

SUMMARY MINUTES

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION – June 25, 2015

Chairperson Cleora Magee called this regular meeting of the Flint Charter Review Commission to order at 6:33 p.m.

Present: John Cherry, Cleora Magee, Victoria McKenzie, Charles Metcalf, Heidi Phaneuf, Marsha Wesley and Barry Williams. James Richardson arrived at 5:37 p.m.; Brian Larkin arrived at 6:56 p.m.

Also in attendance: Deputy City Attorney David Roth and Thomas Donnellan, the attorney who guided the Charter Review Commission in 1972.

Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Phaneuf led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Commissioners were given minutes from the June 18, 2015, meeting.

Roll Call

The recording secretary took roll call.

Ms. Magee noted two changes to the agenda: 1. Questions for Attorney Roth would be added after public speaking, and the letter received from the State of Michigan in response to a letter submitted by Ms. Magee on behalf of the Charter Commission would be discussed under Old Business.

Ms. Phaneuf, with support from Ms. McKenzie, made a motion to accept the agenda with the changes proposed by Ms. Magee. The motion passed 7-0 by the following vote:

John Cherry – Yes
Brian Larkin – Absent
Cleora Magee – Yes
Victoria McKenzie – Yes
Charles Metcalf – Yes
Heidi Phaneuf – Yes
James Richardson – Absent
Marsha Wesley – Yes
Barry Williams – Yes

Public Comment on Agenda

None

QUESTIONS FOR ATTORNEY ROTH

Mr. Williams asked about prayer before Charter Review Commission meetings.

Mr. Roth answered that he neglected to bring the city's written opinion on the subject. He said that in general, prayer can be included in meetings but there are restrictions. He said a member of the general public can deliver a prayer but that it cannot be instigated by a member of the Charter Review Commission. He added that Commissioners can send out invitations to local pastors to give invocations at meetings, but that the invitations must be broad and include opportunities for all religious beliefs.

REPORTS

1. Finance Committee

Ms. Wesley, the committee's chairperson, presented the minutes from the June 22, 2015, meeting. She said the committee discussed allocation of the FY2015 and FY2016 budgets, procedures for budget variances and procedures for expenditures.

Mr. Cherry mentioned that the City Council decides if Commissioners get paid and how much the compensation would be. Also discussed was transferring FY2015 funds to the FY2016 budget so that several purchases can be made: procuring copies of the current City Charter and the printing of business cards for Commissioners. Ms. Magee stated that she is working with City Clerk Inez Brown on many of these issues, including getting a Purchase Order No. from the Clerk's office.

Ms. Wesley discussed a memorandum sent to City Administrator Natasha Henderson that asked about allocating expenditures approved for FY2015 to be used to schedule an educational session for the Commission, for printing of the current Charter and for compensation for the CRC, which is stipulated in the Home Rule City Act, Section 117.19. Ms. Wesley enclosed a copy of the CRC's projected budget, with a note that the total exceeds the FY2016 appropriated funds by \$103,300.00. The memorandum requests an amendment of the current budget.

Commission Motion

Mr. Williams, supported by Mr. Richardson, made a motion to accept the Finance Committee Report. The motion passed 8-0 by the following vote:

Brian Larkin – Absent
Cleora Magee – Yes
Victoria McKenzie – Yes
Charles Metcalf – Yes
Heidi Phaneuf – Yes
James Richardson – Yes
Marsha Wesley – Yes
Barry Williams – Yes
John Cherry – Yes

2. Rules Committee

Ms. McKenzie, the committee's chairperson, said that the information discussed in her committee is not yet ready for presentation to the Commission. She said she hopes to have it finalized after the committee's next meeting (June 30, 2015).

Mr. Cherry, supported by Ms. Wesley, made a motion to accept the Rules Committee report. The motion passed 8-0 by the following vote:

Cleora Magee – Yes
Victoria McKenzie – Yes
Charles Metcalf – Yes
Heidi Phaneuf – Yes
James Richardson – Yes
Marsha Wesley – Yes

Barry Williams – Yes

John Cherry – Yes

Brian Larkin – Absent

3. Outreach Committee

Ms. Phaneuf, the committee's chairperson, read from the minutes of the June 24, 2015, Public Outreach Committee meeting. She identified and explained 11 tools for Public Outreach as follows:

