

TOWN OF RICHMOND, RHODE ISLAND  
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Wyoming, RI 02898  
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**HOME RULE CHARTER COMMISSION**  
Town Hall – Second Floor Conference Room  
August 18, 2021  
5:30 P.M.

**MINUTES**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Town Clerk Liese called the meeting of the Home Rule Charter Commission to order at 5:30 P.M. This meeting was held In-Person at Town Hall, Second Floor Conference Room, 5 Richmond Townhouse Road, Wyoming, RI.

**B. SWEARING IN AND MEMBERSHIP ROLL CALL**

Present were: Tracy A. Nelson, Mark T. Reynolds, Krista Marie Tracy, Gina M. DeBernardo, B. Joe Reddish, III, Joseph Arsenault, Benjamin Jack, and Erin F. Liese.

Town Clerk Liese had advised the Commission she was sworn in earlier in the day by Deputy Town Clerk Ruzzo.

Town Clerk Liese administered the Oath to the following Commission members: Tracy A. Nelson, Mark T. Reynolds, Krista Marie Tracy, Gina M. DeBernardo, B. Joe Reddish, III, Joseph Arsenault, and Benjamin Jack.

Members introduced themselves.

**C. NEW BUSINESS**

*Please Note in Accordance with Section 42-46-6 (b) the Commission May Review, Discuss and/or take Action on the following items:*

- 1) Nominations for the position of Chair

**A motion was made to Nominate B. Joe Reddish as Chair by Tracy A. Nelson seconded by Gina M. DeBernardo.**

**A motion was made to Nominate Mark T. Reynolds, as Chair by Erin F. Liese seconded by Joseph Arsenault.**

Both nominees introduced themselves and explained their qualifications.

**Back to the Vote:**

**A motion was made to Nominate B. Joe Reddish as Chair by Tracy A. Nelson seconded by Gina M. DeBernardo. Vote: Tracy A. Nelson- Aye, Mark T. Reynolds- Nay, Erin F. Liese- Nay, Krista Marie Tracy- Aye, Gina M. DeBernardo- Aye, B. Joe Reddish, III- Aye, Joseph Arsenault- Nay, and Benjamin Jack- Aye. (Motion Passes)**

**A motion was made to Nominate Mark T. Reynolds, as Chair by Erin F. Liese seconded by Joseph Arsenault. Vote: Tracy A. Nelson- Nay, Mark T. Reynolds- Aye, Erin F. Liese- Aye, Krista Marie Tracy- Nay, Gina M. DeBernardo- Nay, B. Joe Reddish, III- Nay, Joseph Arsenault- Aye, and Benjamin Jack- Nay. (Motion Fails)**

It was determined that B. Joe Reddish, III would serve as Chair.

2) Nominations for the position of Vice Chair

**A motion was made to Nominate Mark T. Reynolds, as Vice Chair by Gina M. DeBernardo seconded by Tracy A. Nelson. Vote: Tracy A. Nelson- Aye, Mark T. Reynolds- Aye, Erin F. Liese- Aye, Krista Marie Tracy- Aye, Gina M. DeBernardo- Aye, B. Joe Reddish, III- Aye, Joseph Arsenault- Aye, and Benjamin Jack- Aye. (Unanimous)**

T. Nelson thanked E. Liese for serving as Clerk to the Commission. She also offered if E. Liese was absent she would volunteer in her place.

3) Schedule future meeting dates

Discussion ensued on timeline to consider amendments by the voters.

Discussion ensued on meeting dates.

It was noted the next meeting would be August 31, 2021 at 5:30 P.M. It would be the Commissions preference to meet every two weeks.

4) Discussion of potential amendments to the Home Rule Charter

Discussion ensued on write in candidates being considered for vacancies.

E. Liese advised on the focus to convene the Charter Review Commission, and the possibility of changing the budget adoption process.

**A motion was made to investigate a transition for budget adoption options from a Financial Town Meeting to an All Day Referendum and authorize the Town Clerk to do research on language options by Tracy A. Nelson seconded by Krista Marie Tracy. Vote: Tracy A. Nelson- Aye, Mark T. Reynolds- Aye, Erin F. Liese- Aye, Krista Marie Tracy- Aye, Gina M. DeBernardo- Aye, B. Joe Reddish, III- Aye, Joseph Arsenault- Aye, and Benjamin Jack- Aye. (Unanimous)**

J. Arsenault suggested making motions and or potential amendments when we are further along in the process.

Discussion ensued on the review process.

T. Nelson suggested a change of the Town Council Article II, Section 6 and Article III, Section 3A. She suggested striking 7:00 as specific time should not be included. Also to change the Council to the first meeting in December vs the meeting after Certification due to the work of the licensing that occurs in November.

Discussion ensued on certification of an election and timeline.

Chair Reddish suggested aligning the start date with the Senate, which begins their term in January.

E. Liese advised against January due to appointments that fall in December, and the new Council should make such appointments.

**A motion was made to consider a potential change regarding the newly elected Council convene at a meeting in December following Election Certification and authorize the Town Clerk to provide language examples by Tracy A. Nelson seconded by Gina M. DeBernardo .**

Discussion ensued on motions and changes.

