



City of Venice

401 West Venice Avenue
Venice, FL 34285
www.venicegov.com

Meeting Minutes Charter Review Committee

Monday, August 16, 2021

9:00 AM

Council Chambers

I. Call to Order

Chair Boone called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Present 7 - Mr. Ernest Booker, Mr. John Holic, Mr. Richard Clapp, Mr. Kit McKeon, Mr. Jeffery Boone, Mr. Jon Preiksats and Mr. Joseph Ferretti

Also Present

City Manager Ed Lavalley, City Attorney Kelly Fernandez, City Clerk Lori Stelzer, and Administrative Coordinator Toni Cone.

In-person: Mr. Boone, Mr. Ferretti, Mr. Holic, Mr. McKeon, Mr. Preiksats

Via video conference: Mr. Booker and Mr. Clapp

III. Approval of Minutes

[21-5159](#) Minutes of the June 25, 2021 Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Preiksats and seconded by Mr. McKeon that the Minutes of the June 25, 2021 meeting be approved as written. The motion carried by voice vote unanimously.

IV. Audience Participation

There was none.

V. New Business

[21-5160](#) Article I. Powers and Article II. Corporate Boundaries

Ms. Fernandez indicated that Article I and Article II are controlled by state statute.

There was no further discussion.

[21-5161](#) Article III. Legislative

Ms. Fernandez stated the comments and language provided were received by the city clerk from city council and council had previously accepted the

language prior to the charter review committee being formed.

Discussion took place regarding section 3.01 City Council, Powers, composition, to include reduction of city council from seven members to five members, the benefits of having more council members, variety of opinions, meeting time, local cities that have five members, rationale for reducing number of members, whether a decision would be made on this or other sections today.

Mr. Boone discussed the process and inquired as to how the committee wanted to handle each decision.

Discussion ensued regarding making final decisions about recommendations today, obtaining consensus on each section, or just discussing.

Ms. Fernandez stated if there was a consensus she would need to draft language for them to vote on at a future meeting.

There was consensus to discuss each section, reach consensus, have attorney draft language, and revisit the section at the next meeting.

Discussion continued regarding number of council members, representation, other cities, the growth of Venice, and whether districts may be appropriate, a change in number of council members may impact other parts of the charter such as elections, and it was noted that a five person board is easily dominated by a few people.

There was consensus to make no change to the number of city council members.

Discussion occurred regarding districts for city council, the pros and cons of districts, partisanship, the current system, the growth of North Venice and that districts may be appropriate with growth, districts could impact decisions that benefit one area, the benefits of having districted city-wide elections, every citizen should be able to vote for every member of council, hybrid situations, districted seats vs. voting individuals allowed to vote for all of city council.

Chair Boone summarized the four alternatives to be considered at the next meeting: council elected at-large, districted council seats, with citizens voting for every candidate, districted seats and votes, and hybrid - four districted seats, three at-large seats.

Chair Boone recommended making districting versus at-large council seats a future agenda item to discuss at next meeting.

Ms. Stelzer stated she would provide the city precinct map, with boundaries and how many registered voters in each precinct at the next meeting.

Discussion occurred regarding the possible amendments that city council proposed regarding mayor and vice-mayor.

Discussion ensued regarding clarifying language of the items that could be handled by the city manager or his designee, currently, all contracts are signed by mayor, even those that do not need city council approval, if the item requires city council approval, the mayor will sign.

Ms. Fernandez stated items involving contracts and purchasing could be executed by city manager or designee if charter was amended.

Mr. Lavallee noted that council has prerogative to have staff handle for efficiencies, certain financial values, and council could specify criteria in a resolution or ordinance.

Discussion continued regarding review by city attorney, obligation of the mayor, and what is considered a contract.

Ms. Stelzer stated there is a contract approval policy in place for city attorney, risk management, and finance review.

Discussion took place regarding delegation of contract execution taking place annually by city council.

Ms. Fernandez noted that delegation was always open to modification by city council, but did not recommend scheduling it annually.

Ms. Stelzer responded to a board question about the contract review policy and noted that if the new policy is approved by city council, the contract approval process would fall under the city manager purview.

There was consensus to make change to include underlying language clarifying the city council signatory designation to city manager.

There was consensus to recommend to city council that the policy for contract execution affected by this section of the charter be codified.

The meeting went into recess from 10:38 a.m. to 10:54 a.m.

Ms. Fernandez stated the appointments of committee and advisory board members is completed by the mayor, after receiving rankings from all council members, the language giving the mayor authority over all appointments would be eliminated from the charter and there would be an

ordinance or resolution detailing the process.

Mr. Clapp stated the charter should state who has the authority to make appointments if it is removed from the mayor.

Discussion took place regarding the principal duties of the mayor.

