

City of Whitehall
2018 Charter Review Committee Meeting
Whitehall City Hall
360 S Yearling Rd
Whitehall, OH 43213
February 26, 2018

Meeting called to order at 6:30pm by President of Whitehall City Council Jim Graham. He swore the Commission in under oath. They are:

Kim Bentley
Allyson Sharp
Kevin Skinner
Jack Soma
Paul Werther

Other people present:

Facilitator- Jim Graham- President, Whitehall City Council
Whitehall Clerk of Council-Mary Freimark- took minutes

Jack Soma was voted as the Chair Person of the Commission; Kevin Skinner was voted as the Co-Chairman of the Committee; Allyson Sharp the Secretary.

Chairman Jack Somas called roll call. All Commission Members were present.

Chairperson Soma said he would take suggestions on Rules and Regulations during a meeting. Jim Graham gave guidance whether to open the Charter Review Committee Meetings to the public. He recommended a citizen could speak up to three minutes; it could be open to the public and a citizen could make a statement. Chairperson Soma decided to have the public sign in and have a 3 minute time frame to address commission.

Jack Soma recognize the other people that were present- Gerald Dixon and Councilman Larry Morrison. Jack Soma recommended doing a sign in sheet for all visitors going forward.

Jack Soma asked if there was any new business.

Highlight a rough draft of the charter for the next group Kim Bentley recommended.

Jim Graham clarified that all changes make to the charter have to be voted on by the Council. Then it goes to vote by the electorate.

Kim Bentley would like to reach out to city officials if there are questions. Jim Graham recommended any city official you need information on, it is best to send in writing that you want them at the next meeting to discuss items in the charter.

Can the language be gender-neutral- he/she instead of just he? – Kim Bentley

City Attorney, Mayor, and Director of Recreations and Parks were asked to attend future meetings to get clarification. Mary Freimark will write the letter and Allyson Sharp will sign as the Secretary.

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Jack Soma said to get this completed for council by early May.

Jim Graham suggested when there is a recommendation to provide a reason.

Jack Soma recommended breaking the sections into 4 meetings like prior Commissions.
We will have meetings every other Monday at 6:30, in the same location.

The commission unanimously agreed the meetings will be held on the following dates:

- March 12, 2018
- March 26, 2018
- April 9, 2018
- April 23, 2018

Kim Bentley wanted on record why she took this role. She has lived here for 25 years; 50 years her grandmother. She has never seen Whitehall progress like it has in the last 3-4 years.

Jack Soma has lived in Whitehall 45 years; Paul Werther a lifetime; and Kevin Skinner too. Allyson Sharp is new to Whitehall at three years but has lived in several cities around the country. As a Commission, Jack Soma said we will do our best to be impartial and fair.

Sections will be reviewed according to dates:

- Section 1-21- Tonight
- Section 22-44 March 12, 2018
- Section 45-64 March 26, 2018
- Section 65-86- April 9, 2018
- April 23, 2018- last meeting and final recommendations

The Commission began reviewing each section:

Section 1- No changes

Section 2- No changes

Section 3- Was it on the ballot to stagger terms? Kim Bentley asked. Jim Graham said it was on term-limits. According to Mary Freimark, the recommendations from last Charter Review Commission members were to cancel term limits for elected officials. Jack Soma said it was written poorly when it went to vote. Who writes them? asked Kim Bentley. The city attorney and then the Board of Elections, said Jim Graham.

Visitor Gerald Dixon said the last recommendation was for city council; but then the Council voted to make term limits for all elected officials.

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Kevin Skinner recommends take the term limits out for city council; for the past two terms, no president for city council has run opposed, said Jim Graham. Kevin Skinner and Kim Bentley want to strike all term limits; Paul Werther wants to extend the term from two to three; the ballot needs to be clear; and each position should be spelled out. Allyson Sharp, Kim Bentley, and Kevin Skinner agreed with Paul Werther's recommendation. This is a recommendation the commission will review further.

Section 4- Kim Bentley was confused by this section; Jim Graham said it is divided by 24 pay periods; the last raises were three years ago. Kim Bentley asked if the council could get cost of living increase? Jim said the Council would need to make that recommendation. Allyson Sharp asked about point c. for clarification. Is this section needed since it's over 30 years old as it ended in 1983? The city attorney would need to address.

Section 5- No changes

Section 6- No changes

Kim Bentley suggested that all the Sections be bolded or consistent. Allyson Sharp agreed that the bolded Sections appear to be more prominent or important. It's easy to miss a section.

Section 7- No changes

Section 8- No changes

Section 9- No changes

Section 10- Some discussion by the group; Jim Graham explained this section regarding the ordinances and resolutions being passed after being read on the three separate days. He also explained the non-emergency ordinances verses the emergency ordinances and resolutions being passed after being read on the three separate days. Some discussion, but no changes.

Section 11- No changes

Section 12- No changes

Section 13- No changes

Section 14- No changes

Section 15- Some discussion by the group. Jim Graham explained that the 10% was based on the last election-No changes

Section 16-No changes

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Section 17- Some discussion by the group. Jim Graham explained that everything has to be abide by the Ohio Revised Code- No changes

Section 18- Much discussion regarding the Wards by all the members. 7000 was the number used because the population in Whitehall was about 21,000. However, this hasn't been studied, or unsure if the work was done to determine the balance of the wards and the information in the annual report. Jim Graham will do some research to get information on whether this work was done.

Section 19- No changes

Section 20-No changes

Section 21- No changes

Jack Soma asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

- Allyson Sharp-1st motion
- Paul Werther- 2nd motion

Meeting adjourned at 8:14pm.

*Items in italics were suggestions regarding words and layout of the Charter. May or may not need Council review.

**Items in bold the Commission would like more information to review in more depth.

Submitted by Allyson P. Sharp on February 27, 2018.