

Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes  
HELD ON  
August 17, 2022  
6:00 P.M.

The regular meeting of the Charter Review Committee was held at the Mechanicville Public Library, 190 North Main Street, Mechanicville, New York on Wednesday June 22, 2022.

Mark Seber: Called the meeting to order 6:04 P.M.  
Mark Seber led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call:	Mark Seber -Chairman	Present
	Matt Maiello	Absent
	Jim Peluso	Present
	Ed Morcone	Absent
	Ann Cerone	Present
	Tony Accetta- Vice Chairman	Present
	Greg Mansfield-Treasurer	Present
	Nick Rinaldi	Absent
	Bob Murphy-Secretary	Present

Mark Seber stated the Committee has done a terrific job vetting of various areas, learning the City, and learning how things operate which will help them in the decision making process. He went on to say that unless someone objects he thinks it is time to move into the next phase of the process. After a discussion it was agreed that there are basically three (3) different areas that they will be focused on, keeping the current form of government, strong Mayor form of government, and a city administrator form of government. Mark stated that if the Committee keeps the same three (3) sub-committees and are assigned a form of government and they can do research on them then they can come back to the large group and report on the findings and then at some point decide what direction they want to go in.

Bob Murphy stated he feels that is probable appropriate as the next big milestone is to get in front of the public and to effectively do that they need to have more of the options vetted out. He added they have the understanding of the existing and understanding what the potential solutions are and being able to present them is what he feels is the next step before they get to the public.

Mark Seber stated he too wants to get this all in front of the public but he feels it is important to have something to talk about with the public. He asked the committee if they agreed with the idea of each sub-committee taking a different form of government to research and then bring all information back to the large group to share.

Tony Accetta stated he is definitely ready for that and thinks they should get pros and cons of each and give a presentation and have an open conversation.

Ann Cerone stated she felt it was a good idea and is ready for it.

Mark Seber stated it will not only give the public but also the committee and idea of the costs as compared to where they are now. He went over the committees and who are on which committee and stated he will provide any committee with any information which is readily available to him. He added it is important to reach out to other communities of similar size to discuss their forms of government.

Bob Murphy asked if he is suggesting one of the groups is the status quo.

Mark Seber status yes and when he says status quo he suggest putting a recommendation on how they can improve upon the current form of government.

Tony Accetta stated he knows they have the groups of three but if they are going to have each group focus on one particular area he would like to know if there is a couple of them that already know what they would like to focus on for example if there is anyone that is thinking that the current form of government could would and just need to be fixed they three committee members could possibly focus on that.

Mark Seber stated they can move things around he just thought since the groups were already formed they could do it that way but what Tony stated makes sense but stated you don't necessarily need to be in favor of one particular form to get the information on it.

Ann Cerone stated that if as an example you are leaning towards the current form of government then you would need to research further on the costs to improve what is currently there.

Jim Peluso stated he feels a sense of urgency for the committee to act.

Mark Seber stated he does also and wants to continue doing what they are doing but it won't be on the ballot until next November. He added that it seems to be that if people don't understand something they want to keep it the same.

Bob Murphy added that with their timeline they should have plenty of time to get in front of the public to answer their questions the best they can over multiple cycles.

Mark Seber stated that is why he is thrilled as to how this has progressed because he thinks the public will be satisfied once they understand the work the committee has done and they have not come into this with a preconceived idea, they did it on the information that they have gathered over the past several months and continue to gather. He added over the last two (2) or three (3) years the City has had six (6) unopposed elections which he does not feel makes for good government. Mark asked if anyone on the committee had any particular form they want to focus on.

Ann Cerone and Tony Accetta both stated the City Manager is what they were leaning towards.

Mark Seber stated he would like to keep three (3) groups of three (3) so stated he would add Matt to that group. He stated Bob, Jim and Greg would research the strong Mayor form of government and then himself, Nick and Ed would research the current form of government where he promised he would be objective.

Bob Murphy stated it is important to stress the status quo research is status quo plus improvements.

Jim Peluso stated he could switch to the group of the current form of government since he was previously involved and can think of improvements.

Mark Seber stated he could switch with him.

Jim Peluso stated he feels Mark should stay because he is currently serving in the current form of government.

The committees are as follows:

Strong form of Government: Bob Murphy, Ed Morcone, Greg Mansfield

Current form of Government: Mark Seber, Jim Peluso, and Nick Rinaldi

City Manager form of Government: Tony Accetta, Ann Cerone, and Matt Maiello

Tony Accetta stated they will need some sort of financial analysis, and an organizational chart.

Bob Murphy added they need to respond to some of the concerns that they have already heard like HR for instance. He asked if they should get anecdotal comments from other communities that have the form of government.

Mark stated he has a list and he can get contact information to the groups.

The committee stated they could reconvene at the end of October to bounce ideas back and forth in case they have any questions for each group.

Mark Seber stated after they get all this information together which could possibly take two (2) meeting he would like to bring the public in as he is eager to get their comments.

The committee decided to meet again on Wednesday October 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 and they can discuss each report and if they need to they can schedule another meeting after that.

