

Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes
HELD ON
January 30, 2023
6:00 P.M.

The regular meeting of the Charter Review Committee was held at the Mechanicville Senior Center, 178 North Main Street, Mechanicville, New York on Monday January 30, 2023.

Mark Seber: Called the meeting to order 6:03 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	Present
	Ann Cerone	Present
	Tony Accetta- Vice Chairman	Present
	Greg Mansfield-Treasurer	Present
	Nick Rinaldi	Absent
	Bob Murphy-Secretary	Present

Mark Seber stated at the last election two cities in the Country, Oregon, Illinois and Portland, Oregon both had Commissioner form of governments and their voters voted for a change to a City Administrator form of government. He announced they have a few reports that would be given, one on the Strong Mayor form of government and then there is some additional information that was gathered on the City Administrator form of government. Both reports are attached to the minutes.

Jim Peluso added that the continuity of leadership has been lacking within the City and when looking at cost a broader picture needs to be looked at as opposed to just looking at salaries. He added when they have public hearing they need to stress that there are much more efficient ways of running government than what we currently have.

Mark Seber stated that less than 1% of governments in the Country are Commissioner forms of government and that speaks for itself. Mark stated there will be additional costs depending on which way they decide to go. He added he thinks they need to narrow it down to two (2) choices. He went on to say that the committee needs to make a recommendation on what form they would like to go and then the Council will say yes or no as to whether they want it to go on the ballot and then from there the voters decide.

Bob Murphy added that he thinks that before they make a decision they should go in front of the public. He suggested they present all three (3) options to the public and get feedback on all of them and then the committee get back together and propose a solution to present.

Mark Seber stated his thought was that the next meeting should be that, invite the public in and if they need to meet more than once than that is fine too. He went on to say that if they want to get this on the November ballot the Board of Election needs to have the proposition to them by August 7th. He added he needs to bring it to the Council at the June or July meeting for them to authorize it.

Jim Peluso stated he thinks they should have at least two (2) public hearings possibly three (3).

Mark Seber stated he was thinking having one (1) in February and one in March (1) and if another one is needed, they could do it in April and still have time to meet and discuss a direction they want to go and get it to the Council.

The Committee penciled in March 1st, March 13th, and March 23rd depending on if the Senior Center is available for the public hearings.

Bob Murphy added that in reference to the forms of governments that were presented is that communities across the state have used them differently, some have different responsibilities for the Strong Mayor, as opposed to others and it is reflected in salary. He went on to say no matter what form of government there are many ways to do it within the same fiscal restraints it is just dependent on how it is laid out.

Commissioner Fred Hosley asked if the charter was going to be revised.

Mark Seber stated no matter what form is chosen the charter needs to be revised, but if the form is changed there will be massive changes to the charter but if it remains the same there will be some tweaking of the charter.

Commissioner Fred Hosley asked about the office of community services.

Greg Mansfield stated the idea would be to elevate the Deputies which have all the institutional knowledge of the City's operations to be a Department Head, then combine the responsibilities of the Public Safety with the Community Service responsibility of the Accounts Department, such as City Clerk, and combine that into an office called the Office of Community Services.

Commissioner Fred Hosley stated that he is concerned that if a change is made a place like the Senior Center is going to fall through the cracks and not get the attention it gets now.

Tony Accetta stated that would only happen if there was bad structure of management. He went on to say he knows that people don't like change, and he understands change is scary, but he thinks this is a phenomenal opportunity to look at the roles and responsibility and see where they can enhance things. He went on to say that he observed overlapping and inefficiencies going on and there is a small pool of people to draw from and can barely get people to run for office. He went on to say that it is a lot for the City to take on, but things would have to be address so that the great things the City offers do not fall through the cracks, they just need to make sure they have the right structure in place, everyone has a definitive role in the position they have in the City, and that it is clear cut. He went on to say that now the employee handbook and the charter

are not clear cut, and although it may have been fifty (50) years ago it is not today. He added that regardless of what form of government is chosen they have there is structure, accountability, and they update everything from they point on. He said that no of them want anything to fall through the cracks and that is why they are not rushing through any decisions.

