

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

**April 24, 2021**

**\* To view the recording, please click the following link and observe the instructions when/if prompted:**

[https://zoom.us/rec/share/3DSb\\_UVaD6HviqjAFBNCAnlSPqYOaujttOuPqNO0a3SQZrrU2oLflKsDIJQ8flsZ.jG7-YKM8wocIC1o8](https://zoom.us/rec/share/3DSb_UVaD6HviqjAFBNCAnlSPqYOaujttOuPqNO0a3SQZrrU2oLflKsDIJQ8flsZ.jG7-YKM8wocIC1o8)

**\*\* If prompted for a password, enter: 7=ikCmG.**

**\*\*\* 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)**

**Then, review the recording by downloading the digital version of these minutes and following the instructions above.**

---

A meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was held on Saturday, April 24, 2021 via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. by the Chair, Mr. Dixon and roll call was taken.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Frank Dixon, Chair, Jackie Downing, Vice Chair, Lamond Battle, Secretary, Jeffrey Cohen, Frank LaDore, Nancy Olson, Sarah Gallagher, Jay Kaye, Todd Berton, Marnie Hebron; Myron Hul

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Thomas Figlar, Tiffany Artis-Wilson, Todd Moler, Joshua Sprague Oliveira

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Steve Mednick, Counsel

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES** – March 31, 2021. Moved by Mr. Kaye, seconded by Ms. Downing and approved unanimously.

Mr. Dixon directed to agenda Item # 3: Final Discussion and Action Item #7, Boards and Commissions (Chapter VII) and Findings of the sub-committee on Boards and Commissions asking - Mr. Mednick to begin. Mr. Mednick displayed Sub section 2 of the Action Item, read the headers: The Roles of Boards and Commissions - The Public Interest - Regulatory or Quasi-Judicial Functions, and briefly referenced the text. A question was asked about whether to delineate which commissions were in which function in this paragraph. It was decided to add that to the glossary of definitions. Next sub-section B – Administrative Requirements. Mr. Mednick briefly reviewed wording which had been added last meeting regarding frequency of meetings to verify. “Meetings may be cancelled with notice to the Public and disclosure of the reason for such cancellation: notwithstanding the foregoing, no Board or Commission shall cancel meetings for two consecutive month.” Next, Mr. Mednick verified the wording in the section stating that the Chief Operations Officer will appoint the Board and Commission Clerks, and that public records will be in compliance with requirements of Law, and the wording: “Access to the email shall be limited to the clerk or Chair of the Board or Commission both of whom shall be responsible for disseminating such information to the remaining members”. The commissioners then chose to insert the words” and/or” between the clerk and Chair.

Next Mr. Mednick reviewed changes in language discussed in the previous meeting for Section A, b 1. regarding the Mayor appointing to Boards and Commissions. “The Mayor’s power of appointment pertaining to all members of Boards and Commissions, including vacancies is set forth in this section of the Charter and is absolute unless otherwise set forth in the General Statutes or other provision of this Charter. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event the Mayor fails to announce and submit to the Legislative council a candidate for reappointment or replacement in the event of a vacancy on a said Board or Commission, within ninety (90) days following the term of the member or vacancy, whichever is applicable, during the first six months of a Mayor’s first term of office, or within sixty (60) days following the term of the member vacancy, whichever is applicable during the remainder of the term of office, the Legislative council shall, on its own motion, make said reappointment. Mr. Hul asked Mr. Mednick to define “day” in the glossary, because there was a situation regarding the definition of what a “day” is that went to court some years ago, and it should be made clear here.

There was a brief discussion of terms and vacancies, and the reporting of vacancies, letters of resignation. Letters of resignation should be sent to the Town Clerk and the Mayor. Mr. Mednick said an email is also acceptable and thinks if a person resigns in a meeting and it is in the meeting record, that can also suffice as a resignation. He will check to verify if this is the case. Mr. Kaye expressed concern that vacancies be reported and in a timely fashion. Mr. Mednick will add a provision that the Chair of a Board or Commission is responsible for reporting a vacancy to the Mayor and the Town Clerk immediately with the date being the post stamp. Wording was discussed. Mr. Hul asked Mr. Mednick what happens if the Council rejects an appointment? Mr. Mednick said the clock starts again the next day. Mr. Hul wished to add, if it is rejected the Mayor then has 30 days to make a recommendation, (shorten it from the initial 60 days).

