

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

April 30, 2022

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A meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was held on Saturday, April 30, 2022 via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

1. Call to Order: 10:35 AM

2. Roll Call

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

Also in attendance: Steve Mednick, Counsel to Commission,

Approval of Minutes: 13 April, 2022 - Motion made: Downing, Seconded: Kaye Passed with one abstention

Agenda:

4. Public Testimony:

- Diane Hoffman - At last the meeting the CRC discussed whether the Chief Operating Officer should be discretionary, ("may"), or mandated, ("shall"). Ms. Hoffman prefers mandatory but if that isn't possible then at least include the position as a discretionary one. But include the position.

Public Comments for CRC can be sent to: CRC2022@hamden.com

5. Action on Police Commission - (Item 4)

- Mednick – trying to connect with human resources regarding the recruitment requirements related to the police commission that should be in the charter. He plans on giving us the Charter including part we have not worked on yet.
- Gallagher – we will hold off on this item until we have more information from human resources. CRC members all agree.

6. Chief Operating Officer (Item 5)

- Mednick - We passed Lopes amendment to not include other "may" or "shall" but rather another wording. (Subsection A)
- Gallagher explains that the Lopes amendment to Gallagher's motion passed however the motion itself failed.
- Downing moves to amend the COO to new wording that she and Kaye worked on; Kaye seconds
 - The new wording is shared on screen. It streamlines the wording, leaves conflict of interest statements, and the word "shall," (making this a mandatory position).
 - Santino – clarification between a COO and CoS.
 - Gallagher – CoS is a mayoral appointee as an aide to Mayor, COO is a professional administrator, also appointed by the Mayor but would have professional requirements attached to it.
 - Downing - the Mayor gets funding to staff their office however they like incl - CoS or admin asst, and whatever else they feel is necessary, but the COO is not required as part of that.
 - Mednick - If this is a discretionary the LC could make it mandatory. If it's mandatory LC may have to add a line budget
 - Lopes - if this does pass what are the hiring procedures. This could be overwhelming for the Personnel office to manage. How soon would this position need to be filled? How long do they have to find someone - it could be very difficult.
 - Mednick - like any other position, they all require significant background work. But a lot of towns have this position filled (often called Town Administrator). If we adopt mandatory basis we need to determine when it starts, so as not to overwhelm present or admin and staff (HR).
 - Santino - Re: interviewing process - if this is mandatory it will take more than a month to initiate. With the way public comment seems to indicate - it makes it more valuable to have someone with knowledge of town management. Is there a term limit?
 - Downing - it is a co-terminus with mayor, it is an appointment by the mayor.
 - Mednick offers an historical context - when we discussed this last year the debate centered on if this should be term based independent of mayor. The last CRC decided it should be co-terminus.
 - Vener-Saavedra - with the 4 yr mayoral term we passed previously, we can make this begin with next election.
 - Downing - public wants more professionalism in the government/mayor's office. We want to make sure mayor has all the professional expertise possible. "I do not think it will be as hard to fill this position as some may think it will be." A Mayor will be able to find someone to fill this position fairly easily.
 - Santino - language we are discussing, are we trying to make this discretionary?
 - Gallagher – The language as currently written would make it mandatory not discretionary.
 - Santino - Do we have to decide where the funding comes from?
 - Gallagher - If the position is mandatory, there will need to be a line for it in the budget.
 - Kaye - Can we see the language again so we can all review it again?
 - Lopes - Still having issues with "shall". The mayor should have flexibility on how to staff their office. If they are forced to have a position they do not want, it calls to question, will they use it properly? If the position is discretionary and they don't use the position and they screw up, the voters can vote them out.

- Kaye - I get it but if it's "may" it doesn't have to be in the charter, but the public wants it so it should be mandatory. Anything that is a betterment should be considered.
- Downing - the mayor has the right to hire anyone who is fit for the position. We need to demand that certain things be fulfilled more professionally. If "may" it could go for 10 years with nothing happening and then all over again CRC will have to consider "shall."
- Gallagher – Agrees with Lopes. Clarifies that the position has not been in the charter before and with either “shall” or "may" the position would be codified in the charter for the first time. The position was not available or articulated previously in the charter.
- Mednick - if it's mandatory you will have to set an effective date
- Gallagher moves to amend "shall" to "may" Dixon seconds.
- Lopes - understands the reasons for both shall and may
- Dixon - public asked for "shall" but can support the chair's amendment
- Santino - favors "shall" because that's what the public suggested. If it's "may" that's not what the public wants. Will vote for shall.
- Vener-Saavedra - understand both perspectives and while "may" is better than nothing "shall" is better.
- Vote on amendment from "shall" to "may": 3 (aye) to 4 (nay) - fails
- Vote for original language by Downing and Kaye - Passes 5 to 2.

6. Scheduling -

Need two more meetings and a public comment session to finalize the process.

Remaining items: police commission, board of education, budget, department heads and removal from boards and commissions.

Upcoming meeting dates:

May 15, 2022 9:30 AM

May 18, 2022 7:00 PM

May 24, 2022 7:00 PM Public Hearing

Time adjourned: 11:55 am Motion: Santino, Second: Lopes

View revised meeting schedule here:

<https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/5869/CRC2022-MEETING-SCHEDULE---REVISED>

Minutes submitted by Commission Secretary Patricia C Vener-Saavedra