

TOWN OF RICHMOND, RHODE ISLAND
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HOME RULE CHARTER COMMISSION

Town Hall – Council Chambers
February 7, 2022
5:30 P.M.

MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was teleconferenced via Zoom and called to order at 5:30 P.M. by Chairman Reddish.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair B. Joe Reddish, III, Joseph Arsenault, Gina M. DeBernardo, Erin F. Liese, Tracy A. Nelson, and Joseph Arsenault. Also present was Chief Elwood Johnson.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 1) Discussion and Approval of Minutes from December 6, 2021.

MOTION made by G. DeBernardo SECOND by T. Nelson to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2021 meeting.

T. Nelson requested the minutes be amended as follows: Page 1, change she to the Town Administrator and next line add Chapter 2.30 of the Code of Ordinances.

MOTION made by G. DeBernardo SECOND by T. Nelson to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2021 meeting as amended.

Vote: Ayes – (Reddish, DeBernardo, Liese & Nelson) Abstain – (Arsenault)

Mark Reynolds arrived at 5:37 P.M.

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Please Note in Accordance with Section 42-46-6 (b) the Commission May Review, Discuss and/or take Action on the following items

- 1) Discussion on Amendments to the Home Rule Charter Regarding Municipal Court

T. Nelson questioned if we needed to put all the language for enabling legislation regarding Municipal Court in the Charter.

E. Liese stated we put all the language but maybe could be just a reference; however maybe the Town Solicitor could weigh in.

M. Reynolds apologized for being late. He agreed with T. Nelson to just reference the general law.

G. DeBernardo also agreed to just reference the enabling legislation.

J. Reddish suggested putting all the language in regarding Municipal Court for clarity of the public during review and then removing it from the Charter to only include the reference to the enabling legislation.

T. Nelson suggested just adding an exhibit.

Chief Johnson suggested you reference the other statutes 45-2.63 Title 8 and Title 3; as they are important to how Municipal Court is conducted.

Chief Johnson explained that Covid showed the advantage to having Municipal Court locally. The initial review of Municipal Court in 2018 by the Town was only looked at for revenue versus efficiency. He further discussed the advantages of Municipal Court.

Discussion ensued on the recommendation to Council and process to implement Municipal Court.

E. NEW BUSINESS

Please Note in Accordance with Section 42-46-6 (b) the Commission May Review, Discuss and/or take Action on the following items:

MOTION made by T. Nelson SECOND by E. Liese to move New Business Item 2 prior to Item 1.

Vote: All Ayes

2) Discussion on any other areas that should be reviewed or added to the Charter

J. Reddish advised on moving this item forward in case we have more items to consider.

M. Reynolds questioned the section governing the police department regarding the number of officers and employees and the police department. That should be approved at the Financial Town Meeting. He explained the language is not present in other departments.

Chief Johnson explained this is probably due to the budget process. He further explained how police officer funding is vetted.

Discussion ensued on the language in the charter relative to the number of police officers and collective bargaining.

It was noted that this language should be removed and would be referred to the Solicitor during her review.

M. Reynolds recommended looking at the Recreation Director and the Recreation Commission sections. He explained that the language appears to have the Commission direct the Director.

Discussion ensued on the Recreation Director and it was noted it should be updated for the directive to be by the Town Administrator.

It was noted the Recreation Commission should be an advisory body to the Director.

It was recommended to strike the language that the Director is supervised by the Commission.

Discussion ensued on the Recreation Commission language.

It was also recommended to add page numbers to the Charter.

1) Discussion on Final Review

G. DeBernardo suggested looking at the Moderator in elected officials.

It was noted a Moderator was still in need due to the Chariho Budget Public Hearing.

It was determined the Charter Commission did not have the most recent version.

T. Nelson advised the following edits: Article 4 is duplicated. She also referenced the highlighted text that was edited. She also commented on the Town Manager responsibilities, Article 5 Section 1b to add number 11 for language to approve signs. Town Manager language regarding Employee Evaluation process needs to be added. Article 6 section 2 budget adoption strike section 3.

M. Reynolds also commented on Article 5, giving the Town Manager the ability to hire employees below the Department Head level. Also are we giving the Manager the power to terminate?

Discussion ensued on terminating employees and who would have that power.

It was suggested to add the language to reflect the Town Manager should have the ability to hire and terminate with consultation of the Department Head.

E. Liese requested assistance from T. Nelson to provide an updated draft.

It was suggested to put it on a shared drive. It was noted that would work if everyone has google.

J. Reddish questioned if we are approaching an open violation.

E. Liese advised the only edits could be scribe errors or already determined amendments.

2) Schedule future meeting dates

Meeting dates were reviewed and it was noted the next meeting would be March 14, 2022 was previously set as the next meeting.

Discussion ensued on public forum and public input It was noted the agenda would be put on the website and social media.

Discussion ensued on providing the public with a working draft. It was determined the document would be watermarked draft.

F. PUBLIC FORUM

No public comment.

G. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION made by J. Aresenault, SECOND by M. Reynolds to adjourn at 7:01 P.M.
All Ayes**

Respectfully submitted,

Erin F. Liese, CMC
Town Clerk