

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

August 2, 2022

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A meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was held on Tuesday, 2 August 2022 via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

1. **Call to Order:** 4:37 PM

2. Roll Call

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

Also in attendance: Steve Mednick, Counsel to Commission, Karimah Mickens (Town Clerk), Melissa Kaplan (BoE), Kevin Shea (BoE), Gary Walsh (BoE), Dominique Baez (LC Prez)

Agenda: Continuation: Confer with the Legislative Council regarding Resolution of the Hamden Legislative Council Recommendations to the Charter Revision Commission, Pursuant to C.G.S. § 7-191 (b)

3. Public Testimony:

- None

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

4. Agenda - we go through LC reccies for discussion. Guests are stakeholders in items we are looking at today.

- Board of Ed - LC Rec#2 3-3.C(1)(b) We recommended change of Mayoral term to 4 years but now we need to review timing so as to synch better with BoE election cycles. Should Mayoral match with class of 6 or class of 3? BoE has a 4 year term but they are staggered into two groups.
 - Kaplan - considering election cycle in terms of voter turnout is imperative and prefers the class of 3 synch with Mayor and Town Clerk to get more people to polls for class of 6.

- Osmanu - was the LC who was concerned about the impact of the new 4 yr. Mayoral term. Prefers 2025 so as to encourage voters to vote for BoE as well as Mayor. (we wouldn't more BoE encourage people)
- Walsh - agrees with Osmanu - the more candidates running with Mayor bec it may be that few voters turn out for off term elections. Does voter turnout vary greatly in Hamden? Mednick - in Hartford everything is unsynched and voter turnout for just BoE is about 12%
- Walsh - thinks larger class should run with Mayor.
- Baez - Why do you feel this - is it because more people will be out anyway and so more voters will be there to be voted in. Walsh says yes.
- Baez - we should look at other towns because we have no local data for these two difference. yes, the Big Candidates are the big draws. Eg, Mayor vs LC. Are we looking to change the turnout of people coming out or are we just looking at "this is what it is, let's use it."
- Gallagher - yes that's what I'm asking myself too.
- Downing - Clarification Osmanu and Walsh was advocating class 6 with Mayor ad Kaplan is advocating the other class 3 with Mayor.
- Kaplan - if you are running only two people for BoE you don't have much of a voice and aren't heard and could this "stack the deck?"
- Vener- Saavedra also confused of need
- Walsh - many years there hasn't been much turnover but this year there were a lot. 2/3 GOP new and a majority of Dems are new. Is a large turnover better with a new mayor or not?
- Kaplan - Understands the question and doesn't know which is important. No matter who is Mayor it's really about individual candidates.
- Kaye - one other thing we discussed was with 6 - 3 split being the issue and could we do 5 - 4 but there's no time for that change but could that change be made outside the Charter. This would eliminate political concerns. Would this help level the playing field in the short term. Mednick tried to change this split because it's a strange thing and the history is unclear. The BoE themselves might be able to consider this transition from 6 - 3 to 5 - 4. It will take some thinking and planning.
- Shea - New BoE so has no opinion yet as he is too new.
- Kaplan - going back to Kaye's comment of 5 - 4 finds it intriguing. Would a transition be for the 6 members instead of a 4 year term it would be a 2 year term and that is worth exploration and consideration?
- (we will return to this item on Sat)
- Town Clerk items (LC Rec #8) 7-1.A (2) - Mednick goes over highlights from his meeting with Ms. Mickens and her notes to him.
 - Mickens - does not have control over some of these technology tasks - e.g., she doesn't assign emails (IT does this) and clerk work is covered by CBA. We don't have emails for commissioners that are town emails.
 - Mednick - TC working with <appropriate group>
 - Mickens - when we onboard someone this should trigger something with IT not with TC
 - Gallagher - it does seem that there should be a coordinating person, a point person, in the administration for requests and needs of commissioners and etc.

