

**City of Norwalk
Charter Revision Commission
Regular Meeting
January 18, 2023**

Attendance: Patsy Brescia, Chair; Carl Dickens; Tyler Fairbairn; Richard McQuaid; Benita Watford; Michael Witherspoon, Jordan Schantz, Ed Comacho (6:10), Tom Livingston

Other: Steven Mednick, Corporation Counsel

1) CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Brescia called the meeting to order at 6:35.

2) ROLL CALL

A quorum was present.

3) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 4, 2023

******Mr. Dickens moved to postpone approving the minutes until corrections can be made.**

******Mr. McQuaid seconded the motion.**

******The motion passed unanimously.**

**4) CONTINUED REVIEW OF REVISED OPERATING, CAPITAL, AND
BOND PROVISIONS**

Mr. Mednick shared the fourth revision which begins with Article X: Budget, Public Funds and Finance. This revision includes the changes made at the last meeting. It defines the operating budget, the capital budget and the fiscal year.

City of Norwalk
Charter Revision Commission
Regular Meeting
January 18, 2023

Mr. Mednick went through the changes that had previously been agreed upon.

Ms. Brescia asked that in article 4, Conservation and Development be capitalized.

Mr. Mednick highlighted some sentences that he feels should be edited to make them as easily understandable to the public as possible. Ms. Brescia made the point that keeping all titles and names consistent throughout will also make the document more accessible to the layman. The commission agreed that if a board is mentioned by full name in the paragraph, and mentioned again later in the same paragraph, it can be shortened to 'the board.'

Mr. Mednick pointed out that in section 10-11 paragraphs A, B and C, the language is not clear enough regarding the transfer of funds. He will have a separate meeting to address this and will present new language at the next commission meeting.

Mr. Mednick asked the commission to read the changes made to section 10-12, paragraph B as this section has been completely rewritten.

The commission agrees that section 10-16 paragraph c, Transfer of Operating Budget needs to be rewritten and parameters should be set as to how money left over in the Operating Budget can be used.

There needs to be further clarification and discussion on sections 10-17 through 10-23. An edited version will be presented at the next meeting.

Going forward, Mr. Mednick is meeting with the Mayor and Council and will incorporate their input into the final draft.

5) DISCUSSION OF ARTICLES I – III, VI, IX, XI, AND XII

Mr. Mednick shared his screen to show the titles of the articles. His overarching goal is to simplify the charter.

Mr. Mednick went through each article and explained its purpose and function.

The commission agreed to eliminate the paragraphs on Town Meetings as town meetings no longer occur. Mr. Mednick also recommends removing paragraphs C and D. Once a section is removed, it is run past the court counsel office for approval.

In section 1-5, Mr. Mednick added new language about granting of power. This is to cover a broad range of circumstances.

City of Norwalk
Charter Revision Commission
Regular Meeting
January 18, 2023

Mr. Mednick plans to take his recommendations on these articles to the Corporation Counsel for discussion. Some sections can be eliminated, some are outdated and some should be moved to other sections.

In Article 2, Mr. Mednick reviewed the definitions presented. Mr. Dickens asked for clarification on how the departments report. Mr. Mednick made a point to explain what was meant by Final Action in paragraph 14.

These articles are a first draft and are presented in general terms. They will be reviewed and revised as to how they function in Norwalk specifically.

Sections 2-3 address the standards of conduct. Mr. Mednick gave an overview of these standards. Ms. Brescia asked who's responsible for keeping track of these standards. It is the Ethics Commission which will be further defined in another section of the charter.

Section 2-4 covers rules of order and civility. There should be safety, decorum and respect for interactions between the public and elected and appointed officials.

Section 2-5 deals with open meetings and public records. And the last section, 2-6, covers diversity on boards and commissions.

Mr. Mednick has comments on these sections from Mr. Livingston, and is waiting for comments from the Mayor's office. He would like to have all these sources of input together for presentation to the Charter Commission by the next meeting. He also asked the members of the Charter Commission to look ahead to Article 3 and the Board of Education section and start making suggestions on edits.

6) COMMENTS BY COMMISSION COUNSEL STEVEN MEDNICK

Mr. Mednick presented a schedule of approved dates the Charter Commission plans to meet, and what sections of the Charter will be discussed at each meeting.

Between now and the end of March, a working draft will be done of each section. April and May will be dedicated to refining and editing the sections.

7) ADJOURNMENT

******Ms. Brescia moved to adjourn the meeting.**

******The motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Brescia adjourned the meeting at 9:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Chaple
Telesco Secretarial Services