

Ramsey County Charter Commission

Minutes of May 6, 2019

The meeting was held at AMC, 125 Charles St, St Paul with the following members in attendance:

	Members Present	Members Absent
District 1	Joe Murphy	Steven Reeves
District 2	Ache Wakai	Emily Dunsworth
District 3	Nancy Haas	
	Jacquelyn Thomas	
District 4	Bethany Winkels	
	Sharon Garth	
District 5		
District 6	Tony Parrish, Sr	
	Robert Humphrey	
District 7	John O’Phelan	
At Large	Bill Kempe	
	Laura Suess	
	Susan Majerus	

Also present: Jeff Stephenson, Ramsey County Civil Division Director
Janet Guthrie, Director of Administrative Services / Chief Clerk – County Board
Katie Haselman, Administrative Assistant
Kristine Grill, Open Data Portal Coordinator

1. Call to Order: Chair Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. Introductions: Six new Charter Commission members introduced themselves as this was their first meeting: Ache Wakai – District 2, Nancy Haas – District 3, Tony Parrish, Sr – District 6, John O’Phelan – District 7, Susan Majerus – At Large, and Laura Suess – At Large.
3. Approval of May 6, 2019 Agenda: Robert Humphrey moved approval of the agenda, seconded by Bill Kempe. Approved unanimously.
4. Approval of October 22, 2018 Minutes: Bill Kempe moved approval of the minutes, seconded by Bethany Winkels. Approved unanimously with Susan Majerus sustaining.
5. Citizen Comments/Input: None
6. Charter Commissioner Purpose/Orientation for New Members: Janet Guthrie gave an overview on the Charter and its background. Ramsey County is the only county that operates with a Home Rule Charter. Citizens voted to approve the Home Rule Charter and establishment of a Charter Commission in November 1990. which became in effect November 1992. The Home Rule Charter is overseen by a 17-member Charter Commission appointed by the Chief Judge of the 2nd Judicial District Court. It has been amended 4 times. The Charter gives a framework to Ramsey County on how to operate and its recognized roles. The annotative home rule charter goes into more detail and gives more context on how certain decisions were made in the home rule charter.

Questions fielded from Charter Commission members related to the Charter Commission:

Q: Have we, as a board (Charter Commission), ever given suggestions to the Board of Commissioners on budget?

A: Every October the County Manager and Chief Financial Officer present the draft budget for the coming year to the Charter Commission during which the Commission members provide input and ask questions are asked for clarification.

7. Old Business: Update on Community Recruiting/Awareness Ad Hoc Committee: Chair Murphy asked if there are still members interested. The members agreed the problem has been resolved with recent efforts. The flyer for recruitment has helped to engage the community.
8. New Business: Presentation by Kristine Grill, Ramsey County's Open Data Portal Coordinator: Kristine Grill (handouts provided) presented on Ramsey County's Open Data Portal. She explained that open data is a concept that takes government-owned data that is not private or sensitive and makes it available to the public. 40 – 50% of the data comes in the form of a spreadsheet and that can be downloaded and used as needed (hard/raw data). The other 60% of the data has been taken from the spreadsheet and made and presented in a more user-friendly mode e.g. charts and graphs. There are 3 Open Data Portal sites:
 - A. Open Data: datasets, maps, charts, and graphs
 - B. Open Performance: Ramsey County Performance Measures
 - C. Open Finance: budget, expenditures, revenue

Kristine gave a live tour of each of the Open Data Portal websites.

Questions fielded from Charter Commission members related to the Open Data Portal:

Q: Is there a Ramsey County Org Chart on the website that shows the names of the people in each position?

A: Not currently. Kristine Grill will bring it back to her supervisor and work on creating one.

Q: On the handout, the median household income amount and percent of families 'Living below the poverty line' are different from presentations from Ramsey County Commissioners.

A: Census bureau provides 3 different numbers to estimate the numbers. Also, Commissioners are most likely reporting on their district only, not the entire County. Reference was made to check out the MNCompass [website](#).

Q: How does our Open Data compare to other counties?

A: We are one of the only counties in the state who has an Open Data Portal. Hennepin and Olmstead also have data available, but it is not condensed in one place. We are a leader compared to other counties.

9. Future Agenda Items:
 - A. Review Charter: ideal charter, values, measures. Commission members discussed possibly hearing from the Board of Commissioners about how they use the Charter Commission.
 - B. Celebrate/Promote Charter: November 2022 would be the 30-year anniversary
 - C. Next meeting: Monday, August 5, 7:00 PM – Location to be determined
10. Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by Susan Majerus, seconded by Bethany Winkels. The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Haselman – Administrative Assistant – County Manager's Office