

TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

MINUTES OF MEETING

May 12, 2021

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<https://zoom.us/rec/share/6SCX80o6sfp60fOJS2GRBHUwOwaE3vgIuhKTIRuW8iRDk8W8-YYj5oun2SRB9gsZ.mUa1gmTTVfUML-1k>

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A meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was held on Wednesday, May 12, 2021 via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 7:08 P.M. by the Chair, Mr. Dixon and roll call was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Frank Dixon, Chair, Jackie Downing, Vice-Chair, Lamond Battle, Secretary, Thomas Figlar, Jeffrey Cohen, Frank LaDore, Nancy Olson, Myron Hul, Sarah Gallagher, Jay Kaye, Joshua Sprague- Oliveira, Todd Berton, Marnie Hebron

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tiffany Artis-Wilson, Todd Moler

ALSO PRESENT: Steve Mednick, Counsel

Mr. Dixon directed attention to Mr. Mednick. Mr. Mednick directed to Action Item 3A Romanette i, re: Library Board. He pointed to Item 7 Page 30, to see changes made resulting from last week's meeting with the Library Director and the Library Board Chair. It was clarified that Library Director hiring is a recommendation to the Mayor by the Board, approval by The Mayor and then by Council. Termination is in accordance with 8A- it is a recommendation for removal from office. They eliminated references to an Assistant Director. All other employees are under the Merit System. Language was added re: Best Practices. The Library Board "Not later than six full months after confirmation, new members will engage in training specific to the responsibilities of being a Library Trustee, orientation to Library operations and acclimatization with Board process and vision".

Mr. Hul asked who is responsible for recruitment. Mr. Mednick said the Library Board working with Personnel.

Next, Mr. Mednick directed to Romanette V, and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Commission paragraph. He asked the Commissioners if they wanted to add under the protected classes, "justice impaired individuals". A robust discussion followed. Ms. Downing moved to add to the L1Section of the DEI Commission to read "persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty, involvement with the Justice System or inequality". Mr. Sprague Oliveira seconded. A roll call vote was taken: Vote was as follows: Ms. Downing-yes, Ms. Gallagher-yes, Mr. Sprague Oliveira-yes, Mr. Dixon,-yes, Ms. Hebron-yes,

Mr. Kaye-yes. Mr. Berton-No, Mr. Cohen-No, Mr. Figlar-No, Mr. Hul-No, Ms. Olson-No, Mr. LaDore-No. The motion failed. (Mr. Battle was not present during this vote)

Next, Mr. Mednick directed to Section 7-1, C-4 "Limitation of Service pertaining to their previous discussion about the impact of modifying the membership of Boards and Commissions. He offered language which he said could be a possible solution.

"Any Chair who is term-limited may remain on the Board or Commission, as an at-large member for a period of one (1) year from the date in which a full compliment of members is confirmed by the Legislative Council; although in no case no more than eighteen (18) months following the effective date of this Charter". Ms. Olson pointed out that they had discussed "ex-officio" for their knowledge, instead of "at large". Mr. Mednick said yes and you have to make it clear, with no vote. This would upon effect of the revised Charter. Mr. LaDore expressed concern about the possibility of losing all members of a Board and suggested having more ex-officio members stay on. He asked about the info on this which had been requested on the current commissioners and their terms. Mr. Mednick indicated he did request info from the Mayor's office and has not received it yet. He will pursue it getting this information. There was a continued discussion of term limits. Mr. Mednick will draft language and provide it for review.

Next, Mr. Mednick went to 7-1, K, Administration of Boards and Commissions. The Role of the Town Clerk. Mr. Mednick presented revised language based on discussion with the Town Clerk, after the Town Clerk met with Mayor's Office to review this topic and the Town Clerk provided Mr. Mednick with some language. The language accordingly distributes the responsibility between the two offices. There was also a revision to subparagraph 2 regarding "Additional Public Outreach". The Town Clerk was removed from the sentence pertaining to Outreach and it read that the Mayor's Office will be responsible for Outreach. The commissioners discussed this and agreed to put the Town Clerk back into the Outreach Section. Electronic Media was added to the list of means for publication of the Outreach.

Next, Mr. Mednick pointed to edits he made in Action Item #8, 7-2, Purpose regarding the "Role of The Hamden Police Commission". He said he had taken the language which was proposed and built it into the five things that local governments can do with Police commissions from the Twenty First Century Policing Report from the White House. The commissioners briefly discussed the section and it was decided they would need a day to review it and get back to Mr. Mednick.

