



# RAVENNA CITY COUNCIL

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## RAVENNA CHARTER COMMISSION MINUTES

Ravenna City Council Chambers  
Wednesday, May 4, 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, Denna Tannert, Gail Jones-Nemeth, Jonathan P. Jennings, Octavia Jones, Rory R. Becker, Sharon Spencer, Steven Farhat, Michael Smith II.

Also in attendance: Interim Fire Chief Chapple, Fire Lieutenant Brad Ryczek; Clerk of Council, Chelsea Gregor; and Cliff Soudil

Absent: Carmen Laudato and Mike Bogo

### Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the April 20, 2022, meeting minutes by Gail Jones-Nemeth, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sharon Spencer- **All Ayes**,

### Approval of the Agenda

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

### Interview: Interim Fire Chief Chapple

- Gail addressed Interim Chief Chapple and asked him if he felt there is anything that would be helpful to add into the Charter since it currently has vague language. He did not have any changes but would consider the question.
- The Commission discussed the vacant Fire Chief position, and it was stated that he has been the Interim Fire Chief for approximately one year. The vacancy of the position is addressed in the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). Deena asked who fills the vacancy and the Clerk stated that Human Resources plays a large part in employee recruitment.
- Deena read Section 6.5 and Interim Chief Chapple explained the service years needed to become a lieutenant and Chief but stated that there is no time accrual needed to go from lieutenant to captain position.
- Interim Chief Chapple stated that a Civil Service exam is required to become a Ravenna firefighter, and to advance to each officer position. He stated that there was nothing in the Charter about Civil Service testing.
- It was stated that the Fire Chief is not in collective bargaining agreements and that it could be specified that the position requires a salary review.

## Charter Reading

- The Commission discussed Section 11.4 regarding the use of the emergency clause with ordinances. There was concern for its consistent use to when passing ordinances. The Clerk explained the three differences for passing ordinances. Council could choose to have an ordinance read three times over three months, it could be passed after one reading without an emergency clause which would allow the ordinance to go into effect 30 days later, or an emergency clause would allow the ordinance to go into effect immediately. The Clerk then explained that an emergency clause allows for easier administration but added that the Law Director oversees the legislation to approve the language for the emergency clause. There are exceptions and certain items do go through three readings, such as zoning items, but Council can always move on to a second reading if an ordinance is written with emergency language.
- Jonathan was asked his opinion on the matter, and he stated that it is a common practice that allows the item to be in effect immediately upon passing. Dirk asked if it could be abused, and Jonathan stated that ordinances are not in stone and could be changed.
- The Commission discussed Section 11.6 regarding publication access for the general public and posting information on social media. Currently announcements are made in the Record Courier and on the Council calendar on the City's website. There was conversation regarding the verbiage used in the Charter, but it was eventually stated that publication could mean various types of media outlets. The Charter verbiage was deemed sufficient but the way in which the City relays information to the public should be looked into.
- The Commission discussed Section 18.1 regarding changing the number of members necessary and the frequency of meetings. Gail stated that the number should be an odd number and the consensus was that it should be changed to 9 members and 2 alternates. The Commission decided to keep the frequency to every 5 years.
- The Commission discussed Section 18.2 and whether Dirks suggestion regarding a Chairperson and their roles should be placed in. "The members of the Commission shall elect a Chairperson at the Commission's first meeting. The roles of the Commission Chairperson are to set agenda items with input from other members and to conduct meetings. The Chairperson has the same rights to participate and vote during meetings as other members of the Commission. With the Commission's approval, the Chairperson may act as the Commission's representative when presenting information about the Commission's activity or its recommendations to the Council."
- The Commission agreed that the statement should belong in a separate section for Chairperson.
- The Commission discussed Section 18.3, which was repealed, and it was stated that the item could be found on the Board of Elections website.
- **Old Business:** The Commission discussed the Law Directors revision suggestion for 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:
  - The Commission accepted the recommendation.
- The Commission discussed Section 10.5 regarding the addition of allowing virtual meetings. Dirk provided language to consider. "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.”

- Dirk mentioned the recommendation of changing to gender neutral language throughout the Charter for the Commissions consideration.
- Dirk mentioned the topic of nepotism and stated that it is only within the Charter Review Commission and asked the Commission to consider if it should be removed or stay.

**Public Comment:**

- Cliff Soudil addressed the Commission to comment on virtual meetings.

**New Agenda Items:**

Discuss:

Article XIX- Personal Interest

Nepotism

Language

- Motion to adjourn at 7:05pm by Deena Tannert, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mark E. Smith - **All Ayes**