

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
CHARTER REVISION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MAY 15, 2012**

**ATTENDANCE:** George Estrada, Co-chair; Florisca Carter, Secretary; Ruben Felipe; Harry Weichsel, Rev. Marshall; Charles Valentino; Cathleen Simpson (6:20 p.m.)

**STAFF:** Atty. Steve Mednick; Atty. Ed Maley (6:30 p.m.); Atty. Anastasi (7:07 p.m.)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Estrada called the meeting to order at 6:14p.m. A quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes will be reviewed at the next meeting.

**DISTRIBUTIONS OF UP-DATES, INCLUDING CHAPTER 9 AND OTHER  
SIGNIFICANT REVISIONS.**

Atty. Mednick said that he would be presenting a simplified red line copy of the draft to the Commission so that everyone can see how much they have accomplished.

He then reviewed two changes of definition, one that was requested by the OPM Director and another clarifying the fact that the term "City" incorporates both the Town of Bridgeport and the City of Bridgeport.

Atty. Mednick then directed everyone's attention to Chapter 3, page 14 regarding the designated Assistant Town Clerk.

*Commissioner Simpson joined the meeting at 6:20 p.m.*

The discussion then moved to the fact that the State had abolished the office of Sheriff. Commissioner Valentino said that former Governor Rowland had abolished the position, but it had not become an issue until recently. Now the position is called a "constable". However, if the Charter is changed to reflect this, the current occupants of the position would have to be re-elected. It was agreed that Atty. Maley would be asked about this issue.

**DELIBERATIONS AND ACTIONS OF CHARTER COMMISSION ON THE  
PROPOSED REVISED CHARTER.**

**1.) §7 of Chapter 3 – Reappointment Revisions**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO MOVED TO APPROVE ACTION ITEM 1 - §7 OF CHAPTER 3 – REAPPOINTMENT REVISIONS**

**\*\* REV. MARSHALL SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**2.) §11.A(2) of Chapter 3 – General Review of the provisions on Voluntary and/or Temporary Removal of the Mayor and the standard for Council action to temporarily remove the Mayor from office: 2/3rd or 3/4<sup>th</sup>.**

The Commission then reviewed page 16 in the draft. The discussion then centered on whether the percentage for a temporary removal. It was noted that the Charter only requests a 2/3 majority for a full removal. It was decided to have the threshold at 2/3rd.

*Atty. Maley joined the meeting 6:30 p.m.*

**\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO MOVED TO APPROVE ACTION ITEM #2 - §11.A(2) OF CHAPTER 3 – GENERAL REVIEW OF THE PROVISIONS ON VOLUNTARY AND/OR TEMPORARY REMOVAL OF THE MAYOR AND THE STANDARD FOR COUNCIL ACTION TO TEMPORARILY REMOVE THE MAYOR FROM OFFICE WITH A 2/3RD VOTE.**

**\*\*COMMISSIONER FELIPE SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**3.) §11.B(3) of Chapter 3 – Should the Personnel Director and the City Librarian be subject to actions initiated by the Mayor?**

Following a discussion, it was decided to withdraw #3.

**4.) § 11. B(4) of Chapter 3 – How many days notice to change party?**

The Commission confirmed their support for 30 days notice.

**5.) § 12 of Chapter 3 – Approve the Conflict of Interest and Ethics provision?**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO MOVED TO APPROVE ACTION ITEM 5 – § 12 OF CHAPTER 3 – APPROVE THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS PROVISION.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER FELIPE SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**6.) §12 of Chapter 4 – Approve the Emergency Powers provision?**

**a. § 4.C(3) of Chapter 4 – Is this enough funding.**

The discussion moved to Emergency Powers outlined in Chapter 4. Atty. Mednick said that currently, the draft allows the Mayor to spend up to \$100,000. Atty. Maley commented that Cromwell allows the Mayor to spend up to 1% of the City budget. It was decided to continue research on this.

**7.) §2.E of Chapter 5 – Should the President of the City Council be responsible for the supervision of Legislative Services employees?**

Discussion followed about this issue. Commissioner Felipe suggested that it be a confidential position that serves at the pleasure of the President of the City Council.

Atty. Mednick said that he noted that there was no clear point outlined in the Charter where legislation starts. This will have to be determined at a later date.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO MOVED TO APPROVE ACTION ITEM 7 - THE PRESIDENT OF THE CITY COUNCIL WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUPERVISION OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES EMPLOYEES.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER SIMPSON SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**8.) §3.B of Chapter 5 – Do we need to define “disorderly behavior”?**

The discussion moved to the issue of "disorderly behavior". Atty. Mednick reviewed this and requested that this be considered on Thursday. This was agreeable to all.

**9.) §6.A(2) of Chapter 5 – Approve the Oversight Function provision?**

Atty. Mednick then gave an overview of §6.A(2), which has not been currently included in the draft. He said that in the current charter, there is a requirement to bring regular monthly reports to the Council. The proposed change is that the Council receives the reports quarterly. The language will be finalized for Thursday.

**10.) §2.A(1) of Chapter 6 – approve certification of the Town Clerk?**

Item 10 requires the Town Clerk to approve certification as set forth in the Connecticut General Statute. This will be reviewed on Thursday.

