

RAMSEY COUNTY CHARTER COMMISSION

Agenda of Monday, February 7, 2021 – 7 PM

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § § 13D.021, subd. 1, the Charter Commission Chair has determined that due to the ongoing health pandemic, particularly because of the delta variant, an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent. Charter Commission Committee members will participate online via Zoom by telephone or other electronic means. Also, because of the ongoing health pandemic, it is unfeasible for at least one Charter Commission member, chief legal counsel, or County Manager staff to be physically present in the regular meeting room. 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>.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call Attendance
3. Approval of February 7, 2022 Agenda
4. Approval of October 18, 2021 Minutes (Attachment)
5. Old Business
None
6. New Business
 - A. Welcome Chair and Vice Chair
 - B. New Commission Member Introduction
 - C. Entire Commission Member Introduction
 - D. Charter Commission Onboarding Binder (Attachment)
 - i. Roles and Responsibilities
 - ii. Robert's Rules of Order
 - E. 2022 Charter Commission Workplan Adoption (Attachment)
7. Committee Reports
 - A. Budget (Attachments)
 - B. Charter Review
 - C. Bylaws
8. Citizen Input (Approximately 8:30 PM)
9. Future Agenda Items
10. Adjournment

Next Meeting: Monday, May 2, 2022 – 7 PM

Location information will be posted 3 days prior to each meeting date.

Attachments:

- October 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes Draft
- Charter Commission Onboarding Binder
- 2022 Charter Commission Workplan
- Budget Committee Letter
- County Manager Response to Budget Letter

DRAFT

RAMSEY COUNTY CHARTER COMMISSION

Minutes of Monday, October 18, 2021 – 7 PM

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 13D.021, subd. 1, the Charter Commission Chair has determined that due to the ongoing health pandemic, particularly because of the delta variant, an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent. Charter Commission Committee members will participate online via Zoom by telephone or other electronic means. Also, because of the ongoing health pandemic, it is unfeasible for at least one Charter Commission member, chief legal counsel, or County Manager staff to be physically present in the regular meeting room. 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>.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order: Chair Nancy Haas called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Due to the ongoing health pandemic, particularly because of the delta variant, as Chair of the Charter Commission, I have determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent. In compliance with Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.021, subdivision 1, we state for the record that all members of the Charter Commission are able to hear one another and all discussion and testimony, as can members of the public. Also, because of the ongoing health pandemic, it is unfeasible for at least one Charter Commission member, chief legal counsel, or County staff to be physically present in the regular meeting room. All votes by Charter Commission members will be conducted by roll call.

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 type="checkbox"/>
2	Ache Wakai	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Joann Knuth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Nancy Haas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Bethany Winkels	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Sharon Garth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Joshua (Josh) Ortiz	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>
7	John O'Phelan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	William (Bill) Kempe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At Large	Angela (Angie) Thies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At Large	Susan (Sue) Majerus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At Large	Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Also present: Amy Schmidt, Assistant County Attorney, Ramsey County Attorney's Office
Sia Xiong, County Manager's Office Admin.

Guests Alex Kotze, Chief Financial Officer

3. Approval of October 18, 2021 Agenda: Assistant County Attorney Amy Schmidt had a minor edit to the agenda regarding the call to action. Motion by Bethany Winkels and second by Ann Maslansky-Takahashi. Unanimously approved by roll call of all members present.
4. Approval of May 3, 2021 Minutes (Attachment): Motion by Sharon Garth and second by Angie Thies. Unanimously approved by roll call of all members present.
5. Approval of August 2, 2021 Minutes (Attachment): Motion by Ann Maslansky-Takahashi and second by Sue Majerus. Assistant County Attorney Schmidt reiterated that members not present at the meeting are able to still vote and approve the minutes. Unanimously approved by roll call of all members present.
6. New Business:
 - A. Welcome and Introductions: Chair Haas shared with members that the two current vacancies are in the process of being filled.
 - B. 2022-2023 Budget Presentation by Chief Financial Officer Alex Kotze (Attachment): Chair Haas welcomed CFO Kotze and passed it over to her to begin the presentation. CFO Kotze went through her budget presentation, highlighting major items for each service team then opened up for questions and comments.

Questions came up related to CARES ACT and additional funding not listed in the presentation. CFO Kotze shared some details around Navigators and their new roles. Ann Maslansky-Takahashi expressed her concerns around checks and balances when deploying programs. CFO Kotze highlighted the role of the Compliance and Ethics Office and their work together to ensure guidelines are met. There have also been master contracts with organizations to address items that cannot be supported internally, such as the trusted messengers.

