

**CITY OF NORWALK
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 15, 2025**

ATTENDANCE: Tyler Fairbairn, Chair; Douglas Hempstead, Vice Chair;
John Levin

Via Zoom: Jo Bennett, Atty. Ed Camacho, Carl Dickens

STAFF: Atty. Steven Mednick, consultant

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Fairbairn called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Fairbairn called the roll. A quorum was not present.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: April 29, 2025

B. Special Meeting: May 5, 2025

Due to the fact that there was not a quorum present, these minutes were tabled until the end of the meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Ms. Diane Lauricella who was on Zoom, indicated that she wished to speak but due to technical difficulties, they were not able to unmute her. It was decided to allow her to speak later in the meeting if they were able to correct the problem

ACTION ITEMS

A. Operating budget definition

Atty. Mednick said that the CFO provided them with a good definition of the Operating Budget. He displayed the page on screen for the Commissioners as follows:

The Operating Budget means the component of the budget of the City adopted annually in the manner set for in this Charter, detailed estimates of revenues and operating expenses, including, but not limited to operating, personnel, maintenance and all

expected revenues, as required by this Charter and any related Ordinance. The Operating budget is funded through local property taxes, intergovernmental revenue, licenses, fees, charges for services, fines, interest and other sources of revenue.

**** MR. FAIRBAIRN MOVE TO APPROVE ACTION ITEM A – OPERATING BUDGET.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. Sheriff/constable

Atty. Mednick said that there were no language changes in this section of the document. Mr. Fairbairn said this had been discussed by the previous Charter Revision Commissions. Mr. Fairbairn said that he had spoken with Mr. Kleppin about the constables and discovered the Planning and Zoning Department uses them regularly. He added that Mr. McQuaid was also in favor of this.

Discussion followed about whether it should be a elected position. Mr. Levin said that the electors were poorly positioned to determine who would be a good constable. He felt that the elected positions should only be ones where there is responsibility to the public. There is no public face to the constables. He added that other cities have moved away from elected constables and moved to the appointed positions.

Mr. Levin said that no one has been able to answer the question as to why these were an elected position. Atty. Camacho reminded everyone that the constables serve the City but are not City employees.

There was a brief discussion about the role and duties of the sheriff and whether the position would have a sunset clause. Atty. Mednick said that this had not been changed in the Charter.

**** MR. FAIRBAIRN MOVED TO LEAVE THE SECTION §6-3 ON SHERIFFS AND CONSTABLES AS THEY CURRENTLY EXIST IN THE CHARTER.**

Mr. Fairbairn noted that he, Mr. Dickens and Atty. Camacho were all in favor of this. Ms. Bennett said that she felt they did not need the sheriff but they do need the constables.

A brief discussion followed about the description of the positions. It was agreed that the Commissioners would vote on each position individually.

**** MR. FAIRBAIRN MOVED TO LEAVE THE SECTION ON THE CONSTABLES AS THEY ARE CURRENTLY LISTED IN THE CHARTER.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR (BENNETT, CAMACHO, DICKENS, FAIRBAIRN AND HEMPSTEAD) AND ONE (1) ABSENTION (LEVIN).**

**** MR. FAIRBAIRN MOVED TO vote on the following:**

- **LEAVE THE SECTION ON THE SHERIFF AS THEY CURRENTLY LISTED IN THE CHARTER OR**
- **REMOVING THE POSITION OF THE SHERIFF FROM THE CHARTER**

**** THERE WERE TWO (2) IN FAVOR (DICKENS AND FAIRBAIRN) OF LEAVING THE POSITION OF SHERIFF IN THE CHARTER AS IT EXISTS AND FOUR (4) WHO WISHED TO REMOVE THE POSITION OF SHERIFF FROM THE CHARTER (BENNET CAMACHO, HEMPSTEAD AND LEVIN).**

C. Library director

The discussion moved to 8-2(3)m which codifies the Library Director process. Mr. Fairbairn said that he had no issue with the proposal Ms. Noor, the Library Board Chair had suggested. Discussion followed about making this section would become its own section.