Next, Mr. Mednick directed to sub-paragraph J, pertaining to the percentage for Professional Services (Police Commission having a percentage of the PD budget for professional services). This would be a General Fund appropriation in accordance with whatever the Charter would set up. Mr. LaDore indicated that after thinking about this, he is not totally in favor of it. He asked if an example of when this was needed in the past could be provided. Mr. Kaye indicated that way it is written could be mistakenly interpreted as that it is coming out of the Police Budget, when it is not. It is a General Fund appropriation. Perhaps it should be re-written, so it is clear that money would not be taken from the Police Budget. Mr. Hul pointed out that there are no commissions other than Ethics board which have a budget. He expressed concern that we cannot control how our elected officials are going to vote to use money. He has seen Council transfer money out of accounts. There is no guarantee money would not be taken out of the PD budget. Mr. Hul said he is not in favor of this language in the Charter. It is a Council prerogative to fund accounts. Mr. Hul asked: did the Council fund two years ago with the Officer Eaton, a third party review of the State and/or City/Town reports of that shooting? Mr. Mednick replied that it was recommended by the Council that they do and the Chief negotiated the ability to have a third party review. He doesn't know if it was ever done. Mr. Hul asked/said, so there was really no opposition to it, the Council said go ahead and do it and here is some money? Mr. Mednick said no the Council didn't do that and the Council voted to not go forward with its third party review and they would have then had to fund it. Mr. Dixon indicated that he believes funding needs to be given to the

Police Commission so if they need to utilize additional resources, it is there. Ms. Downing believes there should be some set-aside money and that it should be directly tied to the amount of the Police Budget. She does not think it should come directly from the police Budget, but if it did, it is money well spent. This is Public perception. This is the Public perceiving that this Commission has teeth and has the ability to understand what is presented to it in an independent fashion. She also pointed out that the Town has no Traffic Engineer and the Police Commission runs the Traffic Authority and has no Traffic expert. In order for the Traffic Commission to do its job, it may need to bring in resources. If for nothing other than that, she believes they need funds. She would be in favor of a half of a percent, not from the Police Budget, but in relation to the Police Budget. Mr. Cohen expressed his agreement with the earlier comments of Mr. Hul. Mr. Hul pointed out that this is money that would be designated to the Police Commission and we are saying here that the Traffic Authority can use it. Unless the language is there, it won't work, it is going to be Police Commission monies.

Mr. Dixon asked for a vote. Ms. Gallagher motioned to put language in for the Police Commission to have a budget of four percent of the PD Budget and (include the language with modifications from Mr. Kaye making sure it does not come out of the Police Budget, point four percent of the Police Budget... Mr. Mednick clarified "Point four percent and shall not reduce Police Budget". Ms. Hebron seconded.

A roll call vote was taken. The vote was as follows: Mr. Battle, YES, Mr. Berton, YES, Mr. Cohen, YES, Mr. Dixon, YES, Ms. Downing, YES, Mr. Figlar, YES, Ms. Gallagher, YES, Ms. Hebron, YES, Mr. Hul, NO, Mr. Kaye, YES, Mr. LaDore, NO, Ms. Olson, ABSTAIN, Mr. Sprague-Oliveira, YES.

The motion passed with ten YES, two NO, and one abstention.

Next, Mr. Mednick briefly reviewed some minor changes in Action Item #8 3-A. He clarified a paragraph by removing the term 'biennial thereafter'. It now reads, "The Mayor shall appoint members for a term of two years for a term commencing the 1st day of the year of appointment". He moved the Citizen's Police Academy to the beginning.

Next, Mr. Mednick went to the Draft of the Preamble, Item 3C. He referred to Ms. Downing. Ms. Downing said she and Ms. Olson worked together on this and placed Preamble references to the Quinnipiac Peoples and the Mount Carmel Ecclesiastical Society into the Draft of the Preamble, and added an extra footnote for historical significance. Ms. Downing said she realizes it is unusual to have this kind of thing in a Preamble, but she believes it is important.

Ms. Olson motioned that the group accept the Preamble Draft as written. Mr. LaDore seconded. The motion passed with all in favor and one abstention.

Mr. Mednick was going to discuss Town Arborist, but he received a letter from the resident withdrawing the request for a Town Arborist.

Mr. Mednick said that in the beginning of this process, the President of the Legislative Council asked for a modification of the Town Clerk from elected to appointed. There has been no follow up. The Commissioners decided to leave this as it is at this time- elected Town Clerk.

Mr. Mednick briefly reviewed language clarification in the Definitions Section regarding meetings. He added the word Meetings and grafted onto State Statutes and clarified that meetings may include "by means of electronic equipment as those laws may be amended from time to time".

Mr. Mednick said he added language at the end of the Definitions Section G-g pertaining to the word "shall", defining it so the meaning is "required to do something".

Mr. Ladore said that he wished to point out an issue that may come up at Public Hearing regarding the hiring of Department Heads. Many are Bargaining Unit employees and some are still appointed by the Mayor and they can be fired at any time. He would like to see the Politics taken out of this. There was a brief discussion of this and whether it required a special Meeting. It was decided to determine how to address this if it comes up during Public Hearing.

The commissioners discussed the upcoming meeting dates. The Public Hearing is on May 18, 2021. Mr. Mednick said he was preparing the Charter Draft for publication and asked the commissioners to get back to him ASAP, and will ask the Clerk to publish it as of tomorrow. He said he would ask the clerk to publish the Draft as of today's date.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:45 P.M.

This meeting had no clerk. Meeting starting/ending times and attendance were best guessed while viewing the video.

Discussion summary typed while viewing the video and submitted by Rose Lion, Secretary to the Legislative Council

Ms. Renta, Legislative Council Administrator/Clerk reviewed the minutes and added any additions and the video link before filing.