

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
CHARTER REVISION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MAY 8, 2012**

**ATTENDANCE:** Cathleen Simpson, Co-chair; George Estrada, Vice Chair; Florisca Carter, Secretary; Ruben Felipe, Charles Valentino (5:37 p.m.); Reverend Marshall (5:40 p.m.); Harry Weichsel (5:45 p.m.)

**STAFF:** Atty. Steve Mednick

**OTHERS:** Council Member Andre Baker

**CALL TO ORDER.**

Commissioner Simpson called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. There were no minutes to discuss.

Atty. Mednick displayed a copy of a document with some changes. He then distributed copies of the updated revised Charter and noted that the footnotes have been moved to the back of the document. Atty. Mednick said that he still had to meet with Mr. Sherwood about some of the financial procedure. He said that he would be checking the document to insure that all the definitions are used and that all definitions are capitalized because they are now defined terms.

No changes in Chapter 2, and only the reapportionment section in Chapter 3.

*Council Member Baker joined the meeting at 5:35 p.m.*

He also indicated that there were significant changes in the section dealing with the removal of a Board of Education member.

Another change in the Mayoral section on page 23 has to do with emergency powers and procedures. The new section gives more detail on how an emergency is declared.

*Commissioner Valentino joined the meeting at 5:37 p.m.*

Regarding the City Council, there was a section regarding altering, and appealing ordinances. Atty. Mednick said that they were still in the Charter, but were part of the Special Acts because they were part of the Home Rule Act. The powers outlined appear to be extraordinary, but they are actually not.

Nothing significant was changed in the Town Clerk's Office.

*Rev. Marshall joined the meeting at 5:40 p.m.*

In the Boards and Commissions section, there are still some items that need to be finalized. Section 1 lays out the general rules for all boards and commissions. Atty. Mednick pointed out that the diversity of membership is in the current Charter, which is unique. He then reviewed the remaining sections and stated that any item that was previously stated has a reference sending the reader back to the original reference.

He added that Section L is critical in that it requires the Boards and Commissions to cooperate with the Mayor and other legislative officers. He added that the Boards and Commissions have the power to subpoena.

*Commissioner Weichsel joined the meeting at 5:45 p.m.*

There are Civil Service regulations for the Board of Education and another Commission where there is a three year standard between an elected official serving on the Commission.

The next items reviewed were the sections of the BOE and the Civil Service. He reiterated that the subjects of removals or other universal processes were referred to the beginning of the document. One section addressed the fact that a particular report was required in 1957 and it has been determined this requirement has been fulfilled, so the section has been nullified.

The Board of Estimate of Damages and the Parking Authority has been eliminated. A brief discussion followed about whether the Parking Authority could be reconstituted.

Atty. Mednick said that the Airport Commission has basically been left alone since it affects two municipalities and was created by a Special Act. Commissioner Felipe said that he had an internal conversation with members of the Administration about the issue. The list of those who can be on the Commission is very limited and straight forward. Commissioner Felipe said that he would like to explore this issue a bit deeper to see if this can be changed. He added that he did want to have the issue slip through the cracks.

*Council Member Baker left the meeting at 5:57 p.m.*

The discussion then moved to the Library Board. Atty. Mednick pointed out that the Library Board has 8 members. This was thought to be unusual. Commissioner Estrada said that he would check into this and let Atty. Mednick know the history. Commissioner Felipe said that he would like to hear the Council Members' views when the Commission meets with the Council because the Council members have the fiduciary responsibility for the City. It was pointed out that in the Charter that all Boards and Commissions are subject to the Charter requirements. This includes the Library Board. Discussion followed about this issue.

Atty. Mednick then gave an overview on the sections where qualifications were outlined. He said that Commissioner Weichsel had requested the best practices be used. The standards are now established in the Charter.

There have not been any discussions about Employment Contracts. Atty. Mednick said that he would like to discuss this issue with Atty. Anastasi.

A section that addressed some procedures was moved to the back of the document and this will be discussed with Mr. Sherwood to determine if the procedures were being followed or had become obsolete.

Items that resemble ordinances and describe processes were all moved to a separate section. The best thing would be to remove them from the Charter and institute them as ordinances.

Discussion followed about whether the current Fire Chief and Police Chief would be eligible to extend their offices past the current ten year limit, if the Charter is approved. This will be discussed at the Tuesday meeting.

Atty. Mednick said that on page 84 there was a Commission on Social Services, which would have to be established by the Code of Ordinance. The question was whether the Commission even existed. Commissioner Felipe said that he and Ms. Kabel had searched and not been able to locate any evidence regarding such a Commission. Atty. Mednick said that he had found a second commission, also. Mr. Felipe will research this one, too.

Atty. Mednick said that he was still working on the Budget Process and would be speaking with Mr. Sherwood. At the request of the City's Bond Counsel, there were some minor changes for bonding and long term debt. No changes were made in the Pensions section.

The Code Section was the next one that was discussed. This section is where all the processes are compiled.

Atty. Mednick then directed everyone's attention to page 41 where there was a footnote that Commissioner Carter had requested to insure transparency.

Rev. Marshall said that the document had been cleaned up and user friendly.

The last public hearing will be May 23rd and the Charter draft will be available to the public on May 18th on the website.

Once the Commission is done, it will be submitted to the Council who will send it to Committee.

Commissioner Simpson said that the Commission would be voting on the various issues on Tuesday.

Atty. Mednick asked whether there should be copies of an annotated Charter available. It was decided that this would be wise.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER FELIPE MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* REV. MARSHALL SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services