

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
JULY 6, 2012**

ATTENDANCE: Cathleen Simpson, Chair; George Estrada, Vice chair;
Harry Weichsel (5:20 p.m.); Charles Valentino (5:30 p.m.)

STAFF: Atty. Steven Mednick; Atty. Ed Maley; Atty. Mark Anastasi

OTHERS: Council President Thomas McCarthy; Council Member Angel
dePara

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Simpson called the meeting to order 5:15 p.m. A quorum was not present. This meeting would only be discussion.

Ms. Simpson said that there were a few major changes being presented. Council President McCarthy said that one key issue for the Council would be the Qualifications Board. Ms. Simpson said that the Commission had tried to insure that the future members would be vetted regardless of who the current Mayor. The Commission also tried to avoid adding another layer of administration and to keep the appointments as Mayoral responsibility. Mr. Estrada added that there were concerns about candidates who wished to use the BOE as a springboard to another office. The goal was to identify people who would be above the political fray.

Atty. Anastasi and Mr. Weichsel joined the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

Discussion followed about these concerns. Atty. Mednick pointed out that this board was an advisory board to the Mayor.

Council President McCarthy asked what would happen if the Board eliminated a candidate. Atty. Maley pointed out that the Mayor would choose all the candidates, so the Qualifications Board would be eliminating Mayoral candidate. He added that the Board could not generate their own candidates. This would be viewed as an employment position and therefore not covered by FOIA. Discussion followed about the fact that these were positions and the general public would not even know if a candidate was rejected. It was pointed out that if there were a bad mayor, the Council would act as a check to the questionable appointments.

Mr. Valentino joined the meeting at 5:30 p.m. A quorum was now present.

Atty. Mednick said that someone had mentioned a written report that would be submitted to the Council that would outline the qualification of the vetted candidates.

Atty. Anastasi pointed out that the FOIA laws might object to the use of the employment functions for Qualification Board. Council Member McCarthy suggested that the name of the Board be changed to the Mayor's Advisory Board for Qualifications. Further discussion followed. Mr. Weichsel pointed out that qualifications were very subjective.

The discussion then moved to what the make up of the Board of Education would be. Atty. Mednick said that this issue had not been included in the Charter.

Atty. Mednick then said that the Council wished to restore the 2/3rd majority for the Budget approval. Discussion followed about the fact that City employees were generally covered by the collective bargaining agreements when voting on the entire budget. Atty. Anastasi said that there had been discussions about this and there had never been a problem. It was agreed to leave the original Charter language on this issue intact.

Atty. Mednick said that the Council has requested that the Commission consider adding in an extra week at the beginning for the Budget and Appropriations Committee, which would move the start of the budget considerations to the last week in March. This was agreeable to all.

Atty. Mednick said that there had been concerns expressed regarding the times when the Mayor is out of the state for more than 24 hours. Council President McCarthy said that this became an issue the first time Mayor Finch left the State for 24 hours. There was an airplane crash and Council President McCarthy was never notified. Council Member dePara agreed that the Council President should be notified. Atty. Maley said that when he had spoken to the Mayor about this and the Mayor was not in favor of this. Discussion followed about the role of the Chief of Administration, the Chief Executive Officer and the Council President.

Atty. Mednick said that there were two items that Rev. Olson had suggested. Council President McCarthy said that he did not care if he presided over the Council meetings, but he would want to have the Mayor in attendance at a Council Meeting.

Mr. Valentino asked what the status of the City Sheriffs. Atty. Maley said that this would be discussed at the meeting on Monday night along with the issues relating to the City Attorney.

Mr. Estrada asked what the next steps would be. Atty. Mednick said that the Commission was constrained to only the issues that the Council had brought up.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** MR. WEICHSEL MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** MR. VALENTINO SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services