

CHARTER REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
May 26, 2009

This meeting was called to order by Chairman Ed Pleasant

MEMBERS PRESENT: GaryMcKinley, Alan Seymour, Rosalyn DeGood, John Popio, Alicia Adams

MEMBERS ABSENT: Becky Wever, Mike Rose, Martin Pratt

CITIZENS PRESENT: Brian Dostanko, Director of Human Resources for the City of Marysville; Tim Alsaner, Marysville Law Director; Hank Berbee

JOURNALISTS PRESENT: Ryan Horns

APPROVALS OF MINUTES – Minutes from the last meeting were distributed. The minutes stand as presented.

GENERAL REPORT:

Chairman Ed Pleasant began the meetings with a review of the council voting procedure.

Chairman Ed Pleasant opened the floor for public discussion. Only one person from the public attended the meeting and stood up to speak on his own behalf: Hank Berbee of 207 Grove Street Marysville Ohio. He found the present city form of government interesting and appealing. Hank Berbee recently became a new citizen of the United States and has a distinct appreciation for the process of routinely reviewing the city charter with an open ear to the public's opinion. He said he likes the present form of government currently in place. It runs nicely, gets the job done, and has little friction or conflict present. In other words, if it isn't broken, then don't fix it.

John Popio asked Hank Berbee about the at-large candidate question. Hank Berbee responded that he thinks it doesn't need changed, either.

Chairman Ed Pleasant broached the topic of term limits and asked the members present their take on it.

Alan Seymour said there seems to be a question as to why there are term limits.

Gary McKinley joined in by saying he has yet to hear a valid reason for having term limits.

John Popio agreed and mentioned it seems that we have a consensus on the topic.

Chairman Ed Pleasant reaffirmed the consensus and agreed to the intent to eliminate the term limits for planning.

Chairman Ed Pleasant then opened the discussion regarding the issue of the law director.

Gary McKinley commented that he was leaning towards the idea of a fulltime law director but keeps circling around to the fact that it is really a money issue. If a fulltime law director is chosen, does it tie council's hands on pay, on assistants, etc.? Perhaps this is a problem best tackled by city ordinance and council – not by charter.

Chairman Ed Pleasant reminded the group that the role of the review board is to make recommendations to council.

Alan Seymour asked if the law director should be elected or mandated. In other words, is it really a council issue?

Rosalyn DeGood asked how would the assistant be selected?

Alan Seymour asked about the legal cost, the underlying budget impact, and the total that this change might incur.

John Popio remarked that the issue at heart is compensation. There doesn't seem to be a need to change the charter. Council can approve the funds for what's appropriate for legal needs.

Also in question is the feasibility of affecting such a change – that in of itself would prove to be problematic.

Chairman Ed Pleasant concurred that the concerns seem to center around the financial aspect of the city budget.

Alan Seymour agreed.

Chairman Ed Pleasant reiterated the consensus that the recommendation is no change to the charter regarding a fulltime law director. Let's leave it the way it is.

Chairman Ed Pleasant then brought forth the topic of the form of government.

Gary McKinley said he is opposed to the city manager form of government due to the lack of checks and balances. Regarding the city manager contract, if you don't like the city manager then there is a whole due process procedure to follow and it can become drawn out. There seems to be only 2 choices that make sense: the mayor/council form of government and the hybrid form of government.

John Popio remarked that he hasn't heard any good reason to change. Not that the city manager is a bad format, but we seem to be doing fine as of now.

Chairman Ed Pleasant said he agrees with Hank in regards to things seem to be going fine. The only concerns would center around the number of candidates to select from, the expertise and education of such candidates, the selection process of the candidate and ensuring a professional standard for both the process and the end result.

Rosalyn DeGood said traditionally there aren't that many people who run for mayor.

Gary McKinley asked if the job was fulltime, do you think there would be a better pool of people to draw from?

John Popio asked if we could somehow suggest language for the requirements and in that way address the issue of qualifications.

Chairman Ed Pleasant said he liked the way they elected Jillian Froment, Director of Administration. There were several different representatives from the city making it a group effort with council approval.

Alan Seymour said the veto power of the mayor is complicated – situations can stagnate or come to an impasse. With the city manager / council form of government, you don't worry about it.

John Popio stated that his opinion on the issue is that he doesn't see a compelling reason to change.

Gary McKinley concurred with John Popio, as well as Alan Seymour.

Chairman Ed Pleasant said the previous form of government was changed due to various personalities conflicting.

Chairman Ed Pleasant said that as a note to council, to encourage the use of qualifications for city administrator. He also proposed the reconvene on Tuesday, June 9th at 6:30 to review the city form of government so the absent members can also have their say. It was agreed upon by all.