Motion to close meeting by: Tony Accetta

Jim Peluso suggested giving the public time to ask questions if they had any.

Mark opened it up for questions.

Marylou Cebula stated that she hopes it is best serving that Mark Seber is on the committee for the current form of government as he is a strong component to change the form of government.

Mark Seber stated there are going to be people who feel strong in different ways but he is hoping this is going to be more of an informational gathering than it is advocating.

The rest of the committee agreed with him.

Marylou Cebula stated that they all agree that no matter what direction they decide to go the charter needs to be revised and she asked where that was going to fit in.

Mark Seber stated he does not want to change the charter and then have to change it again because it was decided to change the form of government. He sees it as deciding what direction they are going to go in and then getting into the charter and then making the changes. He added he needs to look into it because when John Franck was there he said the charter needs to be in place when it goes to vote therefore, if that is the case then that would be the next phase. He went on the way the sees it is they do information gathering, public input, making a decision what direction they want to go in, and then addressing the Charter and making the necessary changes.

Marylou Cebula asked if they were thinking any changes in the Charter in the interim while they are going through the process.

Mark Seber stated he never envisioned that as he didn't want to do it twice, he went on to say that the Charter is two (2) parts, the government part and the code. He went on to say he thinks there are a few things in the code that over the next few months the Council will be addressing that are unrelated to the government change.

Kim Dunn asked if the Committee would be doing all of their homework, get the pros and cons of the three (3) options, and then present that to the public.

Jim Peluso stated it has not been discussed but an option he is thinking of would be each group, before the public present, bring their findings to the Committee and get feedback on all three (3) and then comeback with the Committee's recommendations. He added they have not decided yet how they will be doing it.

Tony Accetta stated they have not made a decision. He added they would first discuss the pros and cons of each with the public present, but that does not mean they have made a decision because then they would need to get feedback from the public.

Kim Dunn asked if they would be bringing all the options to the public and ask for their input and then decide.

Tony Accetta stated that was correct.

Greg Mansfield added he does not see them going forward without input from the public.

Kim Dunn stated it has been well known since this all began HR is a big issue and no matter what option they go with they will need to have an HR department.

Mark Seber stated they will need some HR function, and the issues are not so much on the benefits side but more on the employee relations side of it.

Dave Hicks asked if this was all about accountability through the City and, electing officials on a political basis isn't going to help with the function of the City but stated hiring people will be because they know their job is on the line and if they don't do it they are done.

Mark Seber announced the next meeting will be Wednesday October 26<sup>th</sup>.

Adjournment: 6:40 pm

Motion by: Tony Accetta

Seconded by: Ann Cerone

Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes  
HELD ON  
August 17, 2022  
6:00 P.M.

The regular meeting of the Charter Review Committee was held at the Mechanicville Public Library, 190 North Main Street, Mechanicville, New York on Wednesday June 22, 2022.

Mark Seber: Called the meeting to order 6:04 P.M.

Mark Seber led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call:	Mark Seber -Chairman	Present
	Matt Maiello	Absent
	Jim Peluso	Present
	Ed Morcone	Absent
	Ann Cerone	Present
	Tony Accetta- Vice Chairman	Present
	Greg Mansfield-Treasurer	Present
	Nick Rinaldi	Absent
	Bob Murphy-Secretary	Present

Mark Seber stated the Committee has done a terrific job vetting of various areas, learning the City, and learning how things operate which will help them in the decision making process. He went on to say that unless someone objects he thinks it is time to move into the next phase of the process. After a discussion it was agreed that there are basically three (3) different areas that they will be focused on, keeping the current form of government, strong Mayor form of government, and a city administrator form of government. Mark stated that if the Committee keeps the same three (3) sub-committees and are assigned a form of government and they can do research on them then they can come back to the large group and report on the findings and then at some point decide what direction they want to go in.

Bob Murphy stated he feels that is probable appropriate as the next big milestone is to get in front of the public and to effectively do that they need to have more of the options vetted out. He added they have the understanding of the existing and understanding what the potential solutions are and being able to present them is what he feels is the next step before they get to the public.

Mark Seber stated he too wants to get this all in front of the public but he feels it is important to have something to talk about with the public. He asked the committee if they agreed with the idea of each sub-committee taking a different form of government to research and then bring all information back to the large group to share.

Tony Accetta stated he is definitely ready for that and thinks they should get pros and cons of each and give a presentation and have an open conversation.

Ann Cerone stated she felt it was a good idea and is ready for it.

Mark Seber stated it will not only give the public but also the committee and idea of the costs as compared to where they are now. He went over the committees and who are on which committee and stated he will provide any committee with any information which is readily available to him. He added it is important to reach out to other communities of similar size to discuss their forms of government.

Bob Murphy asked if he is suggesting one of the groups is the status quo.

Mark Seber status yes and when he says status quo he suggest putting a recommendation on how they can improve upon the current form of government.

Tony Accetta stated he knows they have the groups of three but if they are going to have each group focus on one particular area he would like to know if there is a couple of them that already know what they would like to focus on for example if there is anyone that is thinking that the current form of government could would and just need to be fixed they three committee members could possibly focus on that.