Commissioner Fred Hosley stated he is disappointed that people can't come to these meetings and ask questions, so that they understand better what is going on.

Anthony Accetta stated he wants to understand it before they communicate with people. He added the nine (9) of them got together and didn't even get to introduce themselves and see what the focus was and they needed a number of meetings to just find out what they needed to do, and he would like to have substance before he started answering questions. He went on to say he feels they have done their due diligence and now they have to take it to the next steps.

Commissioner Fred Hosley stated he does not like the idea of them having three individual groups for questions as he might feed of a question that is asked but can't if he is not in that group.

Jim Peluso suggested they have three (3) work groups and everyone has the opportunity to participate in the small group and then after that they have an open session where everyone is going to have the opportunity to address the entire panel.

Greg Mansfield stated you would be able to take all the comments from the individual tables and present it to everyone for general questions and answers.

Bob Murphy stated he understands Commissioner Hosley's concerns but the question and answer session after will make up for it.

Mark Seber also stated that some people are nervous about getting up in front of a large group and this gives them the opportunity to get the answers they need.

Jim Peluso stated that after the small groups meet the group facilitator can give a summary of what went on in the group and then questions can be asked and answered.

Mark Seber stated the number of people that attend the public hearing may also effect how the meeting is run, if only six (6) people show up it may not be a good idea to break into three (3) groups.

Bob Murphy stated the break out groups will be difficult with the live streaming, and he also suggested having the summaries posted on the City's website.

Adjournment: 6:56 pm

Motion by: Anthony Accetta

Seconded by: Greg Mansfield

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0

City of Mechanicville

Charter Review Commission

Strong Mayor Ad Hoc Sub-Committee

Proposed Government Structure for Strong Mayor Form

January 23, 2023

The Charter Commission Sub-Committee met on January 23, 2023 via Zoom at 2:00 pm. Present were Greg Mansfield, Ed Morcone, and Bob Murphy, Jr. A review of the 1/19/23 was revised with minor changes and approved in this report.

The purpose was to formulate an initial city government structure and cost assessment based on the strong mayor form of government. It is to be pointed out that this is a preliminary proposal and subject to review and revision by the appropriate members of the city government as the process moves forward.

Our goal is to meet the requirements of the form without affecting public services provided under the present commissioner form of government and to work within the current budget restrictions without affecting the city tax structure.

The plan is to eliminate the commissioner positions and elevate the deputy positions to department heads with the structure detailed below.

It is proposed:

1. The Accounts Department be eliminated with the following responsibilities be reassigned:
 - a. Billing moved to the Finance Department renamed City Comptroller
 - b. Records moved to the Office of Mayor
 - c. City Clerk moved to the Public Safety Department renamed the Office of Community Services
2. The creation of a full-time Mayor's position along with a full-time Deputy Mayor's position. The office would assume the responsibility of record keeping along with the creation of grant applications. The mayor will have all the administrative responsibilities of the entire of city government as well as the development of the city budget in conjunction with the Comptroller.
3. The creation of a full-time Comptroller and secretary with responsibility of maintaining city finances
4. The creation of a full-time head and secretary for the Office of Community Services with the responsibility of all current Public Safety Office assignments along with the role of City Clerk
5. All other city departments would remain with no changes and be answerable to the mayor.
6. A city council would be created with five members being elected at-large by the city residents, terms to be determined by the new city charter.

A breakdown of costs is detailed in the document Personnel Services Cost Analysis, Strong Mayor Form of Government dated January 20, 2023 included with this report.

It is strongly recommended that the city engage into contract with a human resources firm to manage the daily requirements of training, benefits, recruitment and human relations, among other issues. This move would be cost neutral being a necessity for whatever path the city chooses to follow.

It is also encouraged to develop a separate Policy and Procedures Manual as part of the final approval process. A HR. firm would be able to assist in this process.

The meeting adjourned at 2:21 pm. This report and spreadsheet will be distributed to the sub-committee members, commission chair Mark Seber prior to the Wednesday, January 25th general meeting.

