

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

May 26, 2022

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A meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was held on Thursday, 26 May 2022 via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

1. Call to Order: 6:04 PM

2. Roll Call

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

Also in attendance: Steve Mednick, Counsel to Commission

3. Approval of Minutes: 15th, 18th, and 24th May, 2022 - Approval held off due to connection issues

Agenda:

4. Public Testimony:

- Sarah Clark - (worries over comments not being seen as Hamden electronics are down)
 - 1) wants to emphasize open meetings, especially Jay Kaye's wording (she reads it off).She is especially concerned bec. Planning and Zoning has 2 members who have"erratic sound" because of poor connectivity so that commission reverted to in-person only. 2) statement she and spouse sent in about Boards and Commissions releasing publicly their reasoning for changes of meeting format.
- Diane Hoffman - re: Clark's suggestions - supports them.

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

• **Issues to be discussed at final meeting:**

- adding families to descriptions of human services - has been easily added to the document. Lopes is satisfied with it as are the rest of us.
- Civil service commission increase to 5 members -
 - Downing - did anyone ask the chair of the Civil service commission?
 - Mednick spoke with department and Admin. Keeping at 3 minimizes quorum issues.
 - Downing asks about alternate hierarchy.
 - Mednick says they should have the structure to be able to have minority representation.
 - Santino asks if putting in 2 alternates will have an adverse effect on other commissions and boards.
 - Mednick does not think it will be an issue. At least it hasn't before.
 - Santino - It will be a hot topic in other commissions.
 - Mednick - They only asked for 1 alternate but we gave them 2.
 - Downing - last CRC (2021) asked all the commissions for changes to their structures and we answered those requests.
 - Kaye - Some commissions may have changed but it's up to LC after tonight
 - Mednick describes process of the Charter updating - We send our final work to the Legislative Council (LC), they go thru all we've done and we have a series of workshops where we explain our reasoning. LC can then accept or reject in whole or in part. If they have questions or other thoughts about anything we've done, they will ask and offer suggestions. 11 years ago there were under 10 last year was 28. We then can vote for or against as we do not have a lot of leeway. Then it goes back to LC and they either accept or reject. Tonight is our last night of freely changing things.
 - Vote on adding 2 alternates to Civil Service Commission moved by Vener-Saavedra, seconded by Downing - Passes
 - footnote to police commission (background comments) -
 - Mednick spoke to HR director - he had thought that the issues we were discussing were dealt with at HR but in fact they are dealt with at Police department itself as these fall within standards of best practices after the list of potential appointees is generated. By certification rules, best practices, backgrounds and so forth are covered in a broad sense in those best practice standards.
 - Downing - asks if the footnoted version was included in one of the versions and then removed.
 - Mednick - yes.
 - Gallagher - the footnote was in the wrong section and it's up to the Police commission to choose and implement these best practices.
 - Vener-Saavedra - is the footnote superfluous?
 - Gallagher - having all of these in a broad statement does not need to be spelled out because it is up to the Commission to determine the best practices.
 - Kaye - we also have the public able to weigh in on the issues.
 - Vener-Saavedra - we do have the job of making it clear what the PC can do, we (meaning electors) just have to get the right people in there to do it.
 - Kaye agrees.
 - Mednick - it's a very important point. The record will show [the discussions] because it IS a best practice and we have to have a PC that operates in the public best interest.
 - Vener-Saavedra likes the new wording and can support this.
 - Consensus - approved.

- Open Meetings (use of technology mandatory at Board and Commission meetings)
 - Mednick explains the changes in wording and the many versions thereof.
 - Gallagher explains the tech problems town has so that this is an evolution not a revolution.
 - Mednick offers to get rid of superfluous references in comment area
 - Kaye - offers "in furtherance of this... town shall migrate..." Consider adding "and provision."
 - Mednick - the concept of the wording "town migrating" is a commitment of moving in this direction in order to achieve this goal. the use of the word "shall" makes it a constitutional requirement.
 - Kaye - the town should provide equipment - are we removing or keeping this?
 - Mednick it was there to respond to issues brought up by many people.
 - Kaye - today for sure would have been an "exigent" day. Just not sure the wording is clear.
 - Vener-Saavedra muses that it's the reticence of some people not wanting to be in the 21st century.
 - Downing "enable all boards and commissions" (Mednick puts it in). "Migrating" can be fast or slow. We need to emphasize speed.
 - Mednick - there can be multiple standards. A lot of towns were against the changes, especially small towns. According to the announcements published by Hamden town government, If someone wants to participate and does not have the ability they can contact the Town Hall and the town has to provide space, computers, tech, someone to open the place and so forth. Another town doesn't have the proper acoustics for a proper hybrid meeting. Some municipalities are using federal money - in fact we could use federal money for this.
 - Gallagher - it's going to take some time, resources, money, and more time. Open Meetings is more than tech. There's closed captioning, Facebook (which has closed captioning) is now used by LC for public meetings. Remote vs in-Person vs hybrid. Who are we leaving behind? How do we migrate mindfully?
 - Downing - is thinking of setting a time limit on it. Within 3 or 5 years.
 - Kaye - tech vs cost - can we get LC to play a role by Ordinance or a committee. Not to punt it to them. This leads to...
 - Mednick adds a provision but asks what's a realistic time frame. Uses "with deliberate speed." Then adds that LC and Mayor have to develop a plan within the next year to make sure it's achievable within x (undecided as yet) years.
 - Dixon and Kaye and Vener-Saavedra support this. Kaye says at least LC and Mayor will see it.
 - Mednick will work on this 1st thing Friday. Will run language before us all before he sends it out.
 - Downing moves to accept language as proposed plus the language that will include the provision transition plan as drafted by counsel including realistic budget analysis - Frank seconded
 - Kaye - might need to mention the next budget cycle.
 - Mednick will adapt the wording to cover budget planning needs.
 - Vote - Passes unanimously.
 - Final vote on revision - Motion made by Downing ; Vener-Saavedra seconds
 - Passes unanimously.

Mednick personal privilege - you are an outstanding group, not only the 4 from last year but the 3 newbies. - have improved on the product. Thanks the public who are steadfast and dedicated. Ingenuity integrity. The open Meeting provision is the most robust provision in the state. The work we've done in police areas and police and commissions.

We give accolades back.

Kaye - re workshops - do we go to those?

Mednick - Frank or Jackie went but anyone can go and help. We can a feel for LC concerns. By start of July they will have had the meetings. The more commissioners available the better. Gallagher - agrees

Downing - referring to public - hopes they will join the LC in meetings. The document becomes the public's document not the LC 's If public can be at the meetings and voice their support for their own document that shows the LC what the public wants and needs.

Gallagher moves to adjourn, Kaye seconds

Time adjourned: 7:37 PM

Next meeting: TBD?

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