Mark Seber stated they can move things around he just thought since the groups were already formed they could do it that way but what Tony stated makes sense but stated you don't necessarily need to be in favor of one particular form to get the information on it.

Ann Cerone stated that if as an example you are leaning towards the current form of government then you would need to research further on the costs to improve what is currently there.

Jim Peluso stated he feels a sense of urgency for the committee to act.

Mark Seber stated he does also and wants to continue doing what they are doing but it won't be on the ballot until next November. He added that it seems to be that if people don't understand something they want to keep it the same.

Bob Murphy added that with their timeline they should have plenty of time to get in front of the public to answer their questions the best they can over multiple cycles.

Mark Seber stated that is why he is thrilled as to how this has progressed because he thinks the public will be satisfied once they understand the work the committee has done and they have not come into this with a preconceived idea, they did it on the information that they have gathered over the past several months and continue to gather. He added over the last two (2) or three (3) years the City has had six (6) unopposed elections which he does not feel makes for good government. Mark asked if anyone on the committee had any particular form they want to focus on.

Ann Cerone and Tony Accetta both stated the City Manager is what they were leaning towards.

Mark Seber stated he would like to keep three (3) groups of three (3) so stated he would add Matt to that group. He stated Bob, Jim and Greg would research the strong Mayor form of government and then himself, Nick and Ed would research the current form of government where he promised he would be objective.

Bob Murphy stated it is important to stress the status quo research is status quo plus improvements.

Jim Peluso stated he could switch to the group of the current form of government since he was previously involved and can think of improvements.

Mark Seber stated he could switch with him.

Jim Peluso stated he feels Mark should stay because he is currently serving in the current form of government.

The committees are as follows:

Strong form of Government: Bob Murphy, Ed Morcone, Greg Mansfield

Current form of Government: Mark Seber, Jim Peluso, and Nick Rinaldi

City Manager form of Government: Tony Accetta, Ann Cerone, and Matt Maiello

Tony Accetta stated they will need some sort of financial analysis, and an organizational chart.

Bob Murphy added they need to respond to some of the concerns that they have already heard like HR for instance. He asked if they should get anecdotal comments from other communities that have the form of government.

Mark stated he has a list and he can get contact information to the groups.

The committee stated they could reconvene at the end of October to bounce ideas back and forth in case they have any questions for each group.

Mark Seber stated after they get all this information together which could possibly take two (2) meeting he would like to bring the public in as he is eager to get their comments.

The committee decided to meet again on Wednesday October 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 and they can discuss each report and if they need to they can schedule another meeting after that.

Motion to close meeting by: Tony Accetta

Jim Peluso suggested giving the public time to ask questions if they had any.

Mark opened it up for questions.



Marylou Cebula stated that she hopes it is best serving that Mark Seber is on the committee for the current form of government as he is a strong component to change the form of government.

Mark Seber stated there are going to be people who feel strong in different ways but he is hoping this is going to be more of an informational gathering than it is advocating.

The rest of the committee agreed with him.

Marylou Cebula stated that they all agree that no matter what direction they decide to go the charter needs to be revised and she asked where that was going to fit in.

Mark Seber stated he does not want to change the charter and then have to change it again because it was decided to change the form of government. He sees it as deciding what direction they are going to go in and then getting into the charter and then making the changes. He added he needs to look into it because when John Franck was there he said the charter needs to be in place when it goes to vote therefore, if that is the case then that would be the next phase. He went on the way he sees it is they do information gathering, public input, making a decision what direction they want to go in, and then addressing the Charter and making the necessary changes.

Marylou Cebula asked if they were thinking any changes in the Charter in the interim while they are going through the process.

Mark Seber stated he never envisioned that as he didn't want to do it twice, he went on to say that the Charter is two (2) parts, the government part and the code. He went on to say he thinks there are a few things in the code that over the next few months the Council will be addressing that are unrelated to the government change.

Kim Dunn asked if the Committee would be doing all of their homework, get the pros and cons of the three (3) options, and then present that to the public.

Jim Peluso stated it has not been discussed but an option he is thinking of would be each group, before the public present, bring their findings to the Committee and get feedback on all three (3) and then comeback with the Committee's recommendations. He added they have not decided yet how they will be doing it.

Tony Accetta stated they have not made a decision. He added they would first discuss the pros and cons of each with the public present, but that does not mean they have made a decision because then they would need to get feedback from the public.

Kim Dunn asked if they would be bringing all the options to the public and ask for their input and then decide.

Tony Accetta stated that was correct.

Greg Mansfield added he does not see them going forward without input from the public.

Kim Dunn stated it has been well known since this all began HR is a big issue and no matter what option they go with they will need to have an HR department.

Mark Seber stated they will need some HR function, and the issues are not so much on the benefits side but more on the employee relations side of it.

Dave Hicks asked if this was all about accountability through the City and, electing officials on a political basis isn't going to help with the function of the City but stated hiring people will be because they know their job is on the line and if they don't do it they are done.

Mark Seber announced the next meeting will be Wednesday October 26<sup>th</sup>.

Adjournment: 6:40 pm

Motion by: Tony Accetta

Seconded by: Ann Cerone