



RAVENNA CITY COUNCIL

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RAVENNA CHARTER COMMISSION MINUTES

Ravenna City Council Chambers
Wednesday, March 16, 2022, at 6:00pm

The Charter Review Commission Meeting was held in person and was called to order at 6:01pm.

Roll Call

The following Commission Members were present: Chairperson Dirk Remley, Vice Chair Mark E. Smith, Antoinette Austin, Carmen Laudato, Denna Tannert, Gail Jones-Nemeth, Jonathan P. Jennings, Mike Bogo, Octavia Jones, Rory R. Becker, Sharon Spencer, Steven Farhat, Michael Smith II.

Also in attendance: Mayor Frank Seman; Clerk of Council, Chelsea Gregor; Kali Roberts, Betsy Brown, and Cliff Soudil

Approval of Minutes

Dirk made an amendment to the minutes which stated that on page two of the minutes Article 6 should be changed to Article 8.

- Motion to approve the March 2, 2022, meeting minutes by Mike Bogo, 2nd by Sharon Spencer, Michael Smith II- **All Ayes**, Carmen Laudato- **Abstain**

Approval of the Agenda

- Motion to approve the March 16, 2022, meeting minutes by Mark E. Smith, 2nd by Deena Tannert- **All Ayes**

Charter Reading

- Dirk Remley addressed his submission of a proposed schedule to go through the Charter each meeting so that the Commission had a review guideline to finish in a timely manner.
- The Commission addressed Article 4.1 and discussed the qualifications, education and civic experience regarding the position of Mayor. They discussed what qualifications could be placed, which included being civic minded and a voting history.
- Carmen Laudato addressed the current Mayoral salary and stated that it does not reflect the position and the concern that qualified people won't leave the private sector to serve as Mayor. She wanted to address increasing the salary and how the salary is decided.
- Sharon Spencer stated that the section has stayed the same for years and if it is too specific then there could be issues.
- The Commission discussed if a voter history could be implemented as a qualification for Mayor. They stated that a candidate needs to be at least 21 years old, but only 18 years old for the Senate.
- Antoinette Austin stated that even though the qualifications for Mayor are low, Ravenna is a small town, and the people will pick the right candidate.

- The Commission addressed Article 4.3 and discussed what would happen if a mayor elect failed to qualify for the office. Carmen Laudato suggested that the candidate could sign an affidavit or a perjury statement when they come into office and the Clerk of Council would house the document. The Commission questioned who would check to make sure it was true.
- The Commission addressed Article 4.4 and requested to clarify the wording with the Law Director. “(b) The Chief Executive shall be responsible for the preparation and submission to Council by November 1, commencing with the year 1994, for its approval, a preliminary annual budget which shall contain at least the following:”
- They would like to amend it to read “(b) The Chief Executive shall be responsible for the preparation and submission to Council by November 1, commencing with the 1994, and every 5th year after, for its approval, a preliminary annual budget for the following year which shall contain at least the following:”
- The Commission addressed Article 4.5 regarding Veto Power and asked the Mayor for his input. Mayor Seman stated that he has never had to veto anything as mayor and said that he prefers to work through issues for checks and balances.
- The Commission had no remarks for Articles 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 which concluded Article 4.
- The Commission addressed Article 6 and Dirk Remley referenced the 2022 Charter Review suggestions. Deena Tannert read Article 6.3 and the Commission discussed departments and how they are labeled in Article 6. It was suggested that Human Resources, IT, Fire and Police should be added. Dirk Remley referred to Article 12 and said that it is covered there.
- Carmen Laudato felt Council should have a say in board and commission appointments to help balance out the power. Mayor Seman stated that he finds it difficult to fill all the appointments and has no issue with where the power to appoint goes, adding that all the appointments are on a voluntary basis, except for Civil Service and Zoning which are paid.
- Gail Jones-Nemeth addressed possible residency requirements for administration to work for the City. Mayor Seman stated that the pool in the city is small for certain jobs, and it was stated that many employees, although not city residents, care deeply about the city.

Public Comment: Betsy Brown addressed the Charter Review Commission to suggest ranked-choice voting in Ravenna elections and stated that it increases public participation, it increases choices and it allows votes to be spread as a backup.

Mayor Seman shared that the City’s bond rating jumped up two places from an A-3 rating to an A-1, adding that the City has worked hard to become financially stable and stated that the City used to have a B rating which made it difficult to sell bonds.

New Agenda Items:

The Clerk will get clarification from the Law Director regarding Article 4.4 (b).

Discuss:

Article IV- Mayor

Article VI- Mayoral Appointment

Article X- The Council

Article XIII- Presiding Officers: President of Council; President Pro Tem

Article XVIII- Charter Review Commission

Interview: Law Director, Frank Cimino

- Motion to adjourn at 7:08pm by Mark E. Smith, 2nd by Michael Smith II- **All Ayes**