Submitted by Greg Mansfield

Exp. Code	Current Expenditure Category	2023 Adopted Budget	Proposed Expenditure Category	Proposed Charter Change	Difference from Budget
A1210.000 A1210.100	OFFICE OF THE MAYOR PERSONNEL SERVICES	\$ 56,022.00	OFFICE OF THE MAYOR PERSONNEL SERVICES	\$ 103,000.00	\$ 46,978.00
A1315.000 A1315.000	COMMISSIONER OF ACCOUNTS PERSONNEL SERVICES	\$ 85,737.00			\$ (85,737.00)
A1235.000 A1235.100	COMMISSIONER OF FINANCE PERSONNEL SERVICES	\$ 55,310.00	COMPTROLLER PERSONNEL SERVICES	\$ 63,000.00	\$ 7,690.00
A3101.000 A3101.100	PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSIONER PERSONNEL SERVICES	\$ 43,732.00	OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES PERSONNEL SERVICES	\$ 63,000.00	\$ 19,268.00
			COUNCIL STIPENDS	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 12,500.00
TOTALS		\$ 240,801.00		\$ 241,500.00	\$ 699.00
			PAYROLL ALLOCATIONS		
			MAYOR	\$ 40,000.00	
			DEPUTY MAYOR	\$ 35,000.00	
			SECRETARY	\$ 28,000.00	
			COMPTROLLER SECRETARY	\$ 35,000.00	
				\$ 28,000.00	
			DIRECTOR, OCS SECRETARY	\$ 35,000.00	
				\$ 28,000.00	
			COUNCIL MEMBER 5 @ 2,500 EA.	\$ 12,500.00	

City of Mechanicville

Charter Review Commission

Proposed Government Structure for: City Manager-Council

January 30th, 2023

The following information discussed in this report is from the Charter Commission Sub-Committee of Anthony Accetta, Ann Cerone, and Matthew Maiello. The purpose of this report is to gather preliminary information about the proposed change of the form of government, to the City Manager-Council form and to discuss the potential changes and costs.

Benefits of City Manager Form of Government:

Administration of city business is removed from politics.

Efficiency of professional management based on a business model, also the familiar model of school board to school superintendent relationship.

Since city managers are appointed rather than elected, greater attention can be given to selecting a qualified manager. The pool of qualified candidates is larger since city managers traditionally are paid better than mayors and since candidates can be recruited from outside the city including a nationwide search. (mayors must be a resident of the city prior to their election).

Emphasis is placed on the role of the legislative body and its policy-making function. The council gets better cooperation and information because the city manager is their employee.

Since manager serves at the pleasure of the council without a definite term, he/she can be removed at any time, limiting the danger of an abuse of authority.

Potential Changes needed to move to this form of Government:

The elimination of all 5 Commissioners and replaced by a 5 person City Council, which would be elected positions. The City Council would be the governing body for the city and the City Manager would report to the council. The Mayor would be the President of the Council.

Consolidation of Departments and more defined roles/responsibilities. Proposed consolidations would be merging the Accounts and Finance Departments to create a City Comptroller.

The addition of a Human Resource Department. This can either be led by a qualified City Manager or we can look into other options to fill the role. The Human resource Department would oversee training, benefits, recruiting, human relations, and any other issues associated with that position. This is a recommendation that we have for any form of Government that we decide to move forward with.

A new updated Charter and an updated employee handbook. By updating both, it will help give existing and future employees a clear vision of their roles, responsibilities, and direction. Regarding the Charter, a much-needed update of policies and procedures.

Costs: (These are all preliminary and nothing definitive until we as a city and group conduct an actual cost analysis. This also does not consider any savings received from eliminating positions and increased efficiency over time.)

Paying City Council Members \$2500 each. \$12,500 for all 5 members

City Manager \$70k to \$90k. (Entry Level for City Manager in Capital Region is 56K and a range up to 144K)

City Comptroller \$50K to \$60k

A review of existing Deputies, secretaries, and administrators current pay, roles, and responsibilities. A more in-depth financial analysis would need to be done to reflect changes to these positions and the pay.

