

Mike Will, Chairman, called the Charter Review Committee (CRC) meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Donovan Cole, Dennis Feltner, Talon Flohr, Darwitt Garrett, Andy Gundlach, Dan Kaman, Nicole Lloyd, Mike Meinzer, Chris Parthemore, Jennifer Washington, Mike Will and Conor Whelan.

Members absent: Anthony Jones & Christine Mack.

Staff members present: Don Icsman – Law Director, Eric Wobser – City Manager, Kelly Kresser – Commission Clerk, Naomi Twine & Wesley Poole – City Commissioners.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion of Dan Kaman and second of Mike Meinzer, the members voted to approve the minutes of the March 3 meeting and suspend the oral reading. The Chairman declared the motion passed.

PRESENTATION

Eric Wobser provided an **overview of different activities which the city undertakes**, not necessarily under the charter, but all of which are governed by the charter. Sandusky is a home rule “chartered” city under the State of Ohio which outlines our ability to govern ourselves. The city’s organizational chart starts with the voters who elect seven city commissioners with term limits. The City Manager, Law Director, Finance Director and Commission Clerk report directly to these elected officials and they all work very closely with each other and with the commissioners. There are certain things these employees are permitted to do on a day-to-day basis while others must first go through the commissioners for approval via legislation. Departments reporting to the City Manager include Public Services (Horticultural Services, Property Maintenance, Fleet Maintenance, Street/Traffic, Recreation and Oakland Cemetery), Administrative Services (Human Resources and Information Technology), Community Development (Housing & Code Enforcement, Building, Economic Development and Neighborhood Development & Planning), Public Works (Engineering & Capital projects), BIWW and Water Distribution, WPC and Sewer Maintenance), Fire and Police Departments. There are also many different boards and commissions which help each of the departments; individuals are appointed to these boards both by the Commissioners and the City Manager.

Don Icsman distributed a **sourcebook from the Ohio Municipal League** regarding municipal charters in Ohio. Charters are the fundamental framework for the governmental entity and set the broad form of how powers of self-government will be exercised locally. All municipal

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corporations had to go through the State in 1914 to adopt a charter to demonstrate what form each would take. The two most prominent forms of government currently in Ohio are the City Manager/Council or the Mayor/Council and each municipality chooses. Local regulations cannot conflict with certain state regulations such as residential restrictions for employees. The most recent issue concerning fracking allows for state procedures to allow obtaining permits.

CHARTER WORKSHEET

Mike Will said the **charter worksheet** was used by previous Charter Review Commissions to systematically go through the sections. Mike Will wanted the members to have this and said we will work toward using this as we go forward.

BRAINSTORMING

Mike Will said as members have talked to people in the community, he would like them to share different ideas they may have heard or they may want as they relate to the city charter. The goal is to get a full spectrum of ideas and then make a determination what ideas to work toward at a later date. The ideas presented are as follows:

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>IDEA</u>
Mike Meinzer	Consider changing term limits of City Commissioners; authority and power of the City Manager & powers and duties of the Commission President
Darwitt Garrett	Consider Mayor/Ward system of government
Mike Will	Eliminate of residency requirements
Conor Whelan	Consider providing the City Manager more power as executive in his role and make position less restrictive with the elected officials
Andy Gundlach	Look at the structure of Charter officers with Commissioners; have one City Manager - who acts as CEO – with all other employees reporting to him/her directly
Dennis Feltner	Consider changing term limits and size of commission (less members); consider ward system of government; decrease size of legal advertisement required in the newspaper to save money
Donovan Cole	Increase limit for expenditures requiring competitive bidding from \$10,000 to \$15,000
Talon Flohr	Increase salary for commissioners perhaps by decreasing number of commissioners and redistributing funds
Chris Parthemore	Language regarding duties of the President of the City Commission “taking command and governing the city during times of emergency” seems antiquated and may need to be removed
Jennifer Washington	Increase salaries of elected officials; street resurfacing and how projects are chosen

Nikki Lloyd	Law Director and Finance Director should work for the City Manager; publish
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	legislation on the website rather than in the newspaper
Dan Kaman	Keep accountability in mind with the Charter – permanent rank of Lieutenant or higher is required for Police and Fire Chiefs and we are losing out on good candidates; City Manager vs Strong Mayor form of government

Don Icsman said **residency requirements** for city employees (other than elected officials) is no longer an option for municipalities regardless of what may be written in a local charter.

Dennis Feltner said he would like to consider allowing **public input** very soon to use as a basis for identifying changes to the charter. The citizens have given the city money for their betterment and for services; this is not about power, it is about accountability.

Don Icsman said **changes proposed for each section**, even if only for a preposition, would require a separate ballot issue, they cannot be done with one “blanket” change.

Dennis Feltner said it would be appropriate for **current charter officers and commissioners to provide comments** about the issues brought forth.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Upon motion of Dennis Feltner and second of Jennifer Washington, the members voted to ask city staff to secure consultants/experts/persons in various governments to present and discuss forms of government in Ohio.

