

City of Portland Charter Commission Meeting Minutes

May 25, 2022

1. **Call to Order.** Vice-Chair Stewart-Bouley called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

Present were: Chair Kebede, Commissioners Barowitz, Buxton (arrived 6:20 p.m.), Chann, Eglinton, Lizanecz, O'Brien, Sheikh-Yousef, Stewart-Bouley, Washburn, Waxman. (Houston absent.) Vice-Chair Stewart-Bouley and Secretary Eglinton ran the meeting in place of Chair Kebede.

2. **Review and Approval of Minutes.** On motion by Commissioner Eglinton, seconded by Commissioner Washburn, following a brief discussion, the Commission voted to approve the draft meeting minutes of May 11, 2022 by roll call vote of 8 to 2 (Barowitz, Sheikh-Yousef).

3. **Public Hearing on Preliminary Report**

- a. Description: Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the Preliminary Report.
Relevant document(s):

Preliminary Report. The Commission opened the public hearing, received public comment and then closed the public hearing.

5. **Amendments to Preliminary Report**

- a. Description: Commissioners will suggest amendments to the reforms proposed in the Preliminary Report

Commissioner Barowitz presented several proposed amendments and clarifications to the Commission:

- a. How to transition at-large seats to district seats for the School Board? Attorney Katsiaficas explained that under the Redistricting proposal text, one at-large seat would become a district seat in 2023, another in 2024, and two in 2025 – which newly created district seat each would take could be assigned by the Clerk by lot, or perhaps by the Council; Commissioner Barowitz suggested that who would make that decision and how it would be made should be specified in the Charter.
- b. Remove the reference to “business community” from Article I-A Section 3(d) to eliminate an emphasis on business to the exclusion of other groups and communities, to read:

(d) To represent the city with other municipalities, levels of government, community and neighborhood groups, and other communities.

Following discussion, Commissioner Barowitz made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Washburn, to so amend Article I-A, Section 3(d), which motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote of 11-0.

c. Consistency between the Governance Model and Redistricting proposals. Commissioner Barowitz noted that the Redistricting proposal model features a 12-seat City Council, and asked why the Governance Model proposal includes the current 9-seat City Council, and not the larger City Council. Attorney Katsiaficas responded that these were adopted as different proposals, but that they could be combined to make one consistent and complete Governance Model Charter modification question. The Commission decided to leave this matter until it considers whether and how to combine proposals.

d. Consistency between the Governance Model and Redistricting proposals. Commissioner Barowitz pointed out the inconsistency between the Redistricting proposal, which requires a vote by at least 7 Councilors to confirm appointment of the COO, City Clerk and Corporation Counsel, and the Governance Model, which specifies the current number of 5. Attorney Katsiaficas responded that the difference reflects that these were adopted as different proposals, but that they could be combined to make one consistent and complete Governance Model Charter modification question. The Commission decided to leave this matter until it considers whether and how to combine proposals.

e. Communications between elected officials and City staff. Commissioner Barowitz asked why this proposal, which was adopted as a separate proposal but with the understanding that it would be incorporated into the Governance Model proposal, couldn't also be offered as a separate question. Discussion ensued as to what would happen if it were approved by voters as part of the Governance Model but not as a stand-alone question, where the later in time may control. The Commission decided to leave this matter also until it considers whether and how to combine proposals.

f. Other Considerations. Commissioner Barowitz raised other considerations that he recommends be added to the report: an advisory that the Council and/or the Mayor should have their own staff of policy advisors; a provision that those proposing an initiative or referendum present their question to the City Council in a public hearing before they obtain sufficient signatures to send the question to voters to allow an opportunity to discuss and negotiate the language and possibly adopt the measure; and that where the Council places a competing measure on the ballot, "none of the above" be an alternative and that the measure which gains a plurality wins.

Commissioner Buxton asked whether and how such additional or other considerations could be added to the Final Report. Attorney Katsiaficas responded that the Commission can make such additions, even though they are not specified in the statute, but that it would be appropriate for the Commission to add these by majority vote. Commissioner Washburn pointed out that any of the Commissioners can individually submit their Charter concepts to the City Council. Commissioner Barowitz and O'Brien also pointed out the availability of the "minority report" avenue as specified in the Charter statute (with a 1,000 word limit). Commissioner Buxton

recommended putting the topic “other considerations” on a future agenda following the bundling of charter proposals into ballot questions.

As to future amendments, Commissioner Chann reminded all of the upcoming Tuesday, May 31 workshop from 6-8 p.m. Commissioner O’Brien noted that the purpose of this optional workshop is to discuss potential amendments before the text comes forward for discussion at the Commission’s meetings. Commissioner Waxman asked if the same procedure would be followed – first read, second read and vote. After discussion, the Commission clarified that as it previously had done, proposals and major amendments would be subject to first and second readings, while minor amendments would be in order for consideration when introduced. The Commissioners intend to submit any amendments for consideration at the June 8 meeting to the City Clerk by Friday, June 3 for posting on the City’s website.

Commission meetings are scheduled for:

Wednesday, June 8
Wednesday, June 22
Wednesday, July 6

6. New Business

Commissioner O’Brien asked if the Commission would consider adding a meeting on Wednesday, June 29; there was consensus to do so as it appears a quorum will be available.

Commissioner Buxton informed all that the Charter Commission has launched an informational website with minutes and research materials/resources used by and presented to the Commission: <https://portlandcharter.me/>

7. Adjourn

On motion of Commissioner Waxman, seconded by Commissioner Washburn, the Commission voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn at 7:35 p.m.