



Charter Review Commission
Regular Commission Minutes
February 11, 2025

Members Present: Amy Berger, Nancy Crawford, Kris Heller, Matt Hochberg, Randy Rentz, Shannon Stark, Joey Thomas

Staff Present: Kaitlin Grafmiller, David Brehm, Rebecca Princehorn (Bricker Graydon)

Others Present: Mayor St. John, Cindi Cooper, Daryl Hennessy

Call to Order

Chairman **Randy Rentz** called the meeting to order.

Roll call was conducted by **Kaitlin Grafmiller**, confirming all members were present.

Approval of Minutes

- **Motioned:** Kris Heller
- **Seconded:** Nancy Crawford
- **Approval:** Unanimous (7-0)Public Comments

Public Comments

No attendees wished to make public comments. However, **Ms. Princehorn** informed the Commission that City staff received an email from **Mr. Paul Hollar**, a resident, with proposed comments and changes for the Commission to review. She suggested distributing these comments during the discussion of relevant Charter articles to streamline the review process.

Review of Work Plan

Ms. Princehorn presented the revised work plan, noting that the Commission will not meet on February 25th and March 25th. She outlined the schedule of article discussions to ensure timely completion for the Charter's placement on the ballot this year.

Discussion of Article III – Council

- **Redlined Charter Review:**

The Commission received a **redlined copy** of the City Charter highlighting proposed changes, primarily replacing "**Municipality**" with "**City**" and other language cleanups.

- **New Albany Charter Insights:**

At the Commission's request, Ms. Princehorn contacted the **Mayor of New Albany** for insights on their Charter review. He emphasized the importance of:

1. Maintaining **non-partisan elections**.
2. Ensuring the **Mayor is elected directly by voters**.
3. Allowing **executive session discussions on economic development**

He also stated that having a **professional City Manager** under Council's direction was a **major factor** in their success.

- **Public Comments from Mr. Hollar:**

Mr. Brehm reviewed Mr. Hollar's comments regarding the inclusion of **New Community Authorities (NCA)** in the Charter. After consultation with outside counsel, it was determined that while the **concept is valid**, it is **not appropriate for the Charter**.

- **Section 3.02 – Council Composition:**

Mr. Brehm proposed **adjusting Council election cycles** to better balance terms, preventing a scenario where four seats are up for election simultaneously. The change would transition elections to a **3-3-Mayor format**, requiring one Council member in **2029** to run for a **two-year term** before resuming four-year terms.

- **Motioned:** Nancy Crawford
- **Seconded:** Amy Berger
- **Approval:** Unanimous (7-0)

- **Section 3.03 – Mayor's Role:**

Recommended to be moved under the Mayor's section of the Charter for clarity.

- **Section 3.04 – Terminology Cleanup:**

General language updates for consistency.

- **Section 3.05 – Council Agendas & Packets:**

Public comments suggested that **Council agendas and packets be made available the Friday before meetings and this be added to the Charter.**

Administrator Hennessy noted that agendas are typically posted by 6:00 p.m. Friday, while packets are **delivered** Monday before the meeting. He agreed to improve consistency but emphasized this is an **administrative practice**, not a Charter issue.

- **Clerk of Council Language:**

Mr. Thomas questioned language allowing the **Clerk of Council’s removal without cause**. Mr. Hennessy clarified that as the City grows, Council will have the ability to **appoint its own Clerk**, who would no longer be City staff. **Mayor St. John** noted that the **Personnel Board of Appeals** provides oversight in dismissal cases.

- **Alternate Clerk Provision:**

Ms. Princehorn highlighted an existing provision allowing an **alternate Clerk** in case of absence.

- **Motioned:** Nancy Crawford

- **Seconded:** Amy Berger

- **Approval:** Unanimous (7-0)

- **Administrator vs. Manager Language:**

Should the Commission recommend transitioning to a Manager-Council government, "Administrator" must be replaced with "Manager" throughout the Charter.

- **Council Meeting Schedule:**

Ms. Crawford questioned why the schedule was worded vaguely. She pointed out that other municipalities have language stating “Council will meet at least X times per month” and she questioned if Sunbury’s charter should be worded similarly. **Brehm and Ms. Princehorn** explained that flexibility accommodates **holidays, absences, and other scheduling conflicts**.

- **New & Unfinished Business:**

Mr. Hennessy requested clarification on the proper use of the **“New and Unfinished Business”** agenda section. City staff will review, though this is likely an **internal procedural issue, not a Charter concern**.

Discussion of Article IV – Legislative Procedures

- **Section 4.03 – Form & Style of Resolutions and Ordinances:**

Public comments requested clarification on formatting. **Mr. Brehm will review** and ensure **clear guidelines** are established.

- **Section 4.04 – Readings of Resolutions & Ordinances:**

Public comments suggested **reducing the required three readings** to two. Mr. Brehm noted that the **current structure allows flexibility**, as Council can shorten or extend the process.

- **Motion to keep current language:**

- **Motioned:** Amy Berger
- **Seconded:** Kris Heller
- **Approval:** 6-1 (Motion passed)

- **Section 4.05 – Recording of Voting Results:**

A public suggestion recommended **reflecting voting results by name**. Mr. Brehm advised this **be addressed in Council rules rather than the Charter**.

- **Motion to address in Council rules:**

- **Motioned:** Shannon Stark
- **Seconded:** Joey Thomas
- **Approval:** 5-2 (Motion passed)

- **Section 4.13 – Technical Codes:**

Ms. Princehorn, as suggested via public comment, inquired whether the **City should have the authority to expand technical codes** beyond **State requirements**. City staff will **review and provide recommendations**.

- **Automatic Adoption of State Code Changes:**

The Commission discussed the benefits of **automatically updating City codes** to align with State law for efficiency. No formal motion was made at this time.

Good of the Order

- **Election Timeline:**

Ms. Princehorn outlined the **timeline** to ensure the **Charter amendments** reach the ballot before the **August 6th deadline** for the **November election**.

- **Public Notification:**

The consensus was to **mail a Charter copy to residents** and provide a **redlined version on the website**, as done in previous reviews. This followed **Mr. Hollar's suggestion**.

- **Vote on Changing to a Manager-Council Government:**

Ms. Stark proposed a motion for the Commission to formally **recommend transitioning to a Manager-Council form of government**.

- **Motioned:** Amy Berger
- **Seconded:** Shannon Stark
- **Approval:** Unanimous (7-0)

Mr. Brehm will begin updating the **redlined Charter** to reflect this change.

- **Next Meeting Preparation:**

Ms. Princehorn will distribute materials for the **next meeting in two weeks**.

Adjournment

- **Motioned:** Kris Keller
- **Seconded:** Nancy Crawford
- **Approval:** Unanimous (7-0)

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: March 11, 2025