Discussion: Mike Will said big issues related to **strong Mayor form of government versus the City Manager form of government** might be better understood by having professional(s) present information to the Charter Review Committee. Dennis Feltner asked if these individuals would be paid and suggested inviting someone from a city of similar size with a strong Mayor form of government such as the Mayor from the City of Lima. Nikki Lloyd said her concern is to ensure the person to speak is unbiased. Mike Will recalls the past Charter Reviews Committee had two speakers, each biased toward one form of government. Andy Gundlach said it would be good for an educator to speak about theory who understands each form of government and is unbiased. Eric Wobser said the city’s strategic planning/comprehensive planning consultants can help find persons to speak but he does not want there to be a perception he (Eric) is trying to control this process. Don Icsman said the forms of government are strong Mayor, City Manager (elected or appointed) and weak Mayor and it would be good to have someone speak to each form in theory. Andy Gundlach said he likes the idea of persons from both sides to provide their views as well as allowing members of the public to provide theirs. Dennis Feltner said this session is not meant for citizen input but

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that should be done separately. Mike Will asked about the timing and to try and coordinate this as soon as possible. Chris Parthemore said it might be important to hear opinions from people on more than only this topic. Darwitt Garrett said the Department Heads addressed the last Charter Review Committee to speak about specific proposed changes. Dan Kaman said if we are to have four different speakers and the public is also invited, each should be allotted a specific timeframe to speak and this could make for a very long session, but everyone would walk away with good information about why they were convinced to feel a certain way. Andy Gundlach said he would prefer to have both sessions at the same time. Mike Will said we will follow up on the availability and timing for the May 5 meeting with outside speaker(s).

The Chairman declared the motion passed.

Upon motion of Andy Gundlach and second of Chris Parthemore, the members voted to hold an open forum for the public to share their thoughts about the Charter with the members of the Charter Review Committee.

Discussion: Andy Gundlach said a time limit should be set for each person to speak. Dennis Feltner said the professionals should come at the same time/date and allow the public to speak unless we want to limit our meetings to a specific timeframe. Darwitt Garrett said he thinks these should be held on separate dates. Dan Kaman said if there are two separate meetings we may lose some people. Nikki Lloyd said the concerns of the public should be heard, but the speakers are coming in for the benefit of the committee members. Jennifer Washington asked if we can advertise to attract those who might be interested in learning what the professionals have to say as well as for the Charter Review members.

The Chairman declared the motion passed.

Upon motion of Chris Parthemore and second of Nikki Lloyd, the members voted to hold the public input meeting first, and within 14 days.

Discussion: Darwitt Garrett asked if this allows enough time to make sure the public knows about this for scheduling their time and noted if this is specifically for the public, more notice should be provided.

The Chairman declared the motion passed with one “Nay” vote from Darwitt Garrett.

Dan Kaman said for future meetings, **Audience Participation** should be added as a regular item of business.

Mike Meinzer said after the last meeting he and the Chairman discussed the press/public **spokesperson for the Charter Review Committee** and suggested Dan Kaman do this and speak toward consensus rather than opinion. Dan Kaman said anyone is able to attend these meetings to listen or provide input.

Mike Will invited persons from the audience to speak.

Sharon Johnson said she has a big concern as there is a lot of territory to cover and the committee is only meeting once per month in order to get something on the November ballot. Mike Meinzer said it is better to do this correctly rather than quickly. Talon Flohr asked if he was correct in understanding issues could go to the 2016 ballot if not decided this year and Don Icsman said the reason to make the deadline for the November election is a cost factor. When this cost can be shared with others on the ballot, this is motivation to get this work done. Changes must be presented to the City Commissioners initially and the timing of the proposed recommendations for the next regular or special election would be decided accordingly. Don Icsman said normally the Chairman submits recommendations to the City Commissioners all at one time rather than as they are decided and the commission must then act no less than 60 days or no longer than 120 days after passage.

Eric Wobser said Strategy Design Partners, as part of the strategic planning process, will be preparing a community survey for public engagement and questions can be included on behalf of the Charter Review Committee. This survey will be out in approximately mid-April and available for 30 – 60 days. Mike Will said if any members have ideas about questions for this survey, to submit them to him via email for consideration.

Wesley Poole said to consider the role of the Charter Review Committee which is to review each section of the Charter. Each City Commissioner has appointed two persons for this committee and they will use the recommendations to determine placement – or not – on the ballot. As the committee deliberates toward public input, consider how much time will be spent on this and if the task is not complete by July, their recommendations may fall to a totally different group of commissioners with no connection. This may have an impact on relevancy of action taken by the Charter Review Committee.

The Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 21 at 5 p.m.

Kelly L. Kresser, CMC
Clerk of the City Commission

Michael J. Will
Chairperson