



Charter Change Committee Meeting *In-Person and Remote***, Wednesday, April 27th, 2022, 2:00 pm, Sharon Bushor Conference Room, City Hall 4/27/2022**

CHARTER CHANGE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Sharon Bushor Conference Room, 1st Floor, City Hall; Via Zoom

FINAL MINUTES

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

Staff Present: Daniel Richardson (City Attorney)

Others in Attendance: N/A

Meeting called to order at 2:11 PM.

1.0 Agenda

1.01 Motion to adopt/amend agenda

Motion to amend and adopt agenda as written

Motion by Councilor Carpenter, Seconded by Councilor Berman.

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous.

2.0 Adopt Minutes

No Minutes to Adopt





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3.0 Public Forum

No members of the public appeared for public forum.

4.0 Consideration of Non-Citizen Voter Charter Change

There was a general discussion by the Committee members about a non-citizen voting charter change. The City Attorney gave the Committee a history of the work that the prior Committee had done, how the proposal had not been approved by the Committee. City Attorney also updated the Committee on legal challenges to similar amendments in Montpelier and Winooski and the success Montpelier has had in obtaining dismissals against such rulings.

The Committee discussed the parameters of such a charter change. The Committee agreed it should follow either the language of the Winooski Charter or the Montpelier Charter and should include both City of Burlington election items and Burlington School District items. The Committee tasked the City Attorney with revising and preparing a draft charter provision on both versions for the Committee to review and deliberate. City Attorney stated that a draft would be prepared for the next Committee meeting.

The Committee also discussed seeking community input, particularly from communities likely to be affected by these provisions. Councilor Bergman expressed concern that the outreach not be stuck in bureaucratic limbo. This concern is based on his experience in city government. Councilor Bergman recommended that the City Attorney oversee outreach to be done by the REIB Department and the Trusted Community Voices division of CEDO.

Councilor Carpenter made a motion to request the City Attorney to prepare a non-citizen voting charter change draft and to begin to bring CEDO and REIB into the outreach conversation with the Charter Change Committee. Councilor Traverse seconded it.

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous.

5.0. Discussion on Proposed Charter Change for Councilor Compensation.

There was a general discussion of the idea of a charter change allowing for councilor compensation beyond the \$5000 stipend current allowed by charter. City Attorney Richardson and Councilor Carpenter described the history of previous efforts and resolutions by the Charter Change Committee to draft and adopt a councilor compensation amendment. City Attorney described the prior amendment as focusing on shifting the language of Section 45 of the charter from a set



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amount of compensation for councilors to a floor of compensation and enabling language similar to the Mayor's compensation provision.

Councilor Bergman suggested that Human Resources should be brought into the conversation and that there should be some review of the policy.

Councilor Traverse noted that eligibility for benefit plans might not even require a charter change as they were not tied to the Charter in the same way as compensation was in Section 45.

Councilor Carpenter emphasized that there was a need to study what compensation looks like in other communities, across Vermont and in other comparable cities.

Councilor Carpenter suggested that the Committee needed to poll councilors to see what kind of benefits they felt were needed. Councilor Bergman expressed an interest to hold meetings/hearings in the community to bring this item to voters and gauge their support and get their input. Councilor Traverse expressed his support for this.

The City Attorney proposed that he would reach out to the HR Department to see if there was an easy way to collect and share data on comparable municipalities and across Vermont. He would also reach out to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns to see if they had relevant data. If such data was not readily available, the City Attorney offered time with his office's intern in the fall to interview councilors on their needs and to conduct a wider benefits survey.

The Committee agreed with this proposal and supported moving forward with the consensus that such compensation would be beneficial to allowing more people to run for office and to serve with fewer financial impediments.

1. Review of Legislative Process on Prior Charter Changes.

The City Attorney updated the Committee on charter changes that had passed and been signed into law (thermal energy and expansion of the Airport Commission), those that had passed the legislature but were not signed (For Cause Eviction), those that had passed the House (Ranked Choice Voting), and those that had not gotten out of committee (Sex Worker). Nothing in these actions required additional action by the Committee.

7.0 Future Agendas





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The Committee set the date for the next meeting for May 11, 2022 at 10 am in the Sharon Bushor Room. The Committee agreed that the agenda would include: an update on non-citizen voting (draft and outreach), councilor compensation update, general discussion of additional charter changes that the Committee sought to review or draft, and a discussion of jurisdiction based on concerns that some of the discussions and outreach proposals suggested by the Committee feel outside of the Committee's charge and whether or not the Committee should be the lead committee on certain items or whether they should be referred to another committee.

8.0 Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn by Councilor Carpenter, Seconded by Councilor Traverse.

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20pm.