There was consensus for Ms. Fernandez to draft language to clarify the duties of the mayor and delegation of obligations, and appointments to boards by city council.

There was consensus to have city attorney draft language to bring back for vote regarding election of the vice-mayor.

Discussion took place regarding the qualification to hold the office of mayor or city council member of being a registered voter in the city for 12 consecutive months.

Discussion ensued regarding length of time as a registered voter, reasonableness, and age.

Ms. Fernandez will review case law to see if there are any restrictions on the length of time a voter must be registered.

Discussion occurred regarding consistency, representatives for Council of Governments, strong mayor vs. weak mayor, election of mayor, rotation by seat number, election by the members of council each year, and the current election process.

There was consensus to not make a change to the process for electing mayor.

Discussion took place regarding terms limits for mayor and council members, consecutive terms, and term limits for combination of mayor and council member.

There was consensus to not make the change recommended by city council to limit their combined term as mayor and city council to no more than three consecutive elected terms.

There was consensus to have Ms. Fernandez draft language and review at next meeting.

Discussion continued regarding number of terms an individual can be elected to city council and mayor.

Ms. Fernandez noted if an individual is elected to fill a partial term it does not count against the maximum number of terms they may serve.

There was consensus to not make any changes to the number of terms.

The meeting went into recess from 12:08 p.m. to 1:19 p.m.

Mr. Booker left the meeting at 12:08 p.m. and did not return.

Ms. Stelzer displayed salary research on other local cities, Town of Longboat Key, City of Sarasota, City of North Port, and Sarasota County.

Discussion occurred regarding utilizing state formula for county commissioners, voter approval, current salaries being higher than the formula provides for, growth, consumer price index (CPI), timing of increase, last increase was 17 years ago, and cumulative annual factor.

Ms. Stelzer will inquire with the City of Sarasota regarding the .667 figure.

Ms. Fernandez will draft language on compensation.

There was consensus to review formula at next meeting.

Discussion continued regarding understanding the numbers in the formula and hours worked.

Discussion took place regarding method of selection for filling vacancies of mayor or city council members.

Ms. Fernandez stated that the ranking system was intended for board vacancies.

There was discussion that ranking system should not be utilized, past systems used varied based on the council seated at that time.

Discussion occurred that there should be no changes to emergency succession.

Discussion occurred regarding forfeiture of office, having legal counsel present, and who would pay that attorney.

Discussion took place recommending special meetings may be called by mayor at the request of a charter officer or majority of council, suggestion that the mayor could not call a special meeting on their own.

Mr. Lavalley stated that the mayor is part of the agenda committee, which consists of the mayor and the three charter officers, administrative duty to guide council, special meetings, operating issues, and policy level

decisions.

Ms. Stelzer noted that it may not be appropriate for the charter officers to be put in a position to refuse the mayor a special meeting.

Ms. Fernandez indicated that the city has adopted Roberts Rules and it could be taken out of the charter and addressed in the code.

Mr. Boone noted the issues regarding a mayor having to get a charter officer to schedule a special meeting, and if there was a need to address this situation.

There was consensus to bring back section 3.08 Procedure for discussion at the next meeting.

Ms. Fernandez discussed the change for voting on an ordinance, resolution or contract and if they receive affirmative votes of fewer than four, but when the affirmative votes of enough when added to the absent members make four, the ordinance, resolution or contract shall be automatically rescheduled/continued once to the next regular meeting, it would normally fail if there were a three-three vote, and recommended making this change for clarity.

Discussion continued on Roberts Rules, other options, and provisions available.

Ms. Stelzer discussed Roberts Rules of Order options.

There was consensus to not make the change to voting, as recommended by city council.

There were no changes or discussion to the section regarding the city clerk.

There were no changes or discussion regarding the city attorney.

There was consensus to use gender neutral language.

A motion was made by Mr. Holic, seconded by Mr. Ferretti that the Charter Review Committee request the City Clerk to send an email to city council requesting the average number of hours worked per week by each council member and the mayor. The motion carried by voice vote unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Holic, seconded by Mr. Ferretti that the Charter Review Committee request city council direct staff to review Resolution No. 2020-38 to make sure that it is clear the procedure that applies to advisory board appointments does not apply to council or mayoral vacancy appointments. The motion carried by voice vote unanimously.

[21-5162](#)

Meeting Schedule through December 31, 2021

Discussion took place regarding the meeting schedule and it was noted that Mr. McKeon will be absent on October 18, 2021 and Mr. Booker will be absent on August 30, 2021.

[21-5163](#)

Reference Documents Requested by Committee and Council Members

VI. Unfinished Business

There was none.

VII. Future Agenda Items

The items to include on the next agenda will be under unfinished business at the beginning of the agenda and the committee will be prepared to discuss up to section seven at next meeting.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

Chair

Administrative Coordinator