Conclusion:

We feel that as a group, we should explore into greater detail on how this form of government could help the City of Mechanicville be run more efficiently through professional management, give employees definitive roles & responsibilities, and competitive salaries to attract qualified employees to help achieve the City of Mechanicville's goals.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony J Accetta Jr

Ann Cerone

Matthew Maiello

Watervliet City Charter:

Elected Offices: Mayor, Council members (2), Supervisor (1) (and Judge)

Appointed Offices: General Manager; Corporation counsel (attorney); DPW, City Engineer; Finance, Public Safety, Civil Service Commissioner; City Marshall; Registrar (similar to clerk)

City Manager general authority, Section 7 of Charter

"Hereafter the general manager shall, subject to the control of the council, be the administrative head of the city government. He shall see that within the city the laws of the state and the city, the ordinances and resolutions and bylaws of the council are faithfully executed. He shall attend all meetings of the council and recommend for adoption such measures as he shall deem expedient, and shall make reports to the council from time to time upon the affairs of the city, and keep the council fully advised of the city's financial condition and its future financial needs. He shall countersign all payrolls, vendors' claims and requisitions, except those pertaining to salaries of elected officers; he shall prepare and submit to the council a tentative budget for the next fiscal year. The general manager shall appoint such city officers and employees as the council shall determine are necessary for the proper administration of the city, but each such appointment shall be a report to the council at its next regular meeting."

- Serves and appoints subject to council (so Mayor and 2 council members)
- Residence requirement not applicable
- Compensation NOT included in Charter (for Mayor, Council, Manager etc.)

Section 44, Mayor, powers (general)

"The executive power of the city is vested in the mayor and in such executive officers and departments as are or may be created by law or by resolution of the board of estimate and contract. The mayor shall be the official head of the city for services of all civil process and under the military law, and for all ceremonial purposes. He shall be the administrative head of the city government and ex-officio head of all departments. He shall see that within the city the laws of the state and the ordinances, resolutions and bylaws of the council are faithfully executed." (note – the footnotes reference the powers here are subject to Section 7, so much of that is subject to the Council as a whole)

COST:

- \$20,000 salary (approx.)
- 2 councilpersons – \$15,750 each (approx.)
- \$120,000 general manager cost

Salamanca – Mayor form (Section 26) but many elected positions (several Alderman from Wards – 5 and also 5 supervisors from each ward).

Interesting point - The appointed positions (DPW, City Clerk) are subject to appointments for 2 year terms and after the 3rd, 2 year term, will be indefinite appointments and only removed through the Council and processes of Civil Service Law. Alderman and Mayor are term limited to total of 8 consecutive years (then requires 1 full term to pass). All terms are 2 years.

Mayor presides over the Council but has NO vote at the council unless there is a tie. But does have veto authority over resolutions, which if vetoed, requires 2/3 Alderman vote of Alderman currently in office.

SHERILL (population around 3,800 people)

- Commission (5 people) and then a Chief Administrative Officer (aka Manager)
- 4 year terms on Commissioners
- Chairman of the Committee shall be known as the Mayor (appointed by Committee)
- Next most senior Commissioner is the Vice Chairman
- City Comptroller may be the same person as the City Clerk (currently is the same person, full time, \$96,000 salary as of 2022)
- Salaries: Commissioners are \$1,000 a year; Mayor is \$1,500
- Manager salary (set by Commission), currently \$90,000 (approx. as of 2022)

“POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE MANAGER. The power and duties of the manager shall be:

1. To see that the laws and ordinances are enforced;
2. To appoint and, except as herein provided, remove all directors of departments and all subordinate officers and employees in the departments;
3. To exercise control over all departments and divisions created herein or that may be hereafter created by the Commission;
4. To attend all meetings of the Commission with the right to take part in its proceedings but shall have no vote therein unless he be a member thereof;
5. To recommend to the Commission for the adoption such measures as he may deem necessary or expedient;
6. To keep the Commission fully advised as to the financial condition and needs of the city;
7. To perform such other duties as may be prescribed by this act or be required of him by ordinance or by resolution of the Commission;
8. The manager is authorized, when directed by the Commission to maintain actions in the name of the city, to restrain the threatened performance of any act contrary to his official orders, directions and decisions, or the city ordinances, and to restrain and abate nuisances; and for the purpose of obtaining a temporary injunction in any such action no undertaking shall be required. The manager shall keep an accurate and detailed account and record of all his official acts and transactions.”