Next, the group began to review the new language for term limits. There was robust discussion. Ms. Gallagher indicated that she was not in favor of the wording where it allows a person who is serving on a 6 year commission to serve two consecutive terms and possibly the five remaining in the first term, if they filled a vacancy. This could be a 17 year term and it does not seem like a term limit to her. Mr. Hul indicated that after considerable reflection, he is now at this point, unsure about term limits, because if we have a person dedicated to a/the Commission and its work, and in light of the sometimes delays in finding volunteers to fill commissions, we should not have to end the term of that dedicated person or ask them to leave because of term limits. Mr. Hul asked Mr. Mednick to obtain information from the Town Clerk’s office regarding a file containing letters of interest to be on a Board or Commission. He would like to know how large this file is. The discussion continued. Mr. Dixon expressed concern that Hamden has not historically had good enough outreach to even be aware of all those who might truly wish to serve. Ms. Downing said regarding the wording on term limits in the section, the wording can, should/ say “not to exceed 12” (years), in order to address the possible problem such as a 17 year term mentioned earlier. Ms. Downing expressed from her professional experience with numerous Boards and Commissions, that we need to make room for fresh ideas and new people. Having very long term members can lead to “we have always done it this way” thinking and this discourages new people. We want to bring new ideas to the table. There are many people who have passion, ideas, and eagerness to serve and they should be given the opportunity. Mr. Mednick asked if we need a vote. Mr. Hul said he stands by his expressed opinion of no term limits, but, there is no need for a vote because the group of commissioners here is in favor of term limit. Mr. Mednick verified that they wish to cap service at 12 years, no matter what length your term on a particular commission is, (2,3,5,6 years). A discussion followed on addressing how to manage the 12 year cap if someone is in the middle of a 5 term and what about staggered terms etc. Discussion continued. Ms. Downing proposed wording to the effect - if you have been on a commission for ten consecutive years, you are not eligible for another term. This would apply to all commission terms of any amount of years, (2,3,5,6). Ms. Gallagher questioned why we have different year amounts in terms? What is the need for it?

Robust discussion continued on term limits, appointment limits and grandfathering. Mr. Mednick does not recommend altering the number of term years in place. This would create a great deal of chaos. That is why he expresses limitation in number of years of service. He suggested that there be a maximum and the appointing authority cannot appoint someone if it exceeds the max. There was ongoing discussion of terms and their lengths and grandfathering and numerous opinions and suggestions were explored. Robust discussion continued. Mr. Mednick suggested, that, using 12 years as the max, (because we have six year terms), we make it so that the appointing authority cannot reappoint someone if it would exceed the max of 12 years – and simply have it apply to all Boards and Commissions no matter what the term length is. The group agreed to this. Mr. LaDore pointed out that this is a long, deep discussion on term limits etc. and currently there are 22 commissions with vacancies and there are 48 vacancies. We don't have enough people to serve. Mr. Dixon reiterated the previously discussed need for outreach to the community for commissioners. Ms. Downing offered some clarification on grandfathering and time allowed to serve going forward. Mr. Mednick said that with Ms. Downing's grandfather, this new limit would apply to members of Boards and Commissions at the effective time and date of the new Charter. They won't get extended terms, but will be subject to this going forward. Ms. Downing read some new wording aloud: "...would not be appointed to a new term if the appointment of that new term would go over twelve years and the time served in a partial term shall be counted toward limitation".

Next Mr. Mednick directed to and displayed on the screen section D, "Diversity of Representation":

"The Mayor and other appointing authorities are required to consider appointments to ensure that, to the fullest extent possible, the composition of Boards and Commissions reflect the diversity of residents and neighborhoods of the Town. Boards and Commissions should reflect the diversity including the race, color, ethnicity, religious creed, age, sex, national origin, ancestry, status as a veteran, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender,..." (sentence unfinished)

Mr. Mednick said rather than have the diversity section repeated throughout, he wrote this so there will be a general Diversity provision. He said we will make sure the language is consistent with the DEI section. (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion).

Next Mr. Mednick referenced Sub-Section I, regarding restrictions to commissions noting that he added Police and Finance to this section in addition to the previously listed Civil Service and Board of Ethics. "no person who has served in the three (3) previous years as a Public Official, other than a member of the Boards or Commissions set forth in this sub-section, or a political party officer, shall be appointed to membership on the" ... (above listed commissions).

Next, Mr. Mednick referenced the sections "Publications" and "Applicant Pool" directed to a "re-write" of the Outreach Section pertaining to who (Town Clerk) is responsible for publishing on the website the list of Boards and Commissions. He said the most important part of the re-write is the diversity section described above requiring the appointing authorities to ensure that the composition of Boards and Commissions reflects the diversity of residents and neighborhoods.

