

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

**May 18, 2022**

**\*To view the recording, please click the following link and observe the instructions when/if prompted:** [https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/QXgZ-spaGQ8b\\_bNwhNGab8AcEmsaaQSS\\_plWh7QXOF9W4FKEm0z-CJvPl\\_YS\\_JjTK2sjslWH2lMtPIpk.UjMoZoppBrfeYQ-q?continueMode=true](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/QXgZ-spaGQ8b_bNwhNGab8AcEmsaaQSS_plWh7QXOF9W4FKEm0z-CJvPl_YS_JjTK2sjslWH2lMtPIpk.UjMoZoppBrfeYQ-q?continueMode=true)

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A meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was held on Tuesday, 18 May 2022 via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

**1. Call to Order: 7:38 PM**

**2. Roll Call**

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

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

**3. Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of May 15<sup>th</sup> not ready for approval

**Agenda:**

**4. Public Testimony:**

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

- Sarah Clark - Grateful for Mednick's response to concerns and to the CRC as well. She appreciates our perseverance and dedication to town. Excited to see our changes. Will make Hamden more fiscally sound, more equitable and (see early recording)!  
Gallagher thanks Clark for being a public participant in the process.
- Kaye - to point of citizen involvement - that one letter with at least 50 sig, not easy to do and this is what the process is all about. Thanks all the resident participants.
- Mednick - technically I should not be giving politiacl thanks bt some of our work has gone into Hartford and Fairfiled charters.
- Diane Hoffman - Also wants to thank us for hard work. Our discussions have been amazing and thoughtful and llearned a lot from listening to us.

- Gallagher - thanks her for input into the process and longevity.
- Mednick - Diane was also here 11 years ago as well as this past 2 years of CRC.

## 5. Final Review and Review of Changes Made on May 15, 2022

- Mednick - We are trying to say to the public - "this is what Boards and Commissions are all about." You are working in the public interest, not in yours or your party's. Talks about regulatory aspect of commissions. So being broadly constitutional meant putting it in front. The one good thing out of pandemic is hybrid meetings.
  - Downing - is there any latitude within the way this is written for a Board or Commission to say "we don't really need a hybrid meeting"
  - Mednick - it says they should be accessible. Need an option for in-person meeting for the case that there is no electrical power. The general intent is to make completely open meetings. This has to be clear enough for Gruen to be able to defend not having a meeting in an accessible format in non-emergency circumstances is not acceptable. Explains how some meetings might be just remote in some small towns because of space (room) limitations.
  - Vener-Saavedra asks "what if a group says 'accessible means in-person is good enough.'"
  - Mednick explains that the Town Attny and Town Clerk will address that and this language gives them that "authority" to do so.
  - Kaye - in a public comment recently was a concern about "each board and C will have capacity." Should that be "each b and C shall be provided with the capacity to hold hybrid meetings."
  - Page 55 - subsection K 7-1.K addressing issue of Town Clerk providing materials including but not limited to (parliamentary procedure, Open Government Law (FOIA), etc) as discussed earlier.
  - Gallagher is there a category for Home Rule and Dylan's Rule (established Home Rule in 1867) what we have today. Adopted 98 years later. (Title 7)? There is a big study coming up in July.
  - Mednick - our Legislative Council needs to know how Title 7 works
- Mednick - Police Commission - chair met with Acting Chief - couple provisions we need to discuss (pg 70). Began to think that having ability to on their own motion establish policies. Com could study policy and come up with alternatives but initially comes from Chief. Who is exec dir. While commish is board of directors.
  - I ask for clarification and get it.
  - Downing - points out that a volunteer commission could make a lot of busy work for dept but needs to be structured way for commission to initiate a review - "lets think about this-," and review at the public hearing.
  - Vener-Saavedra agrees with Downing - Mednick offers "initiate of a review."
  - Gallagher wonders if this something that should appear nearer the top of the section.
  - Mednick policy of "initiating review" is ok but "initiating a policy" is outside their purview. offers, "Commission may initiate a review ... pertaining to oversight of department." Does this get to Jackie's concern?
  - Kaye - how about "request" instead of "initiate?"
  - Mednick reads the sentence. (Notes that the document is publicly available.)
  - Gallagher - does not think the commission should make policy completely on their own. Mednick notes that by section 2.a(c) They are involved in policy throughout the document. The issue was if they could go over the chief's head.

