

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

October 09, 2024

Regular Meeting

1. The regular meeting of the Charter Review Committee was called to order by Chair Frea at 5:35 p.m. in the Council Chamber of City Hall, 4035 Broadway. Roll call was called and the following were present:

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

Absent: Karen Evans

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

2. Chair Frea welcomed Council Member Les Carrier from Hilliard and thanked him for joining this evening's meeting to discuss the change in Hilliard's form of government. Some of the discussion included:

Mr. Carrier shared that they are now undergoing the construction of a \$100 million Community Center; they have tripled their commercial tax base in the last decade; the change in government still involves politics – it boils down to priorities no matter who is running the government; it is easier for Council to go on “auto pilot” with a City Manager form of government; there was a lot of conversation about what Council's role is under the City manager form. He noted that Hilliard never had a City Manager/Administrator before. The elected Mayor was the full-time Administrator and ran the government. The transition happened when the Mayor decided to retire. He said they never received grant dollars before, which has helped. *Mr. Frea* asked if the boom was due to the change in government or because of the City Manager. Mr. Carrier said a business in town decided to expand. This started under the Mayor and finished with the City Manager.

Ms. Sgalla asked if the business community has a new “go to” person. Mr. Carrier said as the Mayor wound down, they started coming to Council. Now, they go to the Economic Development Director.

Mr. Carrier said they picked someone with regional experience as their City Manager so they could navigate that world during new development. *Mr. Parks* asked if there was any dissension with the City Manager choice. Mr. Carrier said everyone had their opinions but all settled on one candidate.

Mr. Kintz asked if there were any changes to the Charter that gave Council more responsibility when they changed forms of government. Mr. Carrier said all Capital project contracts come back to Council for approval, but Professional Services contracts do not. He shared that he believes there is a difference between legal and administrative, and the Law Director should report to Council. He said if the Finance Director reports to the City Manager, there should be an Audit Committee that reports to Council

Mr. Frea asked who Council appoints. Mr. Carrier said: the City Manager, Planning Commission members and Board & Commission members. Mr. Frea commented that the City Manager's answers to the questions provided were the opposite of Mr. Carrier. Mr. Carrier said he doesn't

blame her. She wants all the power to get things done quicker/more efficiently. He said that Council did reduce their readings of legislation from three (3) to two (2); they meet as a committee of the whole instead of various committees. Everyone hears the information together and at the same time. These changes have made them more efficient. Mr. Frea asked how the community has reached. Mr. Carrier said the response has been positive. The City Manager is an introvert and doesn't like crowds, but she was trained in Dublin and they have realized many similarities in Hilliard. He said that is good and bad.

Mr. Parks commented that Hilliard is a partisan election. Mr. Carrier said they tried to change to non-partisan and it didn't get through.

The Members thanked Mr. Carrier for his time and insight.

3. Mr. Frea asked the Committee if they wanted to hear from any other communities. Mr. Ritchie said yes – someone close. Ms. Sgalla said the timeframe is close and she doesn't want to get too far down the road. Mr. Frea said he would work with Ms. Kelly to see if there was another community – Canal Winchester or elsewhere – that could answer the questions the Committee had.
4. Mayor Stage offered to answer any questions of the Committee. He said he is available by phone or e-mail as well if members had any questions as they go through their review.
5. Mr. Frea asked if anyone read through the Charter and had made any notes.

Mr. Parks said he would like to get rid of "he" throughout the text; noted that the Council salary says annual and the Mayor's says per annum; and Section 2.06 Election Contest – read as a conflict of interest. Mr. Smith, Dir. of Law, explained that Council gets paid an annual salary each month; and the Board of Elections really handles the provisions of Section 2.06.

Discussion took place over titles and the Mayor's duties. Mr. Smith reminded the Committee that they do not have to follow Chapter 7 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Discussion took place over the appointment of the Law Director. Mr. Smith said it doesn't matter who appoints unless the Law Director doesn't understand that the role is to represent the City and not who they report to. He said some cities have the City Administrator appoint the Law Director and Council confirms the appointment.

Ms. Houk shared her perspective of the different forms. She asked the Committee to look through the Charter and ask if there are pieces that Council should have a larger voice in. She said it may not be about the form of government as it is about getting the best practices in place.

Discussion took place over the appointments of Boards and Commissions. Mr. Smith said every community has a different system for their Boards and Commissions. In Grove City, the Planning Commission is a recommending body to Council and Council has the final approval; the Board of Zoning Appeals decisions can be appealed to Council. In other places, full authority is given to those commissions.

6. In closing, Mayor Stage said he likes our form of government because the elected officers answer to the electorate. He said the ICMA (Int'l. City Managers Assoc.) doesn't talk about the electors at all. He said our form is nimble.

Ms. Zimomra asked Mayor Stage what would help streamline things under the current form of

government. Mayor Stage said perhaps Planning Commission having more authority. Mr. Smith said that doesn't always work. The City of Dublin gives Planning Commission full authority and it doesn't always work. Ms. Zimomra asked about any other legislative oversight. Mayor Stage said Council does have a lot of authority in the Charter. For example, they can create Task Forces to explore specific issues, such as this. Ms. Zimomra asked what would be a better tool for economic development/growth, as he looks forward. Mayor Stage said talent selection is key. He said there are many professionals who are Mayors – attorneys, engineers, business owners.

7. The Committee adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent.

Adjourned at 7:06 p.m.


Tami K. Kelly, MMC
Secretary

 10/30/2024
David Frea
Chairman