Mr. Mednick said the theory is the Town Clerk posts the commissions and openings list twice a year. The Mayor declares the openings and intention to appoint. In addition to twice a year posting, they should be engaging in regular outreach. Mr. Hul, added the words "including but not limited to the following types of organizations" where it is states organizations the Town should regularly reach out to. This was agreed to. Mr. Hul explained there needs to be a central repository, a Master list of people who are interested who must write a letter explaining interest along with a resume to be added to this list. Mr. Mednick that he left "political" off of the organization list for outreach. Should it be added? Mr. Hul said yes everybody should be on the list for outreach.

Mr. Mednick asked if wording “the Mayor shall provide public notice two weeks prior to filling the position is enough time. It was offered that it should not be a problem because folks will already have their names in. Ms. Gallagher asked if “resume” could be changed to “qualifications in writing”. This was agreed to. It is actually made known twice a year and they have the Master List on the Town website and in the newspaper.

Next, Mr. Mednick said referencing qualifications on any Board or Commission it will be referred back to Section 7,1-g. Mr. Mednick answered a question about qualifications from Ms. Olson yes, saying a member of a Board or Commission must be an elector of the Town.

Next, Mr. Hul brought up the hiring authority of the Library Board and moved that the hiring authority of the Library Board be transferred from the Library Board and be placed with the Administration and Human Resources for Library Director and Assistant Directors. There was a brief discussion in which Mr. Mednick pointed out that the Mayor makes these appointments. There was a brief discussion on that the language should be consistent with the Town Process and consistent with hiring for all Department Heads. Mr. Hul explained that HR is involved, certainly in receiving applicants for the Mayor to review. Mr. LaDore seconded Mr. Hul’s motion. This passed with 1 opposed (Kaye) and 3 abstentions (Gallagher) (Hebron) (Olson). Ms. Gallagher had asked if anyone had spoken with the Library board on this. It seemed the answer was no. Her abstention was for needing more information. Next, Ms. Downing referenced Library Board being made nine members and asked if it stated that it should be representative of nine districts. Mr. Mednick said no. Ms. Downing said it would be appropriate at this place to address that. Mr. Mednick noted that it will be addressed in the section about all Mayoral appointments which this falls into, now that Mr. Hul’s amendment passed. There was a brief discussion on the Library Board being mandated to have nine district member representation which all agree with. Mr. Mednick will develop language and also transition language for the terms currently being served.

Next, the group began review of the wording for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, DEI, committee. At the request of Commissioner Downing, Commissioner Kaye and Commissioner Gallagher gave a brief synopsis of their sub-committee meeting with the Human Rights and Relations Commission with a brief discussion. Mr. Kaye and Ms. Gallagher indicated that the Human rights and Relations Commission wished they could be made stronger, have more agency to accomplish things, have more “teeth”. Mr. Hul asked whether the Human Rights and Relations Commission acts as a CHRO. Mr. Mednick answered no. Mr. Kaye explained that he believed from their meeting with them, that the Commission would like this and some other more powers or abilities. Mr. Mednick explained they could mandate or establish by ordinance that this commission or another commission in town act as a CHRO. Mr. Cohen offered that upon hearing this Human Rights and Relations Commission discussion he wishes to make it known he believes the DEI Committee could be crafted better and have a little more “Teeth”, (a term which had been used earlier).

The Commission reviewed the language being worked on for the DEI Commission and reviewed possible alternate language. Some of this discussion was concerned with the language possibly being “exclusive, by naming protected classes or groups, rather than “inclusive”, which is actually the intent. Mr. Mednick pointed out that the current language being worked on delineates a number of protected classes, but there is a provision saying you can add other protected classes. After more discussion, the group preferred the following language: “particularly those who have belong to marginalized and/or underserved communities based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and other protected classes as determined by the Commission”. Mr. Mednick will provide the language from the beginning of the document in the Diversity section for them to compare to this so the document will have consistency.

Mr. Mednick said he was going to recommend/prepare language for review, that the DEI commission work with the Legislative Council and the Administration to establish a CHRO regimen for the Town that would be adopted by the Legislative Council. It could involve DEI and Human Rights and Relations.

There being no further business Ms. Downing requested a motion to adjourn. Moved by Mr. Kaye, seconded by Mr. Cohen and adjourned at approximately 11:42 A.M.

**This meeting had no clerk. Meeting starting/ending times and attendance were best guessed while viewing the video.**

**Discussion summary typed while viewing the video and submitted by Rose Lion, Secretary to the Legislative Council**

**Ms. Renta, Legislative Council Administrator/Clerk reviewed the minutes and added any additions and the video link before filing.**