mayor would want this kind of professional help. We did it for the LC with the Financial Commission we can do no less for the Mayor's office.
- Vote - Delete "Conflict of Interest section" change SelectPerson to Mayor and leave "May"
- Downing - wants to know more about striking Conflict of Interest section
- Lopes moves to amend the motion with new language. Vote is 4 (aye) to 2 (nay). Passes
- Gallagher - wants to allow the COO to be able to serve on other community Boards as they may be on charitable or other boards as part of their volunteer or other work.
- Mednik asks you don't want mention of full time employment?

- Downing - Even a charitable entity can cause a conflict of interest. The COO must serve in the interest of the town at all times.
- Gallagher would like the COO to be held accountable to the conflict of interest clauses that are already included in the charter that they must comply with those.
- Downing - would be happy to look at compromise language between this and the earlier mandatory version.
- Vote - 2 Yes, 4 No; Fails
- We will return to this at a later date.

**Time adjourned:** 9:00 PM Motion: Downing, Second: Kaye

Next meeting: Saturday, April 30, 2022 10:30 AM

Meeting schedule can be viewed here:

<https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/5428/Hamden-Charter-Commission-Schedule-and-Subject-Matter>

Minutes submitted by Commission Secretary Patricia C Vener-Saavedra