

Ramsey County Charter Commission Minutes of Monday, September 14, 2020 – 7 PM

The meeting was held through a virtual Zoom meeting.

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM.

ROLL CALL Attendance: Roll call was completed by Jenny Xiong.

	Members Present	Members Absent
District 1	Joe Murphy Steve Reeves	
District 2		Ache Wakai Emily Dunsworth
District 3	Jacque Thomas Nancy Haas	
District 4	Bethany Winkels Sharon Garth	
District 5	Josh Ortiz	
		Michael Lindsay
District 6	Robert Humphrey Tony Parrish, Sr.	
District 7	Angela Thies John O’Phelan	
At Large	Bill Kempe Laura Suess Susan Majerus	
Also present:	Amy Schmidt, Ramsey County Attorney’s Office – Civil Division Jeff Stephenson, Ramsey County Attorney’s Office – Civil Division Janet Guthrie, Director of Administrative Services / Chief Clerk – County Board Jenny Xiong, Administrative Assistant – County Manager’s Office	

Jeff Stephenson (Ramsey County Attorney’s Office) provided an introduction to the meeting for the record. The entire August 3, 2020 Agenda was rescheduled for today, September 14, 2020. This meeting is being held electronically, due to Ramsey County’s State of Local Emergency, pursuant to MN Statutes § 13D.021. Charter Commission members are appearing through Zoom, with County Attorney and Chief Clerk’s staff appearing in person. This meeting is open to the public in the Marsden Room of the Ramsey County Public Works building in Arden Hills. It was concluded that it was impractical to provide public access to this meeting beyond the in-person mask and socially distanced access in the Marsden room for simultaneous monitoring of electronic monitoring. The meeting is being recorded. The recording will be posted on the Chief Clerk website by September 15, 2020. The Chief Clerk’s Office has provided an email for residents to send comments. Prior to the meeting, more than 210 emails were received from members of the public related to what was originally identified as Agenda Item 6.B. All email comments received, will be added to the record for tonight’s meeting and will be considered by the Charter Commission Members. The comments will not be read for the record but will be kept on file in the Chief Clerk’s Office.

Approval of September 14, 2020 Agenda: A request was made to amend the agenda to moved Nominations (7A) to the beginning of the meeting after approval of minutes. Motion by Robert Humphrey to approve the agenda as amended, second by Sue Majerus. Roll Call vote – motion passed unanimously.

Approval of February 3, 2020 Minutes and Approval of August 3, 2020 Minutes: Steve Reeves asked for a correction to the Minutes of February 3 – he was listed as being in attendance and was not. Motion to approve amended February 3 minutes and August 3 minutes made by Susan Majerus, second by Robert Humphrey. Roll call vote – motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

- A. Select Nominating Committee (minimum of 2 people) to bring slate of officers to October: Sue Majerus and Robert Humphrey agreed to serve on the Nominating Committee. Roll call vote to affirm their service: unanimously approved.

Old Business:

- A. Resume Charter Review Discussion. Members discussed questions about clarifying the review of the Home Rule Charter and clarifying the Charter Commission’s roles and responsibilities. Member Bethany Winkels noted that at the February 3, 2020, meeting, she had requested that the County Attorney’s Office provide the Charter Commission with clear review of the roles and powers of the Charter Commission at its next meeting. Member Winkels recalled that at the February 3, 2020, meeting Jeff Stephenson had referenced a document completed by a predecessor in the County Attorney’s Office that provided an in-depth review. It was noted that the document was not provided in the packet for this meeting. It was requested that the document be sent to the Charter Commission members and that the County Attorney’s Office present the material at the October meeting. A motion was made by Nancy Hass to add roles and responsibilities to the October meeting agenda and to send the referenced document ahead of the meeting; seconded by Bethany Winkels. Roll call vote – unanimously approved.

Charter Commission members discussed the emails that had been received from citizens about the issue of election v. appointment of the sheriff. John O’Phelan asked for clarification about what the Charter Commission was intending to do about the issue of election v. appointment. Other members indicated the need for clarification as well. Janet Guthrie, Chief Clerk, indicated that this item of Old Business was a continuation of a Charter Commission discussion of the Home Rule Charter at the September 2019 meeting. At that time, the Charter Commission decided to place the item on a future agenda as one of the items that some Charter Commission members wanted to further discuss. Other than item of Old Business 6.B, no further discussion was made on the items identified for discussion by Charter Commission members from their review of the Home Rule Charter in September 2019.

- B. Election vs. Appointment of Sheriff. Chair Murphy proposed this agenda item be tabled. Motion by Sharon Garth and second by Josh Ortiz to table items 6.A Resume Charter Review discussion and 6.B Election vs. Appointment of Sheriff. Some Members offered comments about communications to the public from the Sheriff related to the issue. Roll call vote: unanimously approved.

Citizen Comments/Input: Four citizens signed up at the meeting to speak; three spoke including Tom Barrett, Dee Walsh and Jamie Hendricks. Each spoke about item of Old Business 6.B.

Future Agenda Items: The following items will be on the agenda for the October 19 meeting:

1. County Manager’s presentation of 2021 Supplemental Budget and Performance Measures

2. County Attorney's presentation of the Charter Commission's roles and responsibilities
3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2021
4. Dates for 2021 Meetings
5. Farewell to Charter Commission members who are not returning due to term expirations

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by Nancy Haas, seconded by Laura Seuss to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jenny Xiong – Administrative Assistant – County Manager's Office