

**CITY OF GROVE CITY, OHIO
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

September 24, 2024

Organizational Meeting

1. The regular meeting of the Charter Review Committee was called to order by Chair Frea at 6:05 p.m. in the Lower Level of City Hall, 4035 Broadway. Roll call was called and the following were present:

David Frea, Wayne Kintz, Brian Parks, Jeff Ritchie, Chris Roach, Cindy Sgalla, Judith Zimomra.

Absent: Karen Evans, Mike Linder

Ex-Officio members: Ted Berry, Christine Houk. Support Staff: Thad Boggs, Tami Kelly. Also present: Chuck Boso, City Admin.

2. Mr. Thad Boggs, representing Mr. Smith – Dir. of Law, introduced himself and explained that he works with municipalities from both Strong Mayor and City Manager forms of government. She share a slideshow outlining each form of government. He noted that in a Strong Mayor/Council/City Admin. Form, the Mayor is like the CEO and the City Admin. is like the COO of a company. They are the Executive side. Council is the Legislative Side and there is a check and balance system in place. In a City manager form, the legislative and executive functions are fused together. Council works through the City Manager. He said there are variations of hiring the staff. Each Charter can be different. He noted that there is no check and balance of veto power from a mayor in a City Manager form. He said all forms of government have their pros and cons.

Ms. Zimomra asked if there were any common elements. Mr. Boggs said it is difficult to say. It is common across the Country for larger cities to have a Mayor/Council form of government.

Mr. Parks asked how the President of Council could change mid-stream. It was explained that the Grove City Charter requires a president be elected at their organizational meeting (every two years). If the President would resign before the two years are complete, then Council would elect someone else from themselves. Mr. Boggs said it would be good to have a way to deal with that in the Charter, or perhaps the Rules of Council.

Discussion then took place about the removal of the Mayor, which would be done through a Recall Petition.

Mr. Parks asked if you had to have a Mayor under a City Manager form. Mr. Boggs said not sure, but all communities do. There needs to be someone to do the mayoral duties.

Mr. Frea asked about the appointment of department heads. Mr. Boggs said traditionally, Council hires the City Manager and the Clerk. The Departments would be hired by the City Manager. However, some Charters have the Law Director hired by Council; the Finance Director is hired by City Manager, but cannot be fired without consent of Council. A community can make those decisions in any form of government.

Ms. Sgalla said she was told that a City Manager form is less responsive to the public than a Mayor/Council form. Ms. Zimomra said that would depend on how good the City Manager or Council Members are. Mr. Boggs said with a City Manager form, the Council sets a direction and

the City Manager must follow it. If the community does not like that direction, the City Manager may not respond, since he/she reports to Council. In a Mayor/Council form, if the community is upset, the Mayor has incentive to respond to the public.

Mr. Kintz asked about the struggles with changing forms of government. Mr. Boggs said there is a different culture with each and it takes time to work through those changes.

Discussion took place of the importance of a professional, educated, City Manager/Administrator. Ms. Houk said we have a more balanced form of government with a professional city administrator and she wants to make sure there is the same level of collaboration and communication moving forward.

3. Chair Frea then review each document on the Agenda and asked everyone to share what jumped out for them on each document.

Governance Retreat Report: Mr. Frea said the mention of: a city manager form of government; communication; collaboration; effectiveness; and forming a Charter Review Committee stood out to him.

Council Comments after Zimomra Presentation: Ms. Zimomra said what she wanted to leave Council with was the understanding that it all depends on what the community wants. There isn't a perfect model. Mr. Frea said he felt the tone of Council changed to be more pointed with criticisms. Ms. Houk explained that the assignment was for each member to share their concerns with the current form.

6/10/24 comments on Different Forms of Government: Mr. Frea said what stood out for him was the fact that the City Administrator can only be changed by the Mayor in a Strong Mayor form and the City Manager can only be changed by a majority of Council in a City Manager form.

07/08/24 Timeline: Ms. Houk explained that after all the Council concerns were reviewed, they went back and asked what the best form of government was and found that there isn't one. Three members of Council met to discuss changes in the existing Charter and decided that a citizen group should look at the whole ball of wax. She said the Timeline shared at that meeting was a way to demonstrate how a change in the form could be accomplished. However, they really don't know how long it will take.

Mr. Roach asked if there was an outcry from the citizens to change the form of government. He said he knows Council wants a change but do the citizens? Ms. Houk said there has been a lot of conversation about this. During the budget process last year, the Mayor and Administration discussed succession planning and she believes this review of the Charter is part of that future planning.

Mayor's Observations: Mr. Parks said he was present at the meeting when Mayor Stage share this document. He said he got the impression that the mayor felt it was an indictment of him holding the office. However, Mr. Parks said he doesn't feel this is the case. He said government in Grove City works very well. He is thinking of how best to protect the citizens in the future. Mr. Ritchie said he wonders if the public even knows the form of government or the differences in forms. He said he likes the stability of four (4) years and likes our current form of government. Mr. Frea said he is intrigued by Hilliard. Mr. Kintz said he felt that was a perfect storm of events for Hilliard. He said he looked at what communities are thriving. He said he likes the traditional form, but feels adjustments could be made for the future. He feels we should be somewhere in the middle to make

positive changes. Discussion took place about the pro's and cons of each form of government. Ms. Houk suggested that their next task be to look at the current Charter and learn who does what. The group could look at what could be changed to make it better. For example: Bexley requires the Mayor to submit a Strategic Plan to Council for approval.

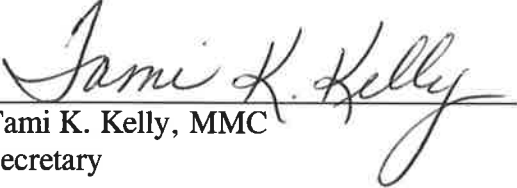
Mr. Frea asked if anyone would like to hear from someone from Hilliard at their next meeting. Mr. Kintz suggested members submit questions they would like to ask Hilliard to Ms. Kelly. Members agreed.

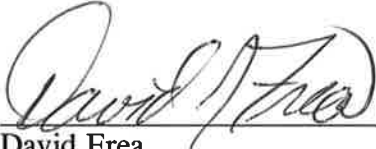
Mr. Frea asked all members to read all the documents that have been sent so far; to start reading over the Charter and marking up the changes they may have.

Mr. Roach asked if this group can suggest changes in the Charter without changing the form of government. It was confirmed that they can.

6. For the next meeting, Ms. Kelly will try to get speaker(s) from Hilliard. All Members will submit their questions to Ms. Kelly by 9/30/24.
7. The Committee adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent.

Adjourned at 7:45 p.m.


Tami K. Kelly, MMC
Secretary


David Frea
Chairman