

TOWN OF RICHMOND, RHODE ISLAND
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HOME RULE CHARTER COMMISSION

Town Hall – Council Chambers
October 7, 2021
5:30 P.M.

MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 P.M. by Chairman Reddish.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair B. Joe Reddish, III, Vice Chair Mark T. Reynolds, Joseph Arsenault, Benjamin Jack, Krista M. Tracy, Gina M. DeBernardo, and Tracy A. Nelson; Absent: Erin F. Liese

T. Nelson was selected as Clerk Pro-Tempore in E. Liese absence.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 1) Discussion and Approval of Minutes from September 14, 2021

MOTION made by M. Reynolds, SECOND by G. DeBernardo to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2021 meeting as presented. Ayes – 6 (Reynolds, Jack, Reddish, Tracy, DeBernardo, and Nelson); Abstain – 1 (Arsenault)

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Please Note in Accordance with Section 42-46-6 (b) the Commission May Review, Discuss and/or take Action on the following items

- 1) Discussion on Budget Adoption Language Research

The Commission reviewed the language and timeline submitted by Finance Director Kenyon and Administrator Pinch. Concerns were expressed, particularly with a potential ten-day window from Council approval to the Financial Town Referendum. Advertising would be a challenge.

As a result of discussion, it was decided to change the timeline to the following:

- All budget requests to be submitted to Town Manager no later than January 15
- Town Manager to submit preliminary budget to Finance Board no later than February 15
- Finance Board return recommendations to Town Manager no later than March 15
- Town Manager to submit proposed budget to Town Council no later than March 31
- Town Council to hold at least two public hearings; the first public hearing to be held at a regularly scheduled Council meeting in April
- Town Council finalize budget no later than May 21 to be submitted to Financial Town Referendum

T. Nelson will draft a revised Article 5, Section 2 to reflect the adjustments. Section 3(D) will specify the “municipal” budget shall be level funded. The word “adopted” will be stricken from Section 3(E).

Discussion ensued relative to definition of a “level funded budget”. The intent is for the bottom line to be level funded with the Town Manager given the authority to move appropriations from one department or line item to another. T. Nelson will research appropriate language.

T. Nelson will prepare a revised draft and submit to E. Liese for distribution to the Finance Director and Town Administrator for feedback.

The Commission will seek clarification on whether bond items can appear as individual ballot questions, separate from budget, on the ballot for the Financial Town Referendum.

2) Discussion on Town Manager Language Research

The Commission reviewed the draft language. Consensus was reached to add language to specify the Town Manager’s temporary designation cannot exceed 30 days without Council approval. T. Nelson will prepare a revised draft for the next meeting.

Due to time constraints, the Town Manager duties and responsibilities will continue at the next meeting.

E. NEW BUSINESS

Please Note in Accordance with Section 42-46-6 (b) the Commission May Review, Discuss and/or take Action on the following items:

1) Discussion on Soliciting Input/ Feedback on the Charter Review Process

Discussion ensued regarding public forum. It was decided to wait until the Town Manager duties and responsibilities are drafted before adding public forum to the Commission’s agendas.

2) Discussion on Amendments to the Home Rule Charter Regarding Municipal Court

In response to the Commission’s solicitation of input from Department Heads, Town Planner Shaun Lacey encouraged implementation of a Municipal Court. E. Liese previously indicated Chief Johnson has been researching. E. Liese will be asked to coordinate with the Chief to attend one of the Commission’s future meetings. It was noted that expenses must be weighed against the revenue.

3) Schedule future meeting dates

Based on the availability provided by E. Liese the next two meetings were scheduled for October 28, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. and November 10, 2021 at 5:30 P.M.

F. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION made by J. Arsenault, SECOND by G. DeBernardo to adjourn at 7:01 P.M.
All Ayes**

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy A. Nelson
Clerk Pro-Tempore