- Downing - likes the word "recommend." Mednick asks "so commission may recommend that chief review a topic?" Downing acknowledges with, "recommend review of"
- Vener-Saavedra asks about the what if, what if, then what, then what? If people go to commissioner and nothing gets done.
- Mednick describes the full route that can be done including going to Mayor, LC and court.
- Issue of personnel - we flipped paragraphs - no changes in appointments just the order is flipped. Recruitment had a few changes previously discussed. Other issues don't show (my issues) are still outstanding. Those should be left to human resource issue. HR director has not made a connection with Mednick
  - Downing - wants to change her language without changing concept just readability.
  - Kaye - reminds us that Downing's phrase includes "shall" rather than "should."
  - Downing - on CBS radio new law in NYC on police testing and training it will become a national best practice.
  - Mednick notes that in this document we don't discuss application process.
  - Mednick - you want the testing done before training!
  - Gallagher in reference to an appointment section - prefers the more general "best practices" rather than specifics that include "psych testing."
  - Mednick also added explicitly the concept of the application process as a section. Then we can include more in accordance with national best practices.
  - Vener-Saavedra - insists that there is a necessity for some specifics (especially psych evals).
  - Gallagher - is against psych testing prefers to reference industry standards. Concerned about specifics being too limiting.
  - Mednick agrees more with Gallagher than with me. But he is going to look for a "best practice" set of specifics to see what these entail. Will get to us tomorrow (Fri AM at latest).
  - Lopes - There are different kinds of psych tests and a company can say "we did a multiple choice" or they might use a sit down interview where someone (the interviewer) has a pre-existing bias."
  - Downing - I think the level of detail of calling out the type of testing is not a charter issue but rather the commission and department. Citing "National Standards" is sufficient.
- Mednick - Complaints section . In the last draft we had a section that made it look like there was a process of appeal to commission by both members of the dept and any civilian by misconduct. This does not exist in bargaining.
  - Mednick breaks the issue into parts and to things clearer. He has included a note to the desire to have a place for civilian appeal even though by bargaining agreement these are not allowed.
  - Downing - not sure the language clarifies this desire. Wonders if the order of wording should be changed to represent how something may be changed and the order in which this may happen. Mednick will do more re-writing. (This becomes a footnote that Vener-Saavedra agreed was acceptable. The footnote has since disappeared.)
  - Gallagher preferred the version with a notation rather than including the note as part of wording. Downing agrees and offers suggestions and Mednick will adapt.
- Mednick discusses more changes in Lopes area of Community and Human services. Human Services is umbrella and Community Services is a subsection or department.

- Gallagher - most towns have health and human services but we don't have a health department. Rather we have the Quinnipiac Valley Health District which includes more than just Hamden. Also has a readability issue.
- Vener-Saavedra - stick in a period after 8-2 to address clarity.
- Downing - these are union positions we need to be sure we are not violating any contract.
- Lopes - the names being changed here are not part of union agreement.
- Kaye - referring to section D, asks about "Human Service departments" phrasing.
- We all offer assistance in the composition. There is some disagreement.
- Downing believes that we might be defining the subjects too closely. Prefers broader categories.
- Lopes - should ID established departments so that they are chartered. We can say something to allow new social services department formations. We discuss wording of the section on Human Services Departments. There is some disagreement on wording. Cooperative composition got it done.
- We cover a few other minor changes we worked on earlier including the removal of some antiquate language.

#### **6. Vote to send Draft to Public Hearing on May 24**

- Kaye moves to put the charter forward for a public hearing. Downing seconds
- Roll call vote - Unanimous Passes
- Public Hearing is Tuesday 24 May 2022 at 6:00 PM.

**Time adjourned:** approximately 9:43 PM, Motion: Gallagher, Second: Downing

Next meeting: Tuesday 24 May 2022 6:00 PM (Public Hearing)

Minutes submitted by Commission Secretary Patricia C Vener-Saavedra