TOOLS

1. Website – Ms. Phaneuf talked to Jason Lorenz, City of Flint Public Information Officer, who said Commissioners should work with the City Clerk's office to get materials on the website. She suggested that the CRC develop its own web page and link it to the City of Flint's.
2. Web domain name – Ms. Phaneuf said her committee is recommending that the Charter Review Commission purchase the web domain name www.flintcitycharter.com from GoDaddy.com for a price of \$7.99 per year, and website builder and hosting for \$10.99 a month.
3. Facebook page – Ms. Phaneuf offered to start a Facebook page and asked for volunteers – Mr. Cherry and Mr. Metcalf said they would help.
4. Email services – Ms. Phaneuf noted that as customers of GoDaddy.com, the Commission can get email addresses for each member, plus a general information email, for \$5.99 per month. She said the total cost for GoDaddy.com would be \$201 per year.
5. Business cards – The Clerk's office provided a template for business cards. Ms. Phaneuf said that the committee decided that they would like individual pictures and the city seal on the cards. Ms. Magee offered to check with the Mott Community College print shop for a price; Ms. Phaneuf offered to work with the template.
6. Booklet of the 1974 Charter – Ms. Magee is working with MCC on getting 1,000 copies of the 1974 City Charter printed.
7. Video recordings of Charter Review Commission meetings – Ms. Phaneuf said she talked to Mr. Lorenz and he provided the name of the person, Mathew Morgan, who videotapes City Council meetings. She said the committee has decided to ask for quotes from three vendors, including Morgan and Paul Herring of Spectacle Productions. She said the committee would like for the meetings to be aired on Channel 17 (Public Access) in good time slots and on You Tube.
8. Advisory Committee – The Public Outreach Committee is recommending the creation of a Charter Review Advisory Committee to help with the Charter review process and share the information with others in the community, said Ms. Phaneuf. She added that the role of the committee would include attending monthly Advisory Committee meetings, helping with public outreach, providing feedback on the Charter, and providing additional support at community meetings. The Advisory Committee would be an extension of the Public Outreach Committee, she said, and would be subject to the Open Meetings Act. She added that her committee believes that membership in the Advisory Committee should be open to all who are interested in becoming involved, and that there should be an unlimited number of spots on the committee. She also said that the Advisory Committee would be informational only, and that members would not speak for the Charter Review Commission.
9. Mailbox – Ms. Phaneuf advised the group that they have a mailbox in the City Clerk's Office, Room 201C.
10. Letterhead – The Clerk's office provided samples of letterhead that were discussed by the committee. Ms. Phaneuf said that the group recommended adding the City of Flint Seal and a column with Commissioners' names. Ms. Phaneuf is working on the template and Ms. Magee is working on printing, she said.
11. Clerical Support – Since staffing for the meetings is limited utilizing the Clerk's office, Ms. Phaneuf said that her committee recommends hiring a clerk. She said Ms. Magee will talk to Megan Hunter, City of Flint Director of Planning & Development, about the AmeriCorps program.

Mr. Richardson pointed out that the expenses outlined by Ms. Phaneuf will need to be accounted for in the budget. Ms. Phaneuf replied that the committee hasn't broken down the expenses yet, but that she expects them to be minimal.

Mr. Cherry talked about a new App called Periscope that allows for live streaming of events. Ms. Phaneuf said she will check it out.

Next, Ms. Phaneuf outlined the strategy that her committee is working on for Public Outreach.

STRATEGY

1. Exploratory Meeting/Meet-and-Greet with Department Heads – The committee proposes inviting City of Flint Department Heads to a meeting to provide information about their various departments, and their thoughts on the current City Charter in relation to their department. After discussion, it was agreed that the Mayor and City Council members should be invited as well.
2. Invite Members of Other Charter Commissions to Speak – This would include members of the Pontiac Charter Review Commission and members of the 1974 City of Flint Charter Commission, said Phaneuf.
3. Kick-Off Meeting – The Public Outreach Committee envisions a large community meeting to ask residents to describe the qualities of the government they would like to have in the future.
4. Establishing a Timeline/Calendar – The committee proposed the following timeline:
 - June-July 2015 – Organize, hire staff, develop budget, seek funds, develop review process and outreach methods**
 - July-August 2015 – Gather data and prepare for kick-off meeting**
 - September 2015 – Kick-off meeting**
 - October 2015 – Section 1 of the Charter**
 - November 2015 – Section 2 of the Charter**
 - December 2015/January 2016 – Section 3 of the Charter**
 - February/March 2016 – Section 4 of the Charter**
 - April 2016 – Sections 5 and 6 of the Charter**
 - May 2016 – Sections 7, 8 and 9 of the Charter**
 - June/July/August 2016 – Final review of document, legal reviews, large public outreach meeting**
 - September/October 2016 – More public meetings on final document**
 - November 2016 – Charter Review Commission document is put before the voters**

The next three meetings of the Public Outreach Committee are 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 8, 2015, 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 15, 2015 and 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 29, 2015.