**Back to the Vote: Tracy A. Nelson- Aye, Mark T. Reynolds- Aye, Erin F. Liese- Aye, Krista Marie Tracy- Aye, Gina M. DeBernardo- Aye, B. Joe Reddish, III- Aye, Joseph Arsenault- Abstain, and Benjamin Jack- Aye. (Motion Passes)**

T. Nelson questioned the involvement of the Town Solicitor.

Vice Chair Reynolds recommended the Town Solicitor attend a meeting to provide legal guidance.

E. Liese advised on the legal review process of the last Charter Commission. The commission provided potential amendments to the Town Solicitor for review. She then attended a follow-up meeting and provided the Commission with legal guidance prior to the Council receiving the recommendations.

Discussion ensued on the Solicitor's involvement with regards to the Charter Amendments.

Chair Reddish recommended that the Charter Review Commission look at the Town Administrator position and rename the position to Town Manager. He advised the Administrator is being paid as a Town Manager so she should have the ability to handle the day to day running of the Town. The Council should be engaged in the policies and ordinances.

Discussion ensued on the position of Town Administrator vs. Town Manager.

**A motion was made to consider a potential change regarding Town Administrator position and authorize the Town Clerk to provide language examples regarding the Town Manager position by Tracy A. Nelson seconded by B. Joe Reddish, III. Vote: Tracy A. Nelson- Aye, Mark T. Reynolds- Aye, Erin F. Liese- Aye, Krista Marie Tracy- Aye, Gina M. DeBernardo- Aye, B. Joe Reddish, III- Aye, Joseph Arsenault- Aye, and Benjamin Jack- Aye. (Unanimous)**

T. Nelson also brought up Article II, Section 3 D regarding Appointments where it says no person elected or appointed to a town office shall seek or accept employment in the service of the town during his or her

term of office and for one year, week after leaving office. This could prevent a current employee for applying for the Town Manager position.

J. Arsenault advised regarding the history of that provision.

Discussion ensued on revolving door provision.

B. Jack questioned the review process.

Discussion ensued on review process.

**A motion was made to authorize the Town Clerk to send a memo to Town Council requesting input to the Charter Review Commission on recommended charter revisions by Tracy A. Nelson seconded by Mark T. Reynolds. Vote: Tracy A. Nelson- Aye, Mark T. Reynolds- Aye, Erin F. Liese- Aye, Krista Marie Tracy- Aye, Gina M. DeBernardo- Aye, B. Joe Reddish, III- Aye, Joseph Arsenault- Aye, and Benjamin Jack- Aye. (Unanimous)**

B. Reddish advised on how we would seek community engagement.

Discussion ensued on community engagement.

E. Liese cautioned further discussion on how we were going to solicit recommendations as this does not appear on this agenda, so recommended waiting for this discussion on a future agenda.

M. Reynolds suggested receiving feedback from the Town Solicitor with her experience working with the document.

Discussion ensued on the role of the Town Solicitors in the process. It was noted concern bringing her in at this point in the process.

Discussion ensued on specific input from the Solicitor.

**A motion was made to authorize the Town Clerk to send a memo to the Town Solicitors requesting input to the Charter Review Commission on specific issues with the current Charter by Mark T. Reynolds seconded by Benjamin Jack. Vote: Tracy A. Nelson- No, Mark T. Reynolds- Aye, Erin F. Liese- Aye, Krista Marie Tracy- No, Gina M. DeBernardo- No, B. Joe Reddish, III- No, Joseph Arsenault- Nay, and Benjamin Jack- Aye. (Motion Fails)**

Discussion ensued on input from Department Heads.

It was noted input should be included in the next agenda.

Discussion ensued on reserved sections of the Charter.

Discussion ensued on Commissions/ Departments in the Charter.

Discussion ensued on items that could be Ordinances vs. Charter.

B. Jack questioned the reference to days in the Charter. Should it be business days or just calendar days?

Discussion ensued on the reference to days.

T. Nelson reviewed potential amendments to Town Council with regards to non-partisan elections.

Discussion ensued on non-partisan elections.

**A motion was made to consider a potential change regarding Non-Partisan Elections and authorize the Town Clerk to provide language examples from other cities and towns by Tracy A. Nelson seconded by Mark T. Reynolds. Vote: Tracy A. Nelson- Aye, Mark T. Reynolds- Aye, Erin F. Liese- Aye, Krista Marie Tracy- Aye, Gina M. DeBernardo- Aye, B. Joe Reddish, III- Aye, Joseph Arsenault- Aye, and Benjamin Jack- Aye. (Unanimous)**

T. Nelson also commented on the number of Charter Review Committee members as scheduling 7 could be difficult.

#### **D. ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Tracy A. Nelson with second by Mark T. Reynolds to adjourn at 7:05 P.M. Vote: Tracy A. Nelson- Aye, Mark T. Reynolds- Aye, Erin F. Liese- Aye, Krista Marie Tracy- Aye, Gina M. DeBernardo- Aye, B. Joe Reddish, III- Aye, Joseph Arsenault- Aye, and Benjamin Jack- Aye. (Unanimous)**

Attest:

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Erin F. Liese, CMC Town Clerk