Atty. Mednick reviewed the details with the Commissioners.

Mr. Dickens asked why they wanted to formalize the process. Mr. Fairbairn said that they had actually been following this process for selection of the Library Director but it was not mentioned in the Charter. Discussion followed.

**** ATTY. CAMACHO MOVED TO UPDATE THE LANGUAGE REGARDING THE SELECTION OF THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR (BENNETT, CAMACHO, FAIRBAIRN AND LEVIN) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (DICKENS AND HEMPSTEAD).**

Atty. Mednick said that someone had asked about the definition of sidewalks. He read the language from the City Ordinances. Mr. Dickens said that the home owner would be assessed for the sidewalks, but there are many trails along East Rocks.

**** MR. FAIRBAIRN MOVED TO MOVED THE SIDEWALK SECTION IN THE CHARTER SECTION 14-4 INTO 8-5(E)1,2**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

D. Mayoral term length

Mr. Fairbairn said that the last Charter Revision Commission had decided not to act on this item because they had made so many other changes in the Charter. In 2016, it was a hotly contested issue. He said that it was a unique opportunity to change it to a four year term in 2029.

Atty. Camacho noted that this would put the Mayor into an off year election. He suggested that this issue be done as a single year issue.

Mr. Levin pointed out that this would be another Charter Commission in less than 10 years. He went on to say that having a single issue for the Charter Commission is not common. Atty. Camacho said that he was aware of this. He then asked Atty. Mednick whether it could be broken into a separate referendum question. Discussion followed.

Mr. Hempstead said that he felt that the system was working well and did not think that they should change the term unless they change the Council terms also. Mr. Dickens agreed with Mr. Hempstead.

Mr. Fairbairn said that he also felt that it should be a separate item, also.

E. Interim approval of draft report for public hearing

**** MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED TO REMOVE FROM THE TABLE FOR DISCUSSION THE ISSUE OF MINORITY PARTY REPRESENTATION.**

**** THE MOTION FAILED TO PASS WITH TWO (2) IN FAVOR (HEMPSTEAD AND LEVIN) AND FOUR (4) OPPOSED (BENNETT, CAMACHO, DICKENS AND FAIRBAIRN)**

**** MR. DICKENS MOVE TO APPROVE THE DRAFT REPORT FOR PUBLIC HEARING WITH THE INCLUSION OF THE VOTES THAT WERE MADE AT THIS MEETING.**

Mr. Levin asked if this draft report would exclude the Minority Party Representation issues that just failed to pass. Atty. Mednick said that if the members of the public bring it up at the public hearing, they could change it since it has been discussed by the Commission.

Mr. Hempstead asked if the Commission could close out the Revision if no one shows up at the Public Hearing or there is no contrary testimony. Atty, Mednick said that they could include a business meeting after the close of the Public Hearing with a notation that there could be possible action on this item.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

The technical difficulty persisted and Mr. Fairbairn asked Ms. Lauricella to please send them an email with her comments.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A quorum was now present.

A. Regular Meeting: April 29, 2025

City of Norwalk
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Regular Meeting
May 15, 2025

B. Special Meeting: May 5, 2025

**** MR. LEVIN MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:**

A. REGULAR MEETING: APRIL 29, 2025

B. SPECIAL MEETING: MAY 5, 2025

The following correction was made :

May 5, 2025 – under Public Participation, please correct “Eric Taglione” to “Erik Vitaglione”

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MINUTES AS CORRECTED:**

A. REGULAR MEETING: APRIL 29, 2025

B. SPECIAL MEETING: MAY 5, 2025

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Public hearing date

The Public Hearing will be in the Council Chambers at 6:30 p.m. on May 20th. The final meeting will be on the 27th if needed.

Atty. Mednick said that there would be a transmittal letter to the Council with an outline of where the changes are.

Mr. Hempstead asked if the Public Hearing had been properly noticed. Mr. Levin asked if the City was going to send out a press release. Mr. Fairbairn said that he would speak with Ms. Dixon about this.

ADJOURNMENT

**** ATTY. CAMACHO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

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