

CITY OF STAMFORD 19TH CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION ELECTED OFFICIALS COMMITTEE

Anthony Pramberger, Chair

Members

Michael Larobina
Thomas Lombardo
JR McMullen
Jackie Pioli

REPORT

Wednesday August 17, 2022

Modified September 1, 2022

**This meeting was held in the Democratic Caucus Room,
4th Floor, Government Center, 888 Washington Blvd.**

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by the Chair, at which time Commissioners Larobina, Lombardo and Pramberger were present. Commissioner McMullen joined at 5:38 pm; Commissioner Pioli did not attend. Also present were Commissioners Bowser, Halpern, Lane and Williams.
2. The Notes of the August 4, 2022, meeting were accepted by Commissioners Lombardo, McMullen and Pramberger. Commissioner Larobina abstained as he was not present at that meeting.
3. Individuals to Interview:
 - a. The invitation to Mayor Caroline Simmons was sent on Monday, August 15. It was also agreed that former Stamford Mayors (Esposito, Malloy, Martin, Pavia and Serani) should also be invited and each given 15-20 minutes to speak with the Committee. Upon further discussion, it was recommended that the invitation to the former Mayors should come from The Charter Revision Commission leadership, and not this committee directly, and all Commissioners be invited to attend. Commissioner Lombardo said he would speak with Commissioner Kolenberg about this.
 - b. Board of Representatives leadership - J. Curtis, M. Cottrell, N. Sherwood, M. Fedeli
 - c. Board of Education – all members. It was agreed that since Dr. Tamu Lucero was not an elected official, this committee should not ask to interview her.
 - d. City and Town Clerk L. Ruijter
 - e. Board of Finance – we will interview with the Finance Committee, which is scheduling the interview.
4. Starting on our workload:
 - a) Request from CRC Co-Chair - items numbered 2, 3, 4, 5, 112, 31, 28 – it was agreed that this committee would accept these items in its charge.
 - i. 2 – Amend to provide that public hearings have an opportunity for possible public/board member dialogue – While the committee felt that public/ board member dialogue on all matters would lead to an untenable situation, the committee

felt strongly that once elected and appointed officials hear from the public, there must be a period of reflection to consider and weigh what the public had to say before decisions are reached.

- ii. 3 – Amend to expand and strengthen public notice requirements and make published materials more accessible - Send notice to local groups; Send to local churches/synagogues and Mosque. Create a unique space on the City of Stamford website and its newsletters that make these materials readily available. The committee also thought that CRC Counsel to-be-hired should help with ordinance review particular to this matter.
- iii. 4 – Refine the definition of public notice to exclude any biased media – The committee questions how would one define “biased media”? The committee felt that this was not doable. The committee also thought that CRC Counsel to-be-hired should advise on this matter.
- iv. 5 – Review the frequency of charter revision - Charter Review Commissions in City Charters - A Review of Municipal Charter Requirements - A majority of cities (63%) conduct reviews on a decennial basis (i.e., at least every 10 years). This does not preclude more frequent Commissions but sets a minimum standard for review of the charter. The committee did not feel that a change was needed.
- v. 28 – Review whether years of experience for Corporation Counsel and counsel assigned to Board of Representatives should be uniform – the following materials were identified as relevant; discussion to be continued, with assistance of CRC Counsel to-be-hired:
 - i. **Sec. C5-20-2. Qualifications.**
 - 1. No person shall be eligible for the position of Corporation Counsel unless such person is a member in good standing of the Connecticut Bar, and has been actively practicing law in Connecticut for at least **five years**.
 - ii. **Sec. C1-90-1. Removal of Elective Officers.**
 - 1. The Board of Representatives shall designate an attorney who is a member in good standing of the bar of the State of Connecticut for at least ten (10) years to present such charges on behalf of the Board of Representatives. The standard of proof required for removal shall be clear and convincing evidence.
- vi. 31 – Change the language regarding Oaths to match the State statute
- vii. 112 - Give Board of Representatives ability to amend charter by a $\frac{3}{4}$ supermajority vote, which could then be voted on by public referendum

b. BOR recommendations and Public comments:

- a. 8 – Consider Term Limits - The committee thought that CRC Counsel to-be-hired should advise on this matter.
- b. 9 – Consider preventing elected officers from holding dual offices, including state offices such as state representative or as appropriate with appointed Boards or Commissions - The committee thought that CRC Counsel to-be-hired should advise on this matter.
- c. 10 – Consider compensation for members of the Board of Representatives, Board of Education and Board of Finance – The committee felt that this should be dealt with through the legislative process. The committee also thought that CRC Counsel to-be-hired should advise on this matter.
- d. 11 – Review having terms for Board of Education Member be 4 years – the Committee felt that Board of Education input was needed for this item, which will be sought during the interview with the BOE.

