



RAVENNA CITY COUNCIL

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RAVENNA CHARTER COMMISSION MINUTES

Ravenna City Council Chambers
Wednesday, April 6, 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, Michael Smith II.

Also in attendance: Councilperson Paul Moskun, Councilperson Tim Calfee; Clerk of Council, Chelsea Gregor and Cliff Soudil

Absent: Steven Farhat

Approval of Minutes

Rory stated that the minutes did not reflect that she was absent at the previous meeting.

- Motion to approve the March 16, 2022, meeting minutes by Sharon Spencer, 2nd by Antoinette Austin- **All Ayes**

Approval of the Agenda

- Motion to approve the April 6, 2022, meeting minutes by Gail Jones-Nemeth, 2nd by Carmen Laudato- **All Ayes**

Charter Reading

- Dirk stated that the Law Director had given his recommendations for the clarification of Article 4.4 “(b) The chief executive shall be responsible for the preparation and submission to Council by November 1, 1994 and every 5 years thereafter for Council’s approval, a preliminary annual budget for the subsequent year which shall contain at least the following:” The Commission discussed the language of the section and recommended that the year “1994” and “every 5 years” be removed.
- Dirk addressed a recommendation from the previous meeting and Carmen stated that she recommended that some Board and Commission appointments be spread out to Council instead of the Mayor being responsible for them all.
- Councilperson Calfee stated that he did not think that change was necessary and stated that the Mayor has a difficult time filling all the vacancies, adding that he does not think it is advisable that Council takes over the responsibility.

- Carmen stated that Streetsboro Council leads heavy on Ward representatives to help vary sections of the city for representation and expressed her concern of possible favoritism with the responsibility.
- Councilperson Calfee did not feel Ward representation was a concern, and that appointed positions serve the entire city.
- The Commission discussed absenteeism in the role of Councilperson in Article 10.3 where it stated that after 3 consecutive missed meetings Council could remove the Councilperson by a vote of 5.
- Councilperson Moskun stated that he has not experienced blatant absences within his time on Council and does not feel it is a problem. It was stated that a former Councilperson was the reason behind the suggestion to look at the language of repeated absences.
- The Commission discussed concerns with justifying absences or a reduction in pay, but it was stated that the salary is yearly and not per meeting. Councilpersons Calfee and Moskun did not see a need to change the language or address the section.
- Carmen explained that she had done research into the Mayor's salary and found that the last ordinance passed to increase the salary was in 2006 for the years 2008-2011. It was stated that the Service Director's salary had been raised but the Law Director's salary has not.
- The Commission discussed a recommendation to place a review in the Charter so that salaries get the necessary discussions and that Council salaries stay increased for PERS benefits.
- Mark stated that officials across Portage County are paid inadequately, and Deena stated that the Commissioners just implemented a step increase for wages.
- Dirk stated that the recommendation could include all employees in the salary review and would consider economic considerations.
- Carmen stated that she did a public records request and found that there was a significant 3-million-dollar income tax increase received by the City starting in 2015.
- Jonathan stated that in Article 10.11 it states that a change in salary should be in place 30 days prior to an election and Carmen suggested a mandated salary review. Deena stated that Council benefits were taken away and salary increases had been frozen several years ago.
- The Commission discussed the differences between employee and elected official salary reviews and that it can be uncomfortable for an elected official to mention their own salary increase. Including language that encourages a salary review, without it being too specific was recommended. Sharon stated that the Mayor did not receive a pay increase during her time on Council and discussion of the topic was limited.
- Deena suggested language to have in place so that Council has to discuss reviewing elected official salaries and Carmen stated that a Charter amendment would ensure those conversations are had.
- Dirk explained to the Commission that in response to a previous public comment regarding Ranked-choice voting, that the State of Ohio currently does not allow it, therefore it cannot be utilized in Ravenna.

Public Comment:

Cliff Soudil stated that the approximate 3-million-dollar income tax increase that Carmen had mentioned earlier is due to implemented Road and Safety Levy's and does not reflect additional funds

to be utilized as needed. Mr. Soudil also stated his belief that Council salaries should stay below PERS qualifications so that PERS benefits are not a driving force for someone to run for Council.

Councilperson Calfee stated that in Article 10.9 Council can change their salaries by ordinance at any time. Dirk suggested that there be a review time for salaries.

New Agenda Items:

Discuss:

Article X- The Council

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

Article XVIII- Charter Review Commission

Interview: Finance Director, Brian Huff

- Motion to adjourn at 7:04pm by Dirk Remley, 2nd by Mark E. Smith - **All Ayes**