2023

CURRENT MAXIMUM COST COMPARISON

Current Position	Current Salary	Current FICA/Med	Potential NYS Ret.	Max.* Health Ins	Employee *** Contribution	Total** Cost
Mayor	\$ 12,546	\$ 960	\$ 1,330	\$ 31,814	\$ 7,954	\$ 38,696
Comm. Acc counts	\$ 39,729	\$ 3,039	\$ 4,211	\$ 31,814	\$ 7,954	\$ 70,840
Comm. Finance	\$ 12,546	\$ 960	\$ 1,330	\$ 31,814	\$ 7,954	\$ 38,696
Comm. Public Safety	\$ 12,546	\$ 960	\$ 1,330	\$ 31,814	\$ 7,954	\$ 38,696
Comm. Public Works	\$ 52,275	\$ 3,999	\$ 5,541	\$ 31,814	\$ 7,954	\$ 85,676
Public Safety Clerk	\$ 31,186	\$ 2,386	\$ 3,306	\$ 31,814	\$ 7,954	\$ 60,738
	\$ 160,828	\$ 12,303	\$ 17,048	\$ 190,884	\$ 47,721	\$ 333,342

* Based on current Family Coverage Premium

** Maximum based on 2022 costs

*** 25% Employee contribution

Potential Costs New Form of Gover (Council /Administrater)

Position	Salary	FICA/Med	NYS Ret.	Health Ins *	Max.* Employee *** Contribution	Total* Cost
City Admin	\$ 100,000	\$ 7,650	\$ 10,600	\$ 31,814	\$ 7,954	\$ 142,111
Comtroller /City Clerk	\$ 60,000	\$ 4,590	\$ 6,360	\$ 31,814	\$ 7,954	\$ 94,811
DPW Supt.	\$ 50,000	\$ 3,825	\$ 5,300	\$ 31,814	\$ 7,954	\$ 82,986
5 City Council Members	\$ 15,000	\$ 1,148	\$ 1,590			\$ 17,738
	\$ 225,000	\$ 17,213	\$ 23,850	\$ 95,442	\$ 23,861	\$ 337,644

* Based on current Family Coverage Premium

** Maximum based on 2022 costs

*** 25% Employee Contribution

2023

CURRENT ACTUAL COST COMPARISON

Current Position	Current			Employee *			Total Cost
	Salary	FICA/Med	NYS Ret.	Health Ins	Contribution		
Mayor	\$ 12,546	\$ 960		\$ 22,326	\$ 5,582	\$ 30,250	
Comm. Accts. counts	\$ 39,729	\$ 3,039		\$ 22,326	\$ 5,582	\$ 59,513	
Comm. Finance	\$ 12,546	\$ 960				\$ 13,506	
Comm. Public Safety	\$ 12,546	\$ 960				\$ 13,506	
Comm. Public Works	\$ 52,275	\$ 3,999		\$ 11,163	\$ 2,791	\$ 64,646	
Public Safety Clerk	\$ 31,186	\$ 2,386	\$ 4,740	\$ 18,977	\$ 4,744	\$ 52,545	
	\$ 160,828	\$ 12,303	\$ 4,740	\$ 74,792	\$ 18,698	\$ 233,966	

* 25% Employee Contribution

* 25% Employee Contribution

Potential Costs New Form of Government (Council Strong Mayor)

Position	Salary	FICA/Med	NYS Ret.	Max. *	Employee *	Total*
Strong Mayor	\$ 60,000	\$ 4,590	\$ 6,360	\$ 31,814	\$ 7,954	\$ 94,811
Controller /City Clerk	\$ 70,000	\$ 5,355	\$ 7,420	\$ 31,814	\$ 7,954	\$ 106,636
DPW Supt.	\$ 50,000	\$ 3,825	\$ 5,300	\$ 31,814	\$ 7,954	\$ 82,986
5 City Council Members	\$ 15,000	\$ 1,148	\$ 1,590			\$ 17,738
	\$ 195,000	\$ 14,918	\$ 20,670	\$ 95,442		\$ 302,169

* Based on current Family Coverage Premium

** Maximum based on 2022 costs

*** 25% Employee Contribution