- e. 12 – Consider including an independent Registrar and/or Unaffiliated Registrar
 - i. This is controlled by State Statute. Universal Citation: [CT Gen Stat § 9-190 \(2012\)](#): “On and after January 9, 2013, each municipality shall have two registrars of voters for the entire municipality, except as otherwise provided for in this section. Each registrar of voters shall reside in the municipality for which the registrar of voters is elected. Notwithstanding any special act, for elections held on and after November 6, 2012, in each municipality in which registrars of voters are elected, no elector shall vote for more than one registrar of voters for the municipality. The candidate having the highest number of votes and the candidate having the next highest number of votes for the office of registrar of voters, who does not belong to the same political party as the candidate having the highest number, shall be declared elected registrars of voters for the municipality, provided, if the candidate for registrar of voters of a major party is not one of the registrars of voters so elected, such candidate of such major party shall also be declared elected registrar of voters. For purposes of this section, a major party shall be one having the largest or next largest total number of enrolled party members in the state, as determined by the latest enrollment records in the office of the Secretary of the State submitted in accordance with the provisions of section 9-65. The term of office of all registrars of voters for voting districts in office on January 7, 1995, shall expire on January 8, 1997, and on November 5, 1996, two registrars shall be elected for each municipality with more than two voting districts which previously elected registrars of voters for voting districts”.
 Modified on Sept. 1, 2022 – Since this is controlled by State Statute, the committee does not have the authority to make such changes.
- f. 16 - Allow the President of the Board of Representatives to issue oath of office
- g. 18 - Delete “or” before the Town Clerk”
 - i. Sec. C3-10-4. Temporary Absence or Disability of the Mayor, speaks to this
 - ii. In the event the Mayor is or intends to be absent from the City for a period of forty-eight (48) hours or more, the Mayor shall give written notice to that effect to the President and/or Clerk of the Board of Representatives and/or the Town Clerk.
 - iii. By keeping the word “or” you deal with the situation where the Board of Representative President is not available. If you want to make a change, you can have the notice go to the Clerk if the BOR President is not available.
 Modified on Sept. 1, 2022 – the Chair will review the source of the request to clarify intent. If needed, the committee will seek the input of the Board of Representatives leadership when the committee meets with them.
- h. 19 - Clarify that the Mayor may issue the oath of office (might be a separate Section; make consistent with State law)
- i. 96 - Board of Representatives should have term limits of 3-4 terms
- j. 97 - Halve the number of members on the Board of Representatives, either by having one per district or reducing the number of districts to 10
- k. 98 – Give the members of the Representative staggered terms, so ½ of the Board is elected every 2 years
- l. 115 - Consider how other cities are governed, e.g. Austin
- m. 116 - Zero base government structure
- n. 117 - Replace Board of Representatives with City Council
- o. 119 – Biannual BOR elections that mirror BOF and BOE elections. One of the two district seats every 2 years. High vote getter gets the four seat and second four

seat and second gets the two-year seat.

- c. Own recommendations - Will be based on review of the following sections of the Charter under this committee's purview:
 - a) Part 1, Div. 7, Election Provisions
 - b) Part 1, Div. 8, Elective Officers
 - c) Part 1, Div. 9, Removal of Elective Officers
 - d) Part 2, Div. 1, Board of Representatives
 - e) Part 3, Div. 1, Mayor's Powers
 - f) Part 4, Div. 1, Town & City Clerk
 - g) Part 6, Div. 2, Elective Boards

- 5. The following meeting dates were agreed upon for the remainder of 2022:
 - September 1, 15, 28
 - October 6 and 19
 - November 3 and 16
 - December 1 and 15

- 6. Adjournment – the meeting was adjourned at 6:58 pm.