- Downing - concern with phrasing "commission with request" so if a commission doesn't want to use tech who makes sure they actually do use it. Someone needs to co-ordinate this.
- Mickens - Today the only tech that exists is Zoom because emails don't exist. Sometimes when she receives a request for something outside her ability/purview. Her role is to onboard clerks who she can then she can connect with IT. She can't be called at 7 PM to fix tech.
- Mednick - intent is to have emails for each board and commission (not members) under the control of a designee (who will read them I assume - PCVS). But someone has to assign these. Is this IT who should be responsible after consultation with
- As a group we worked on wording.
- Next issue (LC Rec #14) 7-1.K(1, 2) (various in Administration of Boards and Commissions)
 - vacancy provisions - this has a stipulated 24 hour turnaround. So mayor doesn't lose appointing authority, this section needs to consider that TC needs a longer period to amass necessary information. We can input that tolling of Mayor's appointment authority begins as soon as (after) TC provides notice. Mickens says she needs 3 to 5 days for this.
 - Notice of posting agendas and minutes - commission clerks do the posting but the physical reports get posted by TC office
 - re: pool of candidates - update website wrt status of Boards and Commissions may need time extension.
 - re: notice of expiration also has a timing issue and needs - 3 to 5 time days in advance of 24 hour tolling.
 - subparagraph 5 additional public outreach - TC and Mayor reach out to groups to encourage participation in commissions and boards.
 - Mickens - it is too specific. End after "shall engage in outreach efforts." Kaye notes that he did see postings for clerks and he spread the word.
 - Downing - how about in this section how about "shall engage in outreach efforts such as ...?"
 - Gallagher - "outreach efforts to ensure broadest knowledge and diversity of applicant pool" intent rather than lists of places.
- (LC Rec #6) 5-4.C "Emergency Expenditure" does it really need a definition. Is this in context of civil defense or merely exigency. - There a definition on the appropriation side which clearly defines wrt overtime so perhaps the expenditure side should also (not sure who said this).
 - Downing - section 5 does define what is an emergency in this context, (a declared public emergency). Regular overtime etc is not included. However overtime used for declared emergency (tornadoes etc) would be covered. If it can be tied to a declared emergency an expenditure counts and is covered. In C-2 instead of merely "emergency expenditures" it could be stated as "declared emergency expenditures"
 - Downing - "public emergency"
 - Kaye - "declared public emergency expenditures."
- (LC#7) 5-5 and 10-2 - eliminating all references to Chief Operating Officer - Vener-Saavedra speaks against eliminating it.

- Downing - will not vote to take it out because as far back as the "first CRC we listened to a lot of constituents who wanted a town manager." This COO addition addressed the need for higher professionalism. Hamden is, in fact, a small city even if we haven't changed our designation. COO is a partner to a mayor rather than getting rid of mayor and going to Town Manager. Mayor gets to fund however he/she wants to. This means it is possible for a different structuring of Mayor's office.
- Dixon - agrees on leaving it in.
- Baez - as we deliberated we (LC) saw it as something that would hold us to a formation of something not sustainable because it would be in Mayor's office and would need a support staff to go with the position and would be too expensive. We are uncertain how this would affect structure of government. What does this person do and what power does the mayor have over this person? It's too confusing and too big a bite.
- Mednick - if CRC recommends to keep it LC could still eliminate it and all references to it.
- Kaye - if we leave it in how do we recommend council make it a separate question for the ballot vote.
- Gallagher - sees where the CRC wants it to go back to the public. The majority of public comment was in support of this issue and there was no comment against it. This makes it hard for CRC to remove it. Maybe LC needs to talk to CRC and understand what the COO is a partner not a duplication. This COO was intended to keep the structure of Mayor leadership as opposed to something else. Kaye - is comfortable with 6 members here to move it forward along with the request to put it as a separate question. This will put it in the hands of the voters. Vote - Motion by Kaye, 2nd by Downing. I commented on staff restructuring or not, that is completely up to the Mayor. Roll Call vote was taken: Unanimous Aye - Passes.

Time adjourned: 6:08 PM.

Minutes submitted by Commission Secretary Patricia C Vener-Saavedra