Ms. McKenzie pointed out that an Advisory Committee could help with the introductory community meeting, and that those in attendance could break up into smaller groups to discuss specific issues. Ms. Wesley suggested a newsletter to inform residents of the meeting.

Mr. Cherry made a motion, supported by Mr. Larkin to accept the report. The Commission decided to do two separate votes, so Mr. Cherry, supported by Mr. Williams, amended the motion to authorize the chairperson to make expenditures for the tools related in the report. Ms. McKenzie suggested increasing the budget for Public Outreach in the motion. Mr. Cherry amended the motion, with support from Mr. Williams, to authorize the chairperson to make expenditures for the tools related in the report, and to add \$5,000.00 to Communications in the CRC budget to account for those expenses. The motion passed by the following vote:

Victoria McKenzie – Yes

Charles Metcalf – Yes

Heidi Phaneuf – Yes
James Richardson – Yes
Marsha Wesley – Yes
Barry Williams – Yes
John Cherry – Yes
Brian Larkin – Yes
Cleora Magee – Yes

Mr. Cherry made a motion, supported by Mr. Williams to accept the Public Outreach report. The motion passed by the following vote:

Charles Metcalf – Yes
Heidi Phaneuf – Yes
James Richardson – Yes
Marsha Wesley – Yes
Barry Williams – Yes
John Cherry – Yes
Brian Larkin – Yes
Cleora Magee – Yes
Victoria McKenzie – Yes

OLD BUSINESS

1. Potential presentations to the Commission

- a. Mayor Deidre Waterman, City of Pontiac

Ms. Magee told Commissioners that the letter to the Mayor of Pontiac was mailed. She said she hopes they hear from her soon.

- b. Michigan Municipal League

Mr. Cherry said he has been in contact with the MML, and that the training will be scheduled once the Commission decides what the training will include. His request for suggestions produced the following answers: Home Rule Act, Chapters 2 (Role of Charter Commission), 5 (Resource Materials) and 9 (the role of the Attorney General); Charter Revision Handbook Table of Contents, Chapters 3 (Making the Most of Charter Commission Meetings), 5 (Critical Decisions for Charter Commissions), and 10 (What To Do When the Draft is Done). Mr. Cherry asked Commissioners to send any other suggestions by email.

Mr. Cherry distributed a letter received from Deputy State Treasurer Wayne Workman. He said he believes from reading the letter that the Charter Review Commission has latitude in preparing the Charter.

In regards to the question “What is the role of the Mayor, City Council and Receivership Transition Advisory Board as it relates to the work of the Charter Review Commission,” Mr. Workman wrote the following:

“In regards to your question, the intent behind the provision in question was to afford the Mayor and City Council an opportunity for input into the charter revision process. Given the significant role of both the Mayor and City Council in governing the city, it is important that those officials be afforded an opportunity to study any revision to the city’s structure of government, which they will be chiefly responsible for implementing.”

For similar reasons, it is important that the Commission consult with the Receivership Transition Advisory Board to avoid any potential revisions that unintentionally might adversely impact the city's ongoing transition from receivership."

Ms. McKenzie noted that there are a number of items that the city must complete before it can come out from under receivership and that it would be helpful to know what those are. Mr. Williams wondered if the Charter goes before a vote in 2016 or 2017, will the city be out of receivership. Mr. Larkin said there is no way to tell at this point. He said that his interpretation of the letter is that the Charter Review Commission has the authority to write a charter, but that they should include the City Council, Mayor, City Administrator and RTAB during the process. He said Chapter 9 of the Home Rule Act (the role of the Attorney General) might help answer some of these questions. Mr. Larkin, who is a member of the RTAB, said he will ask his colleagues for an answer to their questions.

2. Any additional business brought before the Commission

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Review of upcoming Commission and Committee meetings

Ms. Magee presented Commissioners with a schedule for future meetings. Mr. Richardson noted that he and Mr. Larkin are unavailable on the first Thursday of the month and asked for a revision to the schedule. After some discussion it was decided that meetings of the full Commission will be held at 6:30 p.m. on the following dates:

July 9 and 23
August 13 and 27
September 10 and 24
October 8 and 22
November 12
December 10 or 17

Ms. Phaneuf, supported by Ms. McKenzie, made a motion to accept the schedule for 2015. The motion passed 9-0 by the following vote:

Victoria McKenzie – Yes
Charles Metcalf – Yes
Heidi Phaneuf – Yes
James Richardson – Yes
Marsha Wesley – Yes
Barry Williams – Yes
John Cherry – Yes
Brian Larkin – Yes
Cleora Magee – Yes

This Charter Review Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Janell Johnson, Secretary