

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 28, 2012**

ATTENDANCE: Cathleen Simpson, Chair; George Estrada, Vice Chair; Ruben Felipe, Harry Weichsel, Charles Valentino, Sr., Florisca Carter; Rev. William Marshall (5:48 p.m.)

OTHERS: Andy Nunn, CAO; Alanna Kabel; Assistant CAO

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Simpson called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

There were no minutes to approve at this time.

DISCUSSION OF SCHEDULE AND FURTHER MEETINGS.

Mr. Felipe gave an update on the scheduling. The meeting for the Community Outreach is scheduled for the 7th is at the North End Library, from 12:00 noon to 1 p.m.; March 21st at the Black Rock Library and April 4th will be at the Burroughs Library. The public information session for education fact finding will be held on the 6th and the 8th, the Council Chambers, the 13th and the 15th will be in OPED Conference Room at the Annex.

Atty. Mednick said that he had three speakers lined up for the first fact finding speakers.

Rev. Marshall joined the meeting at 5:48 p.m.

The second and third experts for testimony sessions are still being confirmed.

Mr. Felipe said that the City website will have the link to the schedule, the minutes and the testimony that has been submitted posted tomorrow.

CITY COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

Mr. Nunn and Ms. Kabel came forward and introduced themselves. Mr. Nunn said that there had been a department head meeting and he and Ms. Kabel had listened to the departmental heads on staff feedback.

Among the general suggestions expressed were the following:

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- Like to see a Charter that is a governance document with clear language and some streamlining.
- Departments should be able to reorganize as needed.
- The focus should be on the function rather than the 1970's titles
- Consistency used through out

Regarding the Boards and Commissions, the following concerns were expressed:

- The Charter should allow for expansion and contraction of boards and commissions
- Commissions should be allowed to consolidate in case of duplication of mission
- Creation of certain commissions as needed.
- Clarifying the standard for creation of board and commissions by ordinance
- Maintaining the past practice of mayoral appointment subject to Council approval
- Having ordinances rather than charter requirements

Mr. Nunn then directed the Commission's attention to chapter 5, section 2, conform redistricting to State Law. Discussion followed about how this would be done.

Regarding Chapter 6, Mr. Nunn suggested that the name of department be changed to Office of Policy Management, which is the name that everyone has been using for the department.

Mr. Nunn then suggested that in Chapter 9, the Commission consider modifying the date for the City Council budget completion from the second week in May to a date after the State announces their budget. Mr. Nunn urged the Commission to look into what other municipalities do. He suggested moving the date back two weeks. This would give more flexibility to the Mayor's Office and Finance on the budget. Mr. Felipe asked if a written document could be provided with the suggested date to set the completion date. Discussion followed. A formal response regarding changing the date will be requested from OPM.

In Chapter 10, Mr. Nunn requested that the City's bond counsel review the section about the public finance for the re-issuance of bonds.

The Board of Appraisal of Benefits and Damages that is cited in Chapter 11 needs to be considered in terms of whether this needs to be maintained and if so, should the Board be moved under the function to the City Council.

Mr. Nunn suggested that the process for the abandonment of city streets should be moved to the Code of Ordinances.

In Chapters 13, subsection 4 and Chapter 14, subsection 4, which deals with term limitations of the Fire and Police Chief, Mr. Nunn pointed out that the limitation of two five year contracts places an artificial limit on the positions. This forces any chief who is in his/her second five year

contract to begin to look for employment elsewhere. The limitations were put in place some time ago due to an unfortunate situation. However, Mr. Nunn pointed out that there are other checks and balances, such as having the contract approval by the Council.

In Chapter 17, there are 3 personnel offices (Civil Service; Labor Relations; and Human Relations) mentioned rather than a consolidated human resources department. There are certain redundancies but there has been cooperation and coordination between three groups. Due to complexity of these departments, it was suggested that this wait for a separate Charter Revision for any adjustments.

Regarding the Office of Planning and Economic, Chapter 18 Subsections 1 and 3 addresses the scope of the department. Mr. Nunn suggested that this be an expanded scope. He then listed a number of suggestions that will be provided to the Commissioners in hard copy. He said that this would illuminate the function of the OPED.

The discussion then moved to "one stop shopping". Atty. Mednick said that there were numerous Charters that were actually organizational charts and this was not the function of the Charter. The Charter should supply the overall structure for the administration.

Mr. Nunn pointed out that the Chief Administration Office was not mentioned in the Charter. It would be important to have this in the Charter so that the Citizen understand how the City functions.

Discussion followed about the department name for OPM and what the title of the Department heads should be. Mr. Nunn said that each department has a director in charge. Discussion followed.

Mr. Estrada asked about whether the OPM director should have a term limit. Mr. Nunn noted that the Fire Chief and Police Chief have a term limit in their contracts. However, the OPM Director serves at the pleasure of the Mayor, along with the CAO, the IT director and others. At any time, the Mayor has the right to say that it is time to change courses. It was pointed out that it would be important to protect good people and continuity was good. When a new Mayor is elected, then the newly elected mayor has the right choose to continue with the director already in place or to place their own selection in the position.

Atty. Maley joined the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Nunn and Ms. Kabel left the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Felipe said that the Council members would be speaking with the Commission on Thursday. He said it would be important to have the concerns that the Commissioners had ready for discussion immediately following the conclusion of the testimony of the Council.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. FELIPE MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MR. ESTRADA SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services