

RAMSEY COUNTY CHARTER COMMISSION

Minutes of Monday, February 1, 2021 – 7 PM

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § § 13D.021 and 13D.04, subd. 3, Chief Legal Counsel of Ramsey County has determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Charter Commission members will participate online via Zoom by telephone or other electronic means. Public participation is available online via Zoom with live access to the meeting at <https://www.ramseycounty.us/your-government/leadership/charter-commission/charter-commission-agendas-and-minutes>. The video recording of the meeting will be posted at the link noted above.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order: Chair Nancy Haas called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
2. ROLL CALL Attendance: Completed by Sia Xiong.

District	Charter Commission Member	Present	Absent
1	Ann Maslansky-Takahashi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	Steven Reeves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	Ache Wakai	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	Joann Knuth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Nancy Haas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Susan Flores-Diaz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Bethany Winkels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4	Sharon Garth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Joshua (Josh) Ortiz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Sebastian Ellefson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Hoang Murphy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Tony Parrish, Sr.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7	John O-Phelan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7	William (Bill) Kempe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
At Large	Angela (Angie) Thies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At Large	Laura Suess	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
At Large	Susan (Sue) Majerus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Also present: Amy Schmidt, Assistant County Attorney, Ramsey County Attorney’s Office
 Janet Guthrie, Chief Clerk – County Board
 Samuel Clark, Civil Division Director, Ramsey County Attorney’s Office
 Sia Xiong, Administrative Planning Assistant

3. Approval of February 1, 2021 Agenda: Motion by Josh Ortiz and second by Joann Knuth. Unanimously approved by roll call vote of all members present.
4. Approval of October 19, 2020 Minutes (Attachment): The motion to approve minutes of October 19, 2020, and January 19, 2021, by one motion. Motion by Sharon Garth and seconded by Sue Majerus. After some discussion, Amy Schmidt recommended to split up the approvals for easier tracking of the quorum. Motion to approve minutes from October 19, 2020, by Sharon Garth, and second by Sue Majerus. Unanimously approved by roll call, with members present at the October 19, 2020 meeting, voting.

5. Approval of January 19, 2021 Minutes (Attachment): Motion by Joann Knuth and second by Ann Maslansky-Takahashi. Unanimously approved by roll call, with members present at the January 19, 2021 meeting, voting.
6. New Business:
 - A. Welcome by New Chair and Vice Chair: Chair Nancy Haas started with an introduction of herself and passed it onto the Vice Chair Angie Thies before beginning introductions from others.
 - B. Commission Member Introduction by District: Charter Commission members each introduced themselves by sharing their name, career, district, and why they are interested in joining the Commission. Vice Chair Thies also included introductions by Ramsey County staff who support the Commission.
 - C. Adopt Robert's Rules of Order: Chair Haas opened it up for discussion on if the commission should adopt the Robert's Rules. Sue Majerus motioned to adopt Robert's Rules, and Sebastian Ellefson seconded. Discussion with input from Josh Ortiz, Nancy Haas, and clarification from Amy Schmidt that the By-laws for the Charter Commission already include rules of procedure being Robert's Riles of Order. Bethany Winkels requested the workshop material "cheat sheet" from the January 19, 2021 workshop. Amy Schmidt recommended to adopt the rules without a friendly amendment, to reduce misunderstanding. Hoang Murphy asked a question on the bylaws. Unanimously approved by roll call vote of all members present.
 - D. Roles and Responsibilities (Attachment): Chair Haas provided additional context and referred to the document briefly.
 - E. 2021 Workplan Discussion:
 - i. New Member Orientation and Mentoring
 - ii. Focus – Charter Review and Committees / Workgroups
 - iii. Additional Topics – Community Outreach, Education, Budget Review, Comments

Vice Chair Thies shared thoughts and discussion she had with Chair Haas on potential workgroups for the purpose of information gathering, not as advisory bodies. The function of the workgroups would report back to the full Commission. Ann Maslansky-Takahashi asked for some clarity; Chair Haas and Vice Chair Thies emphasized that the workgroups are just suggestions and they are interested in hearing from Commission members. Bethany Winkels likes the idea of workgroups.

