

## **CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION MEETING**

**6:30 p.m. MARCH 28, 2024**

**LOCATION: Willowick City Hall**

**Present: Natalie Antosh, Keith Beck, Jodi Di Domenico, Mark Lasmanis, Patrick Mohorcic, Nicole Monaco, Tom Ott, David Phares, Bob Reho.**

Mayor Vanni welcomed the commission members to their first meeting and outlined the charter review process. Proposed amendments are due 90 days before the November election, typically the first week in August.

The mayor did not directly propose any amendments but said the law director had mentioned the possibility of having the Board of Zoning Appeals cast the final vote on matters that come before the BZA instead of forwarding the board's decisions to the City Council for approval or rejection. The mayor said that according to the law director, most cities leave the final decision to their BZAs. The mayor said he had no preference.

The mayor instructed the commission to select a chairperson and secretary but said the three City Council members on the commission should not be among the choices. Bob Reho volunteered to serve as chair. Tom Ott will act as secretary.

The commission then began going through the charter section by section.

### **ARTICLE I THE MUNICIPALITY**

#### **SECTION 1.1 NAMES AND BOUNDARIES**

Current wording deemed acceptable.

### **ARTICLE II THE POWER OF THE MUNICIPALITY**

#### **SECTION 2.1 POWERS**

Current wording deemed acceptable.

### **ARTICLE III THE COUNCIL**

#### **SECTION 3.1 NUMBER AND TERM**

Currently, all council members run in the same election, along with the mayor, raising the possibility of the entire government turning over in the same year. Tom Ott asked whether any members had interest in staggering the four-year terms to preserve institutional knowledge when seats change hands.

Several commission members expressed support for exploring the idea. Natalie Antosh said most cities in the area stagger council terms. Patrick Mohorcic said staggering elections would allow voters to make changes in the composition of the council at shorter intervals. A previous amendment, approved by voters, extended terms from two to four years, giving members more time to serve without worrying about campaigning.

The commission will consult with the mayor and law director to learn the basis for choosing the current system and how the transition to staggered terms could be accomplished.

### **SECTION 3.2 WARDS**

Current wording deemed acceptable.

### **SECTION 3.3 QUALIFICATIONS**

Nicole Monaco questioned whether the requirement that council members live in the city continuously for one year before being elected or appointed should be increased and added that she would be comfortable with two years. David Phares stressed that candidates need to get involved and become familiar with the community before holding office. Patrick Mohorcic said he does not think that the number of years determines whether someone cares enough about the community or is qualified to run and added that voters should decide those questions. Bob Reho said members appeared to be weighing whether to keep the requirement at a year or increase it to two years. No consensus emerged, but the issue could be revisited.

### **SECTION 3.4 REMOVAL**

Current wording deemed acceptable.

### **SECTION 3.5 VACANCIES**

Current wording deemed acceptable.

### **SECTION 3.6 SALARIES AND BONDS**

Nicole Monaco asked whether other commission members saw benefit in placing council salary increases on the ballot. Others responded that the salaries represented a

minimal portion of the municipal budget and that residents could voice their opinion during the three readings the legislation would have to undergo before the council voted.

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We will ask the law director whether the following reference is outdated and should be deleted, pending voter approval, or whether it may be viewed as historical context. "The Council of the Municipality shall, on or before August 1, 1953, fix the salaries of all elective officials assuming office January 1, 1954. Natalie Antosh expressed concern that voters might cast sweeping votes to reject all amendments, even housekeeping measures.

### **SECTION 3.7 COUNCILPERSON AT-LARGE; DUTIES**

Current wording deemed acceptable.

### **SECTION 3.8 SUCCESSOR TO THE MAYOR**

We will ask the law director whether new language is needed now that the mayor's position is full time. The concern is that the line of succession ends with the City Council and the charter does not specify what would happen if all council members declined. Patrick Mohorcic said nothing in the charter would prohibit the mayor from holding a second full-time job.

### **SECTION 3.9 VACANCY IN OFFICE OF COUNCILPERSON-AT-LARGE**

Current wording deemed acceptable.

### **SECTION 3.10 EMPLOYEES OF COUNCIL**

We will ask the law director whether reference to "The Director of Finance as the Clerk of Council ..." should be stricken, pending voter approval, now that the clerk is a separate position. This reference appears elsewhere in the charter. Tom Ott wondered if all routine amendments could be handled in a single ballot issue.

### **SECTION 3.11 ORGANIZATION. (REPEALED)**

No action needed.

The current wording of the following sections was deemed acceptable.

### **SECTION 3.12 MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL AND OTHER MUNICIPAL BODIES**

### **SECTION 3.13 QUORUM**

### **SECTION 3.14 PROCEDURE**

### **SECTION 3.15 EFFECTIVE DATE OF ORDINANCES OR RESOLUTIONS**

**SECTION 3.16 EMERGENCY ORDINANCES OR RESOLUTIONS**

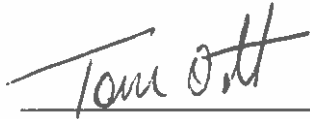
**SECTION 3.17 GENERAL ORDINANCES**

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m. Commission members tentatively scheduled their next meeting for 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 11, 2024.



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Commission Chair, Bob Reho

ATTEST:



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Secretary, Tom Ott