Vice Chair Angie Thies thanked CFO Kotze again for the information and presentation and brought up bond related items. CFO Kotze mentioned that the triple A bond rating was retained. She is advocating for increasing the capital budget and have also increased the fund balance. Joannn Knuth asked a question around planning prior to the budget process and how priorities are established and public communications. CFO Kotze shared that engagement with community were part of the process and are working on better communication strategies. Performance measures are also included to provide data and a Policy and Planning area helps to select priorities.

Bethany Winkels asked a question around internal auditing and its impact. CFO Kotze expressed how internal auditing is focused on tracking and holding accountability along with risk management. It won't change or replace the external or third-party contracts. Chair Haas thanked CFO Kotze for coming and presenting again.

7. Committee Reports:

- A. Budget Committee (Attachment): Vice Chair Thies provided an overview of the three online meetings with Ann Maslansky-Takahashi and Sue Majerus. Budget materials were reviewed, and the drafted letter was developed. The committee is hoping to submit the letter sometime in November 2021 but will be available until late October. Vice Chair Thies thanked the budget committee and gave Sue Majerus and Ann Maslansky-Takahashi an opportunity to share more.

There was additional distinction that the letter is on behalf of the Charter Commission and the letter was structured in buckets so that items were more organized. Sue Majerus reiterated that additional comments are welcomed, please send them directly to [Sia Xiong](#). The letter was drafted prior to the presentation, so a few items CFO Kotze shared were not yet considered or shared in the current materials. Bethany Winkels requested having the levy piece removed and want to ensure all comments are from members, not public input.

Vice Chair Thies on behalf of the budget committee requested authority from members to finalize and submit a letter to the County Manager. Motion by Sue Majerus and second by Hoang Murphy. Discussion occurred and details around the process on conflicting and how the letter will be shared once submitted. Information will be collected and will try to put as much as possible in the letter and ensure items can be traced back to the appropriate member.

The motion to have the budget committee submit a letter on behalf of the commission was unanimously approved by roll call of all members present.

- B. Charter Review: Sebastian Ellefson shared with members that anyone interested in joining is still welcomed to. There has been a proposed two-year plan to review the charter section by section and 1) share findings as they go to the commission on what can be changed, 2) put together a document of recommendations, and 3) creating an educational document to the general public. Meetings for 2022 have already been scheduled and hope to present information as needed.

Vice Chair Thies thanked Sebastian Ellefson for chairing. Sue Majerus expressed interest in being a part of the committee.

- C. Bylaws Committee: Chair Haas noted that this is not formed yet but is open for any members to chair and lead this committee.

8. Chair Reports:

- A. Draft Proposed Workplan for 2022 (Attachment): Chair Haas went through the dates and outline of the workplan. She hopes to also be able to include guest speakers and continued ways to learn more on things members are interested in. Feedback and input were requested, and Sue Majerus shared her appreciation on transparency and being able to plan ahead.
- B. Approval of Commission Meeting Dates: Motion by Bethany Winkels and second by Angie Thies. Unanimously approved by roll call of all members present.
Monday, February 7, 2022
Monday, May 2, 2022
Monday, August 1, 2022

Monday, October 17, 2022

9. Nominating Committee – Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2022: Sue Majerus shared the nominations of Nancy Haas for Chair, Angie Thies for Vice Chair, and Bill Kempe for either one. Bill Kempe shared that he would like to withdraw. Three opportunities were given to members present if there were any more nominations, and there were none. Nancy Haas and Angie Thies each expressed their experience and willingness to continue to serve another year.

Motion by Bill Kempe and second by Sue Majerus to continue with Nancy Haas and Angie Thies as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Unanimously approved by roll call of all members present.

10. Citizen Input (Approximately 8:30 PM): Chair Haas checked to see if there were attendees who would like to provide input. There were no non-Commission members in attendance.
11. Future Agenda Items: Vice Chair Thies suggested adding housing needs.
12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM.

Next Meeting: Monday, February 7, 2022 – 7 PM

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

Respectfully submitted by Sia Xiong, County Manager's Office Admin.