Josh Ortiz asked for some background information on previous ad hoc committees. Bethany Winkels and Sharon Garth provided additional background, and Janet Guthrie provided an additional previous effort. Chair Haas elaborated on her experience and ways to continue work that have been introduced in her previous years of serving. Bethany Winkels agreed and discussed intentionality and how important it is to provide clarity on roles to ensure productivity and confidence. Ann Maslansky-Takahashi mentioned it may be helpful to have history and onboarding to get new members up to speed. She would like to see meetings in local newspapers and envisions a way to be provided another email address to use in this capacity for contacts.

Vice Chair Thies reiterated that she is hearing the Commission members are agreeable to having a committee structure. Bethany Winkels highlighted that some of the things may go beyond the scope and roles of responsibilities of the formal Commission, and there needs to be alignment with those. Vice Chair Thies summarized the review of the Charter and onboarding. Josh Ortiz added outreach and awareness on what the Charter Commission work really is, because the public is not familiar with what the Commission does and what power the Commission does not have.

Sue Majerus asked about standard annual presentations that will continue. Janet Guthrie shared that in previous years, members were interested in education sessions, such as elections, the census, demographics of Ramsey County, and budget. These presentations are not required and are based on what the members want to know and cover. Sue Majerus suggested that sharing the output of the workgroups back to the Commission be an expectation. Josh Ortiz asked where the workgroups would happen. Vice Chair Thies said the committees would be subject to Open Meeting Law but not have to formally run it like the full Charter Commission meetings.

Amy Schmidt clarified that none of the workgroups would be the size of a quorum, and depending on the scope of the committee, the Open Meeting Law may or may not apply. Workgroups will also have to consider public attendance, public promotion; if the workgroup is charged with the duty of the actual Commission, that committee would be subject to the Open meeting law so the committee would have to give public notice as a special meeting and published with three days' notice, and the location or time be accessible to the public. This is where Ramsey County staff would have to post it online and ensure the notice is up. May be safest to assume Open Meeting Law applied to committees and post at the appropriately timeline.

Joann Knuth asked about amendments; Janet Guthrie shared that the Charter went into effect in 1992, and that there have been four amendments to the Charter Commission since then. Amy Schmidt emphasized that all amendments must have public vote in order for it to pass. Discussion on the process to bring an amendment and how it is implemented occurred. Vice Chair Thies summarized interest expressed in committees for new member orientation, community outreach and awareness, and Charter review. Bethany Winkels offered assistance to help the Chair and Vice Chair. Members were encouraged to follow up and email Angie Thies directly if interested in any of the committees. Amy Schmidt reminded members to not "reply all" to all members on emails, but that it is okay to have a one-on-one email communication for clarification and questions directly.

7. Citizen Input (Approximately 8:30 PM): Chair Haas checked to see if anyone who attended who is not a member would like to provide input. There was one non-Commission member in attendance, who chose not to speak. There were no comments.
8. Future Agenda Items: If there are volunteers, members should reach out to Vice Chair Thies and Chair Haas on interests. Vice Chair Thies expressed interest in an informational update on race equity efforts across the county. Ann Maslansky-Takahashi would like an update on COVID-19 vaccines and the county's work with the state regarding access. Sue Majerus would like an update on census data. Hoang Murphy would like an update on Transforming Systems Together.

9. Adjournment: Motion by Sue Majerus and second by Josh Ortiz. The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 PM.

Next Meeting: Monday, May 3, 2021 – 7 PM

Virtual Zoom meeting for Charter Commission members, staff, and the public.

Respectfully submitted by Sia Xiong, Administrative Planning Assistant.