

17TH CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

Public Safety & Health/Education/Ethics Committee

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Jay H. Sandak, Chair

Members

CLARENCE R. GREBEY, III

MICHAEL C. JACHIMCZYK

GAIL S. OKUN

ROBERT S. ROBINS

MINUTES March 27, 2012

The 17th Charter Revision Commission Public Safety & Health/Education/Ethics Committee was called to order by Chair Jay Sandak at 7:00 on March 27, 2012. All committee members were in attendance: Jay Sandak, Clarence Grebey, Gail Okun, Robert Robins, and Michael Jachimezyk. Also in attendance were Rosanne McManus, a Commission member, Annie Taylor, a Board of Representative, and members of the fire services and other citizens.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of March 20, 2012.

The committee continued to discuss fire service issues and the information gathered from the survey. Mr. Sandak suggested that the focus of the meeting should be to build a general understanding of the fire system and the organization structure. A review of the charter as pertains to fire service and the delivery of service was discussed. Questions were raised as to the legal authority of the city in matters of fire service. A discussion followed on what things the committee would want to facilitate or create a structure to build. The items suggested were:

- address understaffing of volunteers
- ability to have volunteers in career houses
- unified integrated training
- volunteer recruitment
- uniformity of enforcement by fire marshals
- central command leadership
- uniform SOP
- equal voice for volunteers at table
- allocation of manpower across districts
- comparability of rank

- allocation of resources
- economics efficiencies
- funding of volunteers
- avoid redundancies of resources and personnel
- preservation of volunteer system
- unified command
- keep pace with changing city and situations
- depoliticize the fire service

The committee then looked at the composition and role of Fire Commission in the Charter. A discussion followed on the responsibilities and the chain of command: Director Public Safety - Fire Chief - Fire Commission - Fire Districts - Fire Marshals. It was agreed that the number one priority is the preservation of the volunteer system. The committee then considered addressing the structure and the role of the Fire Commission noting the fact that it only referenced the "career force" in the Charter. It was discussed if the jurisdiction of the Fire Commission should be broadened.

A new common structure was suggested for the future, to include:

Mayor
 Director of Public Safety Health and Welfare
 Fire Commission
 Fire Chief
 Division Chief- Volunteer
 Division Chief – Career

It was discussed that there might be a Volunteer/Career Commission with full representation so that everyone had a voice at the table. This needs to be discussed at greater length. Questions of personnel matters and chain of authority for both the career and volunteers was discussed.

It was suggested that there could be a management agreement to spell out that all have a voice at the table.

It was discussed that the goal was to have appropriate fire service in all districts with sufficient level of staffing, and a structure that allows for items to be addressed in order to keep pace with changing situations.

In discussing the role of the Director of Public Safety as found in the Charter, it was stated that the position should be an administrative management position that coordinates the services and their budgets.

The Committee then discussed the various supervisory responsibilities that might fall on a city-wide basis as opposed to individual districts:

- City Wide Division
 - technical training personnel matters

- inspections budget
- SOP command authority
- allocation of manpower ownership of asset
- fire marshals
- fund raising
- Recruitment
- funding maintenance of assets

The question was raised whether we can have a structure that is centralized and autonomous and preserves the best. It was suggested that the responsibilities for the command structure should focus on: **life safety, property conservation, and fire marshal duties**. In addition, the autonomy of the volunteer houses should focus on decision making in the divisional areas, command, and responsibility of personnel.

A motion was made and seconded and approved to adjourn the meeting at 9:17.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Okun

This meeting is on Video – [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)