



RAVENNA CITY COUNCIL

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RAVENNA CHARTER COMMISSION MINUTES

Ravenna City Council Chambers
Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at 6:00pm

The Charter Review Commission Meeting was held in person and was called to order at 6:00pm.

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, Sharon Spencer, Michael Smith II.

Also in attendance: Clerk of Council, Chelsea Gregor; Finance Director, Brian Huff; Council person Paul Moskun

Absent: Steven Farhat and Rory R. Becker

Approval of Minutes

Gail stated that on page two of the minutes it should read “leans heavily” instead of “leads heavy.”

- Motion to approve the April 6, 2022, meeting minutes by Mark E. Smith, 2nd by Michael Smith II- **All Ayes**

Approval of the Agenda

Dirk stated that he would like to add two items to the agenda.

- Article IV- A revision from the Law Director
- Article VI- Qualifications for the Finance Director

- Motion to approve the April 20, 2022, meeting agenda by Gail Jones-Nemeth, 2nd by Sharon Spencer- **All Ayes**

Charter Reading

- Dirk stated that he gave the Commission language via email regarding setting salaries and read the verbiage which suggested a review no later than every 5 years. Deena stated that she will work on revising the language for the revision.
- The Commission discussed the rules of an employee who runs for office and what conflicts of interest could occur if the rule were changed to allow current employees to run for an elected position. It was stated that the topic is covered in other areas, such as the Ohio Revised Code, and that the topic is addressed sufficiently as it is currently stated in the Charter.
- The Commission addressed the guidelines of meetings in Section 10.5 and the possibility of adding the authority to hold Virtual Meetings. The Clerk stated that the technology currently exists to do so, but it was acknowledged that the public is unable to participate in virtual meetings. The public is able to give comments or statements to the Clerk to pass on to Council.

Dirk stated that he will draft language for the next meeting. Carmen expressed her concern that virtual meetings can disenfranchise poor people and Octavia stated that virtual meetings should be for emergency purposes only. Deena stated that virtual meetings could allow hybrid meetings to take place if a Council member is unable to attend physically. Jonathan stated that many people have phones with internet that would allow the public to view virtual meetings.

- The Commission discussed Article 13 regarding the position of an elected Council President and if it should become a non-elected position which could then rotate amongst Council members or be appointed due to seniority. Currently the Mayor and Council President are on the same election cycle. The discussion of a yearly rotation amongst Council members was discussed and Deena stated that politics and bias could come into play if Council decided amongst themselves. Former Council member Sharon Spencer was asked her opinion on the topic, and she stated that if anything happens to the Mayor then the Council President becomes the acting Mayor, which was a prominent point to the Commission as to keeping the Council President position elected. The discussion of Council president becoming a voting member was discussed, but it was decided to keep the non-voting status as is.
- The Commission addressed when to have reviews set to discuss Council salaries and it was then discussed and clarified who was being addressed in salary reviews, which was originally elected officials, but the conversation then led into city employees. The Finance Director stated that there is a yearly payroll ordinance done addressing employee payroll and that non-union employee raises usually mirror union employee raises.
- The Finance Director stated that a salary raise for Council members elected for the 2024 term will need to be implemented in 2022, 30 days prior to candidates picking up their petitions. It was discussed that raises should consider inflation. Council member Paul Moskun stated that money should not be a factor when running, and that it is to serve the people.
- The Commission discussed the annual payroll ordinance and how it can be a fixed practice. They agreed to amend Section 10.11 as highlighted below:

“SECTION X-11. Fixing of Salaries and Bonds. **Annually**, Council shall fix a salary or compensation for all officers, members of boards and commissions and all other employees of the city and may require any officer or employee to give bond for the faithful performance of his or her duties in such amount as it may determine and with such surety as the Director of Finance may approve and may, from time to time, require additional bond or surety on an officer or employee and shall provide the premium for any such bond be paid by the City.

The salary schedule of all Municipal elected officials shall be **reviewed and** established and posted by Council at least thirty (30) days prior to the filing deadline of nominating petitions of the primary election for the terms beginning in the next succeeding year and shall not thereafter be changed in any respect during such term or any part thereof. (Amended November 7, 1978; November 2, 1993; November 3, 1998; November 6, 2012)”

Interview: Finance Director, Brian Huff

- The Finance Director was asked about what the qualifications for his position could be now that the position will be appointed once his elected term ends. He thought that it could mirror what the current qualifications are but stated a CPA could be required but it is not necessary. He stated that certain degrees or qualifications could be required but other education and experiences could be deemed appropriate as well. It was explained that the qualifications of the appointed Finance Director position would be fixed by Council with an ordinance. The Finance Director stated that he and the Mayor are bonded and that there is a blanket bond for employees. Gail asked the Finance Director if he feels the Charter restricts his job in any way and he said no. The Commission decided not to further address or change the Finance Director position.

Public Comment: None

New Agenda Items:

Discuss:

Article VII- Police and Fire Forces
Article XI- Ordinances and Resolutions
Article XVI- Amendments to Charter
Article XVIII- Charter Review Commission

Old Business:

Revision of the Law Directors language suggestion.

Virtual meeting language in Section 10.5

- Motion to adjourn at 7:13pm by Deena Tannert, 2nd by Mark E. Smith- **All Eyes**