

Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes  
HELD ON  
March 10, 2022  
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 Thursday March 10, 2022.

Mark Seber: Called the meeting to order 6:00 P.M.

Mark Seber led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

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

Mark Seber stated the various aspects of the charter were discussed at the previous meeting and he stated the outcome he sensed was not to necessarily to go through the charter piece by piece at this point but rather to talk about the process and define things they will be doing going forward. He added one of the major things they discussed was to break into groups and interviewing staff, and he wants to identify which groups are going to work together and who they will be interviewing before they leave the meeting and he will notify the staff to set up appointments.

Jim Peluso stated he hopes the staff does not perceive this group as a part of the government as opposed to a citizen group that is trying to figure out what to do with the charter if anything.

Mark Seber stated one of the benefit of a small government is everyone knows everyone so he can help pave the way to make them understand this is gathering of information so this group can move forward in whatever direction that is decided to go forward in. He went on to say that at the first meeting several things were discussed and government change was one of them and if that was the direction they would be going they needed to move quickly to hit certain deadlines for the November election and he feels that is off the board right now. He added that if they do decided to go in the direction of government change it would most likely be the 2023 election and do their due-diligence with the process.

The committee discussed breaking into groups to meet with the City employees.

Jim Peluso suggested there should also be some way for the employees to communicate with the committee in the event they don't want to discuss things in the open.

Mark Seber stated it is one thing to have conversations but they might have to look into the legal aspect of it for things in writing but he will look into that.

Jim Peluso stated that this is a good idea as to how we handle human resource management in the City and in the Commissioner form of government that is sometimes difficult.

Mark Seber added even if the committee decides not to move in the direction of change of government he thinks some of those ideas incorporated to a new charter would be helpful.

The committee went on to discuss the various groups of employees that they would like to meet with.

Anthony Accetta suggested to possible meet with various business members of the community.

Mark Seber suggested approaching it in two (2) phases handling the employee's first then reconfigure the committees and then come up with additional questions. He stated he wants it to be a thorough as possible and although he does not want this to go on forever he wants it to be a thorough as they can.

Anthony Accetta stated he wants to make sure there are no conflicts of interest as to who interviews who and if anyone is affiliated with any of the groups they are transparent about it now.

The committee talked about what groups they would be divided and then discussed what groups would be speaking with the different groups of employees, boards, and businesses they will meet with.

Mark Seber stated he is looking to meet again on March 30<sup>th</sup> which is three (3) weeks and he would like to schedule again on April 27<sup>th</sup> at the Senior Center at 6:00 pm. Mark stated that the cost of making changes was discussed previously and he sent the committee estimates and he reached out to various smaller cities to get a sense of what it costs them to run their operations and he is finding if it is a strong Mayor form they pay less than they do with a City administrator. He added with the strong Mayor form of government they work very closely with the finance person who is on staff and stated they can talk about it down the line.

Robert Murphy stated he feels once they collect the data from their meetings with the employees they will have a better sense of what is good and not good about the current system and will be better prepared to make decisions about what alternatives there may be.

Jim Peluso asked if they were looking to have a general public forum.

Mark Seber stated he would like to have multiple forums once they have something to discuss.

Robert Murphy suggested having a meeting, breaking into smaller groups then coming back to a whole group to bring the input from each group.

Ann Cerone stated she is interested in the other small cities and asked if any of them are near our size.

Mark Seber stated Little Falls (who he spoke with) has about 5200 residents and they have a strong Mayor.

Ann Cerone asked what strong Mayor entails.

Mark Seber stated he is full time and makes about \$50,000 a year and they have a treasurer which is elected and they actually had a referendum at the last election to see if they wanted to make the treasurer an appointed position but it was voted down the residents wanted to keep it an elected positions.

Ann Cerone stated it seems that there are so many different variations they could go to.

Mark Seber stated there are basically four (4) forms of government: Commissioner Form of government, the Strong Mayor, the Council Administrator, and Council weak Mayor (he stated he does not know of many of these in the State). He stated that when doing public forums he would prefer not to do them in the summer as people are just not around during that time and they should make it available to the maximum amount of people possible. He would like to say he would like some concrete ideas to present to the public.

Ann Cerone asked about minutes from the meetings.

Mark Seber stated he emailed them all a copy and they are on the website.

Ann Cerone stated she has not received any emails.

Robert Murphy stated they could use an online survey on the website with possibly a standing list of standing questions and collect the data and another option is to get the results from in person public meetings.

Mark Seber stated they will set the committee up with an email and will re-send all the information he has been sending out and will be setting up the meetings for the small groups.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:56 P.M.

Moved by: Tony Accetta

Seconded by: Robert Murphy