**11.) §1.D of Chapter 7 – dual Appointments and Term Limits.**

The next two issues have to do with dual appointments and term limits. These are two separate issues. Discussion followed about the details followed.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO MOVED TO APPROVE §1.D OF CHAPTER 7 – DUAL APPOINTMENTS DUAL APPOINTMENTS AS CODIFIED.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER ESTRADA SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The discussion then moved to the issue of having Board members serve for more than 10 consecutive years. It was determined that this would only take effect once the Charter is approved and a person is reappointed. Commissioner Valentino said that while he hates term limits, he would go along with it.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER ESTRADA/ MOVED TO APPROVE §1.D OF CHAPTER 7 – TERM LIMITS.**

**\*\* REV. MARSHALL SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**12.) §1.D of Chapter 7 – Approve the Board of Education Provisions?**

**a.) §3.A (1)(a)(i) of Chapter 7 – Ex officio student members?**

Atty. Mednick said that he had just heard back from the Superintendent regarding the proposed provisions. It was suggested that this be delayed to Thursday.

*Atty. Anastasi joined the meeting at 7:07 p.m.*

Discussion about the role of ex-officio student members and how these students would be chosen. It was pointed out that while it was important to have student input, there were questions as to how would each high school would be represented.

**13.) §3.B(5) of Chapter 7 – Clarification regarding the approval of the City Attorney for outside counsel for the Civil Service Commission.**

On page 48 in the draft, the Charter addresses the Civil Service Commission. Atty. Anastasi suggested that this remain intact. Therefore, there will be no action taken on this.

**14.) §3.E(2) of Chapter 7 – Clarification regarding vacancies on the Planning and Zoning Commission.**

Atty. Mednick asked why the Council had a different process for this. A brief discussion followed.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO MOVED TO REMOVE §3.E(2) OF CHAPTER 7**

**\*\* COMMISSIOER CARTER SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**15.) §3.E (4)(b) of Chapter 7 – Clarification regarding number of votes required for adoption of a city plan and whether the reference is to the City or Town Clerk.**

Atty. Mednick asked how many votes it would take to adopt a City Plan. This will be researched for Thursday.

**16.) §3.1(2) of Chapter 7 – Approve an increase in the Board of Park Commissioners from 8 to 9 members.**

The discussion focused on whether the Mayor had the tie breaking vote on the Board of Parks Commissioners. Commissioner Estrada said that he had spoken with the Parks Director and that the Parks Director believed the Mayor had the tie breaking vote. This was found to be in the current Charter.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO MOVED TO APPROVE AN INCREASE IN THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS FROM 8 TO 9 MEMBERS.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER ESTRADA SECONDED.**

A brief discussion ensued regarding not changing systems that were working with problems.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO RESCINDED HIS MOTION.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER ESTRADA RESCINDED HIS SECOND.**

**17.) §3.J of Chapter 7 - The Status of the Board of Directors of the Bridgeport Public Library.**

Commissioner Simpson said that she had spoken with Council Member Brannelly regarding this issue. Commissioner Simpson pointed out the Council had powers and listed what those powers were. Commissioner Simpson requested Council Member Brannelly let the Commission know what additional items need to be included. Discussion followed.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER ESTRADA MOVED TO LEAVE §3.J OF CHAPTER 7 - THE STATUS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY AS IS.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

It was pointed out that now that the Commission had clarified the powers that the Council has regarding this. Any further action would be the responsibility of the Council.

**18.) §2.A(2) of Chapter 8 – Approval of appointment authorities?**

All of the positions that serve at the pleasure of the Mayor have been consolidated. The appointed positions have been compiled into a list along with the remaining positions that are not appointed by the Mayor.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO MOVED TO APPROVE §2.A(2) OF CHAPTER 8.  
\*\* COMMISSIONER ESTRADA SECONDED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**19.) §2.B(1)(b) of Chapter 8 – Should there be a limit on the tenure of an Acting Department head?**

Atty. Anastasi pointed out that this moved into the Civil Service area.

**\*\* REV. MARSHALL MOVED TO LEAVE §2.B(1)(B) OF CHAPTER 8 AS IS.  
\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO SECONDED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**20.) §3.K.4(a) of Chapter 8 – The issue of when the 10 year cap goes into effect.**

Mr. Felipe suggested that this section would not currently affect the current Police Chief or the current Fire Chief. He suggested the 10 year cap be repealed on a going forward basis after the current officials leave office.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER FELIPE MOVED TO REPEAL THE 10 YEAR CAP ON THE FIRE CHIEF AND POLICE CHIEF AS THE CURRENT OFFICIALS LEAVE OFFICE.  
\*\* COMMISSIONER WEICHSEL SECONDED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**21.) §3.L of Chapter 8 – The issue of employment contracts. Is the provision consistent with the practices of the City?**

Atty. Anastasi and Atty. Maley reviewed the section. Atty. Anastasi said that the key point was the phrase "with the City Council". He noted that the Mayor has the authority to lay off employees for fiscal reasons. It would be good not to limit the Mayor's authority. This is a limitation on the contract, not a term limit. Atty. Anastasi reviewed the details of this subsection. He recommended that this be left as is as 2/3rd.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO MOVED TO LEAVE §3.L OF CHAPTER 8 AS IS.  
\*\* COMMISSIONER ESTRADA SECONDED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**22.) §7.A(2) (f) of Chapter 8 – Why is the Board of Education exempt from the certification process? If so, there should be an accountability measure.**

It was pointed out that on page 67, under the OPM Section, the OPM Director is responsible for payment for the City, except for the Board of Education. Atty. Maley pointed out that the OPM Director can not certify these items, since the BOE can change their line items. The BOE needs to provide the quarterly reports. This will be discussed further on Thursday.

**23.) §10.C(1)(b)(i) of Chapter 8 – Appointment of Director of Public Health.**

There are qualifications for the Director of Public Health, but no protocol for appointment. Atty. Anastasi said that he believed it was the in the CGS.

Following a brief discussion, it was decided to discuss the remain items at the next meeting on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Valentino asked Atty. Maley about the issue regarding the Sheriffs. It was suggested that one possible solution may be to have the people who are known as Sheriffs be granted the powers of the constables.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER ESTRADA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services