



# RAVENNA CITY COUNCIL

Telephone: 330-297-2155 • Fax: 330-297-2164  
210 Park Way, Ravenna, OH 44266

## RAVENNA CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION MINUTES

Ravenna City Council Chambers  
Wednesday, May 18, 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, Gail Jones-Nemeth, Jonathan P. Jennings, Mike Bogo, Octavia Jones, Rory R. Becker, Sharon Spencer, Steven Farhat, Michael Smith II

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

Absent: Denna Tannert

### Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the May 4, 2022, meeting minutes by Mark E. Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gail Jones-Nemeth- **All Ayes**

### Approval of the Agenda

- Motion to approve the May 18, 2022, meeting minutes by Michael Smith II, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mark E. Smith - **All Ayes**

### Charter Reading

- Dirk stated that the Charter Review Commission is finishing up the outlined agenda to review the City Charter.
- The Commission discussed Article XIX- Personal interest. Dirk stated that the topic is covered under Ohio Ethics Law. Jonathan noted that if there were any changes to the stated law, then it could be out of line in the Charter if the Charter were to be amended. Gail said that the topic is addressed in Section 4.8- Conflicts of Interest. Steven stated that he sees no problem with the item staying in the Charter as is and sees no reason to remove it.
- Dirk stated that since the Commission had no objection the article will stay as is.
- The Commission discussed the topic of nepotism and stated that the only place in the Charter that the topic is relevant is under the Charter Review Commission. Mike stated that ordinances can be placed regarding the subject and Dirk stated that Ohio Ethics covers language.
- Councilperson Paul Moskun stated that the City had an issue with nepotism approximately 20 years ago and the person hired under their direct family member was moved to a different department which resolved the issue.
- The Commission expressed concern over conflicts of interest among boards and commissions, and it was stated that a member could recuse themselves from a vote if necessary. Carmen

stated her concern that a board or commission could be created in an advantageous or disadvantageous way.

- Mike stated that the Ohio Ethics Commission is limited to employment and does not apply to unpaid board and commissions.
- There was discussion if language should be added regarding nepotism on other boards and commissions. Jonathan stated that there is a checks and balance system within the City where the Mayor appoints and the Council approves a board or commission member.
- The Commission agreed to leave the language as is.
  
- Dirk addressed the topic of gender-neutral language within the Charter and addressed the section regarding language that currently exists within the Charter. “Section XXII-2. Number and Gender. Whenever the contents require, the use of words herein in the singular shall be construed to include the plural, and words in the plural, the singular; and words, whether in the masculine, feminine or neuter gender, shall be construed to include all of said genders. (Amended November 3, 1987)”
- It was decided that the language was sufficient.
  
- Dirk stated that the Commission has finished the selected Charter Review sections and addressed the selected Charter Review revisions to discuss language.
  
- The first revision was: “Section 4.4 (b) The chief executive shall be responsible for the preparation and submission to Council by November 1 of each year for Council's approval, a preliminary annual budget for the subsequent year which shall contain at least the following:”
  - Motion to approve Section 4.4 (b) as revised by Mark E. Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gail Jones-Nemeth- **All Ayes**
  
- The second revision was: “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)”
  - Motion to approve Section X-11 as revised by Mark E. Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Michael Smith II - **All Ayes**
  
- The Commission discussed the addition of virtual meetings to Section X-5: Meetings Generally to add a new paragraph.
- “At the Council’s discretion, meetings may be held virtually using a videoconferencing system for emergency purposes. Within such meetings, members of Council in attendance will have the same voting rights and responsibilities as those for meetings held in-person.

Such meetings will be made available to the public for viewing on a virtual network, per laws regarding open meetings.”

- Gail stated that she does not like the emergency purposes language, and Carmen stated that she does not want to remove the emergency language. Steven proposed clarifying what an emergency would mean.
- The Commission discussed the availability of access to online meetings and the availability of participation to online meetings, with the additional possibility of adding the allowance of hybrid meetings.
- The meeting reached its scheduled duration and it was stated that the Commission should think about the language for the proposed Charter change regarding virtual meetings for the next meeting.

**Public Comment:**

- Cliff Soudil expressed his concern regarding virtual meetings and the allowance to do so due to state regulations. It was stated that a Charter amendment could allow the City to have legal virtual meetings regardless of what the state currently allows.

**New Agenda Items:**

- Refine Section 10.5 to add virtual meetings and define emergency
- Language of Charter revisions
  
- Motion to adjourn at 7:08pm by Mark E. Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Michael Smith II- **All Ayes**