



Charter Change Committee Meeting ***Remote***, Monday, October 19th, 2022, at 6:30 pm 10/19/2022

CHARTER CHANGE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

Via Zoom (Remote)

DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present: Councilor Bergman (Chair), Councilor Carpenter, Councilor Traverse

Staff Present: Kim Sturtevant (Acting City Attorney)

Others in Attendance: Sam McGinty,

Meeting called to order at 6:36 PM.

1.0 Agenda

1.01 Motion to amend agenda

Motion to Amend Agenda to have two (2) public forums before each discussion topic.

Motion by Councilor Bergman, Seconded by Councilor Traverse

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous

2.0 Adopt Minutes from 10/3/2022

Motion to Adopt Minutes from 10/3/2022 without changes.

Motion by Councilor Carpenter, Seconded by Councilor Traverse

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous.

3.0 Public Forum

No comment.

4.01 Discussion of Siting of Polling Places



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The committee discussed the recent updates to the polling places resolution.

The group reviewed the state statute to confirm that they're appropriately re-assigning polling places based on the provisions suggested in Vermont statute.

Councilor Traverse commented on the importance of this proposal and is glad that final action will be made that evening. The Councilor's only concern revolves around the language pertaining to limiting the moving of a polling location within a ward. There may be an *appropriate* location in any ward, but another polling location in a different ward may be *preferable* – should be reflected in the resolution to accommodate for this notion.

Councilor Carpenter suggested changing the word to 'acceptable' to allow for more leeway in making decisions around moving polling locations. Councilor Traverse suggested the phrase 'more accessible facility outside the ward' instead as the issue is more around the accessibility of the polling place to the voter within a respective ward.

Councilor Bergman agreed with Councilor Traverse's language, but believed it creates a contradiction within the resolution itself, suggested altering other language to encompass the 'accessible/close proximity' notions. The committee made note that this language change is not sectarian, their intent is to allow for broader, flexible ability to place polling locations in advantageous locations that make the most sense to the ward.

Motion to refer the resolution back to the Council with the intent to place this question on the ballot for the November 7th meeting.

Motion by Councilor Carpenter, Seconded by Councilor Traverse

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous.

Additionally, made note that the All Resident Voting resolution still needed to be referred back to the full Council, will need to be done sooner rather than later.

4.02 Discussion of Ranked Choice Voting

Sam M: VPIRG supports the charter change as written. They strongly supports the choice to expand the use of RCV and to put before the voter on the ballot in March 2023, they believe this is an excellent way to strengthen democracy, elections will become more fair and functional. VPIRG will be advocating for RCV in the presidential primaries in 2024, so using them on a Council, and Mayoral, level will act is a good precursor for what can be expected in future elections. He also made note that there is only one universally accepted model of RCV, which is the version suggested in ex-Councilor Hanson's resolution. There has been general support for RCV on the State level as well in the Legislature, where bills were introduced but never voted on. There is strong advocacy for the national accepted model.



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Councilor Carpenter: Why are we adding the tabulation method language to the charter change ordinance if the tabulation is already being conducted that way?

Councilor Traverse: The language that is being added was once removed by the Legislature for the City to determine, by charter, the way the City will tabulate polling results. However, the City has since added into the RCV ordinance that establishes the tabulation method, so the underlined language is no longer necessary. Councilors Carpenter and Bergman agreed.

Councilor Bergman: We should include school commissioners to the list, there's no reason not to.

Councilor Traverse: Agreed, it wouldn't make sense to vote school commissioners one way, and the mayor/councilor another way. Maybe ward inspectors/clerks should be included as well?

Councilor Bergman: Other sections of the charter would need to be amended, and the lack of three way races on the clerk/inspector level makes adding them to the RCV ordinance a bit unnecessary.

Councilor Carpenter: All elections should be voted in the same manner, so although there typical is a lack of three way races, it may make more sense to include ward inspectors/clerks, but doesn't support adding it into the ordinance immediately, would like to wait to see the turnout of councilor/mayoral elections first.

Councilor Bergman: Would prefer for the language to be in the charter, rather than the ordinance. The language should be bedrock for making future decisions around RCV. Would support an amendment to add school commissioners, and if the charter allows it, to add election officials as well.

Councilor Traverse: School officials should be allowed to speak regarding the proposed changes prior to referring this ordinance change back to the full committee, suggested the next Charter Change meeting as a means of accomplishing such. Also made note that there is no language in the charter that declares ward/election officials as needing to be elected under a particular method, cautioned that it may not be a clean slate for the City to decide how, but considers the charter silent on the issue.

Councilor Bergman: Agreed that the school officials should be allowed to provide their input on the RCV change. Additionally, this will provide time for the City Attorney's office time to research whether the lack of charter language around ward//election officials allows them to be included under RCV voting method.

Motion to add school commissioners and ward/election officials to the list of those included under the RCV method.

Motion by Councilor Bergman, Seconded by Councilor Traverse

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Councilor Bergman, Councilor Traverse

No: Councilor Carpenter



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The committee will hold off on referring this ordinance change back to the full Council this evening to allow for input and comment from ward/election and school officials on their inclusion into the RCV method.

Scheduling of future meetings:

Thursday, November 1st at 6:30 PM (All Legal Resident Voting and RCV)

5.0 Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn.

Motion by Councilor Bergman, Seconded by Councilor Traverse

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.