

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION	SPECIAL MEETING	APRIL 27, 2023
NORWALK, CT	COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS	
	AND VIA ZOOM	

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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Zulma Roundtree at zroundtree@norwalkct.gov to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Patsy Brescia, Chair; Carl Dickens; Richard McQuaid; Angela Wasunna; Michael Witherspoon; Tyler Fairbairn (6:45 p.m.)

OTHERS: Steven Mednick, Commission Counsel

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Brescia called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Brescia called the Roll as indicated above.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Regular Meeting: April 10, 2023

**** MR. DICKENS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED**
**** MS. WASUNNA SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. WITHERSPOON)**

Regular Meeting: April 15, 2023

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Page 3: The idea is that they would not have any departments in the Charter except for the ones that operate the government. Should be corrected to: The idea is that they would not have any departments in the Charter except for the three drivers of the government – Purchasing, Finance and Personnel.

Page 4: Remove the following sentence - Ms. Brescia asked if they could add a clause establishing a \$600.00 expense allowance per person.

Page 4: The bond issue is about to be resolved. Most communities do not bond, but rather prosecute. Should be corrected to: Most communities do not bond, but rather insure for certain public officials.

**** MR. WITHERSPOON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED**
**** MR. DICKENS SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Public Hearing: April 19, 2023

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Page 3: Ms. Brescia said the Commission is focusing on the Charter will being reviewed within the next two to three years with a request that it be reviewed every five years. Should read - Ms. Brescia said the Commission is focusing on the Charter and requests that it be required to be reviewed in five years.

Page: Ms. Brescia said she did not recall the following statement: Ms. Smirniotopoulos said she thinks there are a lot of state appointments and there is a lot of double dipping.

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Page 4: As a representative of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association, she said they struggle to get the work out to people. Should read - As a representative of the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association, she said they struggle to get the word out to people.

Page 5: Mr. Fairbairn said he was settled on a two-year term for Mayor. Should read - Mr. Fairbairn said he was settled on a four-year term for Mayor.

**** MR. WITHERSPOON MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED**
**** MR. DICKENS SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public present this evening.

V. DISCUSSION: ARTICLES VII AND VIII – BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS; AND, DEPARTMENTS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS

Mr. Mednick reported that the department section is completed. He said they need to schedule another meeting. All the revisions are done, and he started to integrate the document. He also created a chapter on Special Act provisions.

Mr. Fairbairn joined the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Mr. Mednick shared his screen and reviewed the provisions. Regarding the section on Open Meetings, Mr. Mednick said that with the approval of the Commission, he wanted to add that the City shall migrate toward ensuring technology is available. He continued reviewing the provisions. Ms. Wasunna asked about the terms board and commission. Ms. Brescia said they are defined terms. Mr. Mednick suggested looking at the definition to determine if they can clean that up.

Ms. Brescia asked for clarity in section K. Mr. Mednick said he will fix the language.

Mr. Mednick reviewed the removal provisions and suggested adding - as determined by the Board of Ethics. The members of the Commission agreed to the addition of that language.

Mr. Mednick reviewed provision H – Required Cooperations. He said this provision basically says everyone needs to work together. Ms. Brescia noted that the Board of Education was not listed. Mr. Mednick said that it is in the definition of terms. Mr. McQuaid agreed and said the definition lists all of the boards, commissions. For clarity, Mr. Mednick said they can include - boards and commissions whether elected or appointed. Ms. Brescia said that was not clear

enough. Mr. Mednick suggested saying – as defined in article/section...he said that most people would look at the definition and see the Board of Education there. Mr. Witherspoon said he would be hesitant to add the Board of Education to this when the point is that it applies to everyone. Mr. Mednick said he will move H under article 2 so there will be no doubt that it applies to all boards and commissions.

Mr. Mednick reviewed the section related to Boards and said there were not a lot of changes there. He reviewed the Police Commission provision and noted there will be four electors instead of two with the Mayor as the fifth member (ex-officio). Ms. Brescia asked about the Police Commission setting the Chief of Police's salary. Mr. Mednick will check the language.

Mr. Mednick reviewed the Fire Commission provision and said it mirrors the Police Commission provision. Ms. Brescia noted the Rowayton Volunteer Fire Department needs to be referenced under A. Mr. McQuaid said the Fire Commission does not oversee the Rowayton Volunteer Fire Department. Ms. Brescia said this has been an issue throughout the years. Mr. Mednick explained that it is not in the Charter, but will check this.

Mr. Mednick reviewed other boards and commissions and said there are mandates to create entities that already exist. Ms. Brescia said the Library is a department of the City. Mr. Mednick said that unless he missed it, it is not in the Charter. He asked if the Commission wanted him to add it as a mandated board. Mr. Mednick noted that the Library is in the Code of Ordinances, but is not in the Charter.

Ms. Brescia said the Library board asked for clarification from the Corporation Counsel. She said it is an issue and wants it addressed. Mr. Mednick will add the Library board to the Charter.

Mr. Dickson commented there is no reference to the Oak Hills Park Authority. Mr. Mednick said that no authorities are listed in the Charter.

Mr. Mednick reviewed the provisions that will be moved into the Historical Provisions section.

VI. FURTHER REVIEW OF COUNSEL REVISIONS, IF ANY, OF ARTICLES I-III, IV, V, VI, IX AND X

Ms. Brescia suggested that for the next meeting, they should invite members of the Fire and Police Board. Mr. Mednick discussed upcoming meeting dates. He said they can invite members of those boards to the next meeting, but that will be the first time the Commission will see the consolidated Charter. He said they may need to hold an additional meeting and can invite them to that meeting. A meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, May 9th at 7:30 p.m. followed by a public hearing on May 17th. The final meeting will be held on May 24th. Ms. Brescia said they will meet weekly in May.

Ms. Brescia said that during the public hearing, someone mentioned environmental issues and encouraged the government to be cognizant of this. She asked Mr. Mednick if this is referred to in other Charters. Mr. Mednick said that some Charters mandate it. He added that Norwalk has a Conservation Commission. Mr. Dickens added that the City seems to be addressing these issues with their Ordinances. Mr. Mednick said that when he reviews other departments, he may be able to add language to address those issues.

Mr. Mednick reviewed Article VIII and said that deals with the powers and duties of the departments. He reviewed the duties and functions of the positions that are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council. He also reviewed the Historical Provisions section.

VII. DISCUSSION OF CRC CALENDAR

This was discussed earlier. Mr. Mednick said he plans to provide the Commissioners with the entire Charter next week. He added that he will be reviewing the Charter until the final vote is taken by the Common Council.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. DICKENS MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services