

Minutes of the 17th Charter Revision Commission Government Committee
Monday, February 6, 2012

Present: Vincent J. Freccia; Josh Fedeli; Susan Nabel; Dudley N. Williams, Jr. Rich Roseman

Other Charter Commission Members Present: Rosanne McManus

Invited guests: Emmet Hibson, Frank Vartuli

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Chairman Freccia.

The meeting commenced with Mr. Hibson, City of Stamford Director of Human Resources, who was asked to comment on Government Committee charges 13 and 87. Mr. Hibson related that he feels the Department of Human Resources works well as it is currently housed under the office of the Corporate Counsel. If his department were to be moved, Mr. Hibson said his office could report directly to the Mayor as a Cabinet-level position, but he did not recommend moving his office in order to have it report to the Director of Administration, citing problems from job-level conflicts with other Directors in that department. He said that he is currently invited to Cabinet meetings as was his predecessor, Dennis Murphy. Mr. Hibson recommended that the Labor Negotiator position could be split out of his role and included as a separate role under the office of Corporation Counsel. He felt that having the Director of HR act as the city's labor negotiator lent the perception to city employees that he was adversarial rather than developmental to their functions. The Committee thanked Mr. Hibson for his time.

Charge 14: Committee agreed not to recommend any change to charter language at this time, but to research other charter citations of a finite span of days for the role of an "Interim."

Charges 34/35: Committee discussed its opinions on the size of the Board of Representatives. Most Committee members were in favor of some reduction in number of members and/or districts. Mr. Freccia suggested a possible configuration of 20 districts with one representative and 5 at-large representatives. Committee members felt that recommending a change to the BOR would require much discussion and would not be supported by the BOR. Regarding staggering BOR member terms, it was agreed that BOR President Skigen should be invited to speak to the effects of such a change.

Charges 105 and 106: Committee tabled pending invited guests and other discussion.

Agenda item 3 was a discussion of the Request to consider a Citizens Bill of Rights as an addition to the Charter submitted by Mr. Vartuli. Josh Fedeli brought examples of similar "Citizens Bill of Rights" documents from No. Miami, Louisville and San Antonio. The examples varied greatly in range and specificity. Mr. Fedeli suggested that such a document would help frame the recommendations of the committee, which to him seem focused on making government more responsive, accountable and receptive to citizen service. Members discussed various considerations of enforceability and accountability but agreed that a document that focused on improving the relationship of

the City to citizens might be an appropriate addition to its recommendations. The Committee will research further and return this item on a future agenda.

Chair Freccia stated that Mr. Ernie Orgera, Ms. Anne Fountain, Mr. Ted Jankowski, President Skigen, Rick Talmonelli from the EPB would be invited to the next meeting, on Monday, 2/13 at 6:30 p.m. A longer meeting will be held on Monday, 2/20.

Minutes of the 1/30 and 2/06 meeting will be approved at the 2/13 meeting.

At 8:45 p.m., Josh Fedeli made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Dudley Williams. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Nabel

This meeting is on [video](#).