2022 Charter Commission Workplan

January 2022	<i>Jan. 12 (5 – 6 PM)</i>	Charter Review Committee Meeting – Review sections 1-3
February 2022	<i>Feb. 7 (7 – 9 PM)</i>	Charter Commission Meeting – Committee reports – Focus issue needed
March 2022		
April 2022	<i>Apr. 13 (5 – 6 PM)</i>	Charter Review Committee Meeting – Review sections
May 2022	<i>May 2 (7 – 9 PM)</i>	Charter Commission Meeting – Committee reports – Focus issue needed
June 2022		
July 2022	<i>TBD</i>	Budget Committee Meeting
	<i>Jul. 13 (5 – 6 PM)</i>	Charter Review Committee Meeting – Review sections
August 2022	<i>TBD</i>	Budget Committee Meeting
	<i>Aug. 1 (7 – 9 PM)</i>	Charter Commission Meeting – Committee reports – Focus issues needed
September 2022	<i>TBD</i>	Budget Committee Meeting
	<i>Sep. 14 (5 – 6 PM)</i>	Charter Review Committee Meeting
October 2022	<i>Oct. 17 (7 – 9 PM)</i>	Charter Commission Meeting – Committee reports – County Manager budget presentation
November 2022	<i>TBD</i>	Budget Committee Meeting

November 29, 2021

To: Ryan O'Connor, County Manager

CC: Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk and Director of Administration
Alex Kotze, Chief Financial Officer
Nancy Haas, Charter Commission Chair
Amy Schmidt, Assistant County Attorney

RE: Ramsey County 2022 Budget, Charter Commission Comment

Dear County Manager O'Connor,

Per the Ramsey County Charter, members of the Ramsey County Charter Commission have assembled and reviewed the Ramsey County budget and [corresponding materials](#). I serve as the Vice-Chair of the Ramsey County Charter Commission and Co-Chair of the Budget Committee. On behalf of the Budget Committee, we commend your efforts to compile a thoughtful, strategic, and balanced budget that clearly outlines and resources the priorities of the county.

Specifically, we'd like to call attention to the areas of:

- Intentionally supporting a more collaborative and aligned internal structure that reduces inefficiencies;
- Improving technological support and infrastructure to reduce complex systems and make them easier for the community to access;
- Increasing county efforts to provide individualized services; and
- Importantly, incorporating racial equity aspects throughout the budget.

Of specific note, the Commission was complimentary of the county's efforts to engage residents and community through the budget, resulting in a thoughtful, transparent, and well-organized process.

While overall complimentary, the Commission raised inquiry about the following areas:

- Cited levy increase over the next two years and impact to residents, cities, and townships.
- Pandemic funding and long-term financial stability of the county.
- Pandemic impact in the areas of housing, transportation, and commercial real estate, including the impact to county taxpayers.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide comment and share the areas we encourage the county to continue monitoring. If we may be of additional service, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Angela M. Thies
Charter Commission Vice Chair
amthieser@gmail.com

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From: [OConnor, Ryan](#)
To: [Angie Thies](#)
Cc: [Cheng, Mee](#); [Nancy A. Haas](#); [Schmidt, Amy K](#); [Kotze, Alexandra](#); [Xiong, Sia](#); [Sigveland, John](#)
Subject: RE: Ramsey County Charter Commission - Letter re: 2022 Budget
Date: Monday, December 6, 2021 6:42:49 PM

Ms. Thies:

I wanted to thank you for the letter you shared with me regarding the Budget Committees' thoughts regarding the proposed 2022 budget. These thoughts matter, and it is a positive sign to me that we were able to foster a dialogue that resulted in you providing these comments to me. In my time here I do not believe that has happened before, and I would ask that you and Ms. Haas please pass along my sincerest appreciation for the time and thought you all put into those comments. I also wanted you to know that I shared your thoughts with the full Board of Commissioners so that they may be able to consider the Charter Commission's comments as they partake in final budget deliberations and a hopeful budget approval later this month.

I also want to note that the three areas you specifically cited in your inquiry section are concerns that I share with you. While I have done my best to propose a budget that takes these issues into full account, I want to acknowledge that these issues require deep, serious thought about the tradeoffs and impacts that can occur. Services are funded through taxes, yet taxes impact housing affordability. The market impacts of real estate in the County at any given time impact who bears a larger share of that year's tax burden, further complicating the considerations about ability to pay and impacts on the state's most diverse county. I am proud that Ramsey County's proposed levy increase of 1.5% falls well below the state average of approximately 3.5%, but that also leaves us with less flexibility to accomplish important visions and serve significant needs.

I hope you are open to continuing to engage with myself and the Finance team during the coming year as we continue to discuss the County's budget, the changing needs and service landscape around us, and work together to build a community in which all are truly valued and can thrive. Together I am hopeful that we can develop better approaches to innovation and local government than we could do on our own, and your letter is but one important step in that process.

Thanks again, have a good night, and Happy Holidays.

RTO

Ryan T. O'Connor
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