

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 23, 2012.**

ATTENDANCE: Cathleen Simpson, Chair; George Estrada, Vice Chair; Florisca Carter, Secretary, Harry Weichsel, Charles Valentino, Rev. William Marshall, Ruben Felipe (5:45 p.m.)

OTHERS: Atty. Steven Mednick; Atty. Ed Maley, Atty. Mark Anastasi (5:42 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER.

Ms. Simpson called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

February 16, 2012

**** MR. VALENTINO MOVED THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, 2012.**

**** MR. WEICHSEL SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, 2012 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

February 21, 2012.

**** MR. VALENTINO MOVED THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 21, 2012.**

**** MR. ESTRADA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 21, 2012 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Atty. Anastasi joined the meeting at 5:42 p.m.

**EDIT, REVIEW, REDLINE AND DISCUSSION OF THE PROVISIONS
OF THE CHARTER.**

Atty. Mednick gave a brief overview of the Commissioners' information binder containing compiled information on the educational fact finding. He then indicated the section that contained the provision that would not allow the substitution of a Chancellor of Education in place of the Board of Education.

Mr. Felipe joined the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

DISCUSSION OF SCHEDULE AND FURTHER MEETINGS.

Atty. Mednick said that he had also included a section covering the language from five different municipalities regarding the education.

Mayoral involvement is a key issue. Atty. Mednick reviewed this along with the various levels of involvement. This is to illustrate the different styles and equations.

Tab 2 contains an article by Professor Viteritti of Hunter College, editor of "When Mayors Take Charge", will be addressing the Commission on March 6th. Tab 3 contains an article by Professor Wong about Mayoral Control, which is also contained in the book titled "When Mayors Take Charge". Professor Wong will also be addressing the Commission on March 13th.

Tabs 4, 5 and 6 contain an article by Chester Finn, addressing the failures of U.S. educational governance.

Tabs 7 and 8 have an article on how mayoral involvement can work. Tab 9 has the final report from New York City about school governance and their move to the chancellor system.

The remaining tabs also contain outlines on how mayors can become involved and the impact that this has on the school system.

Ms. Carter and Mr. Felipe said that they appreciated the information, particularly since the Commission will be hearing from two of the authors. Atty. Mednick said that Professor Viteritti had a very broad view of the issues. Discussion followed.

Mr. Alan Taylor, the chair of the State Board of Education and the man who was chairing the elected Board of Hartford when Hartford restructured will be speaking at the March 6th meeting.

Mr. Stefan Pryor, an alderman and former teacher, has been contacted and hopefully will be able to address the Commission, also.

Mr. Felipe said that on the 6th and the 8th, the Council Chambers will be available. The Annex conference rooms were not available for any of the dates. The Chambers will not be available on 13th and the 15th. Discussion followed about potential locations.

Two of the dates for the daytime meetings have been confirmed. March 7th will be at the North End Library, and the 21st will be at the Black Rock Library. Burroughs Library may be the site of the 15th. Mr. Felipe will finalize the location of the 15th. The location for the public hearings has not yet been determined.

IT is ready to go with the link on the City website. The testimonies that have been submitted will be posted along with the meeting schedule.

**EDIT, REVIEW, REDLINE AND DISCUSSION OF THE PROVISIONS
OF THE CHARTER.**

Civil Service -

Atty. Mednick said that the language was ancient, but that with the timeframe, he did not believe that the Commission had time to make many changes. He said that it would be good to move the administrative positions out to the appropriate section and just leave the Civil Service rules. The definitions will be moved to the appropriate section, since some of them, such as "classified" and "unclassified" are used thorough the Charter.

Mr. Felipe asked Atty. Anastasi about the restriction on the number of individual party members on the Civil Service Commission. Special Act 7-4-08 has some requirements.

Mr. Estrada asked for clarification on one of the Special Act provisions. Atty. Mednick will review this.

Mr. Felipe asked about Section 204.a. Atty. Mednick said that this was part of a Special Act. The discussion moved to the relationships between Labor Relations, Civil Service and Human Resources. There is a very high degree of overlap in this area. It was pointed out that the Commission would not have the time to make changes in this section. At some point in the

future, the City will want to review this section. Atty. Anastasi pointed out that this section of the Charter had the largest number of Special Acts than any other section of the Charter. It will be important to have a mandate in the Charter to require coordination. There are also issues that involve collective bargaining. Discussion followed.

Mr. Felipe said that he had concerns about Section 220. Atty. Mednick pointed out that this was superseded by the General Statutes.

Planning and Economic Development.

Atty. Anastasi said that in Section 2, there would be one master section regarding appointments.

Department of Land Use, Construction and Review.

Mr. Estrada said that in the previous administration, there had been a decision that the department head would report to Economic Redevelopment. He said that he believed that the intent was for when a developer came to town for one stop permitting. Atty. Anastasi said that he believed that this would be as support for the Planning and Zoning, the ZBA and Land Use. Mr. Estrada requested that the CAO and Director of OPED have a discussion about having a way to facilitate one stop permitting. It is important to have the chain of command as clear as possible.

Atty. Mednick asked if there was an organizational chart available. Mr. Felipe said that he believed that the CAO's Office had an organizational chart. He then said that he would bring copies for the Commission members.

Department of Health and Social Services.

Mr. Estrada said that there was a Public Health Director and a Director of Health and Social Services, but that the City does not have a Welfare Department. The Director of Health and Social Services position was never filled. Atty. Anastasi said that now that the State is handling the administration of benefits for the residents who need assistance, the structure has changed. Social service providers are more effective in providing services than the City administration is. Atty. Anastasi said that this section should be reviewed and the question about the Director of Health and Social Services position carefully considered.

Ms. Carter asked if there was any reporting on how the grant funding is spent. Mr. Felipe explained when grant funding is given to agencies, the grantor requires the City to supervise the spending of the funds. The discussion then moved to the Office of Central Grants and their role in this situation. Ms. Simpson said that this would be a good question for the CAO. Discussion followed. Ms. Carter said that her concern was that this was separated from the rest of the sections on the overall welfare of Bridgeport's children. Mr. Felipe said that Mr. Jeffrey Cannon, who is well known for his work with Charter Schools, actually started that work on the integration of the whole child.

Mr. Estrada said that he had a concern about agencies that were found to have misappropriated funds. He wanted to see if these agencies could be permanently barred. Atty. Mednick said that there were strong guidelines on the State and Federal levels. Mr. Felipe reminded everyone about an agency that had misused funding. After the board had changed, the same organization was now being approved by DSS and other State organizations.

Atty. Mednick asked if there was a Social Service Advisory Commission. Mr. Felipe said that this Commission did not exist.

Atty. Mednick asked if the Health Director was the Director of Vital Statistics. Mr. Felipe said that the Director of Vital Statistics was a separate position under the Health Department. Atty. Anastasi said that there was some of the functions that the City used to perform were being referred to outside organizations. This also has budgetary implications. Atty. Mednick said that by State Statute had it in the Town Clerk's purview, but that this might be part of the Special Acts.

The Pension Section will most likely be moved to the Special Acts section. Atty. Anastasi said that there were a number of items that were superceded by State law, and reminded everyone that most of the pensions were being moved to MERF.

ADJOURNMENT.

- ** MS. CARTER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** MR. VALENTINO SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

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