

17TH CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

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Vincent J. Freccia, III, Chair

Members

JOSH FEDELI

SUSAN A. NABEL

RICH ROSEMAN

DUDLEY N. WILLIAMS, JR.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Monday, January 23, 2012

6:00 p.m. – Republican Caucus Room

4th Floor, Government Center

888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, CT 06904-2152

Minutes of the 17th Charter Revision Commission Government Committee
Monday, January 23, 2012

Present: Vincent J. Freccia; Josh Fedeli; Susan Nabel; Dudley N. Williams, Jr. Rich Roseman, Dudley N. Williams, Jr. (arrived 7:05).

Other Charter Commission Members Present: Gail Okun, Rosanne McManus
Invited Guests Former Corporation Counsel Thomas Cassone, Michael Larobina;
WPCA Board Members Mary Lou Rinaldi, Ernie Orgera, Don Huppert, Tim Curtin;
Prakash Chakravarti, WPCA Engineer

Visitors: Frank Vartulli

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Chairman Freccia.

Mr. Cassone and Mr. Larobina spoke to Charge 16, Charge 87, Charge 102, Charge 103, Charge 114, Charge 117a, Charge 13, Charge 96, and Charge 112g.

Regarding Charge 16, both rejected the suggestion that the position of Corporation Counsel be a full time position due to the constraints of maintaining a legal practice that would remain viable for an eventual return to private practice

Regarding Charge 87 and Charge 13, both maintained that the Corporate counsel has at most budgetary oversight over the Human Resources function. Neither felt the HR function should be separated from the CC office or should report directly to the Mayor lest the HR position become politicized.

Regarding Charge 102 and 103, Attorney Larobina recommended that the BOR and the BOF have a permanent, part time attorney of their own. Attorney Cassone did not agree. Both stated that the role of Corporation Counsel is to represent elected officials

of the City. In cases of conflict between elected officials, it may become necessary to hire an outside attorney

Charge 114: Both Attorneys agreed that there should be a provision in the Charter to require BOR approval prior to the city entering into an easement.

Charge 117a: Both Attorneys agreed that it is not clear who prosecutes a case of impeachment. They agreed that the BOR would vote to impeach and then hire or assign a Special Counsel to prosecute.

Charge 96: Both attorneys felt that the Charter should retain its current language. Neither recommended that a procedure be in place for when the BOR has approved a contract and the Mayor fails to act, saying that this promotes a strong mayoral role in strategic city decisions.

The Committee took a brief recess from 7:05 to 7:15 p.m.

The Committee next heard from the WPCA Board and Staff members who had assembled. Ms. Rinaldi submitted a document giving a legal opinion regarding the semi-autonomous status of the WPCA. Although the Charter is clear that the functions of the WPCA fall under the Director of Operations, State Statute Ch. 103 calls for a WPCA to be an autonomous entity.

This discrepancy between State Statute and Charter has left the Stamford WPCA in an uncertain state as to its legal status, its financial and staffing separation from the City, and its ability to undertake operating and capital improvements.

That Committee agreed to table its decisions on the agenda charges to permit time for further reading of submitted documents.

Dudley Williams asked that a representative of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities be invited to address the committee on matters such as the WPCA legal status. Chair Freccia noted that Mayor Pavia will be invited to a meeting in the near future to speak to his charges to the Charter Revision Committee.

A draft of the minutes of the 1/18 meeting was distributed for comment or revision. Chairman Freccia noted that the next meeting of the Government Committee will be held on Monday, January 30 at 6:30 p.m.

At 8:30 p.m., Rich Roseman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Dudley Williams. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Nabel

This meeting is on [video](#).