

City of Saratoga Springs Charter Review Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 26, 2001

C-19c Utilities Department: Elio Del-Sette moved and Chris Whann seconded to approve this section with a few minor corrections. Ayes all.

C19d Office of the City Engineer: Elio Del-Sette moved and Chris Whann seconded to approve this section with a few minor changes. Ayes all.

C-76 Public Works & Local Improvements paid by tax, C-77 Public Works and Local Improvements paid by tax assessments & C-81 Water & Sewer Rates: It was agreed these sections would be discussed on Monday, July 2.

C-22 Civil Service: Elio Del-Sette moved and Lew Benton seconded to approve this section with a few minor modifications. Ayes all.

C-24 Code of Ethics: Margie VanMeter moved and Mark Lawton seconded to approve this section of the charter with a few minor modifications. Ayes all.

C-30 Supervisors: Elio Del-Sette moved and Mark Lawton seconded to approve this section of the charter with a few minor modifications. It was agreed that the final paragraph of this section should be added to the election section. Ayes: eight; Abstention: one (Lew Benton). Motion carried.

C-50 City Attorney: Margie VanMeter said there should be regular reporting by the City Attorney to the Council on all legal matters. Tony Izzo said he reports to all five Council members and not just the Mayor. He said he is appointed by the Mayor and the Council approves the appointment. Lew Benton suggested using the same language that is in the City Engineer's section. Elio Del-Sette asked about Commissioners hiring their own attorneys. Tony Izzo said the last paragraph would limit those hires. Margie VanMeter said she was concerned about the City Attorney making periodic reports to the Council. Tony Izzo said he was concerned with the burden of making such reports.

Mark Lawton moved and Elio Del-Sette seconded to approve this section of the charter with a few minor modifications. Ayes: eight; Abstention: one (Vassar Curtis). Motion carried.

C-25 Deputies and Employees: Elio Del-Sette moved and Mark Lawton seconded to approve this section as presented.

Lew Benton said he was concerned that the second sentence in the first paragraph seemed a bit clumsy. He said he was more concerned though about the third sentence concerning job descriptions. He said it was his understanding that all positions in the City had job descriptions. Elio Del-Sette said all positions have a job description. Lew Benton said he was also concerned about establishing standards for deputies. He said he believed that Commissioners should be able to hire anyone they felt comfortable with as their deputy. Tony Izzo said that standards could be

based on education and work experience. Lew Benton again said in this form of government, the Commissioner should have the ability to appoint as his deputy, the individual that he or she is most comfortable with. Chris Whann agreed that the Commissioner should be given a great deal of latitude, however, thought that there should be some standards. Elio Del-Sette pointed out that a deputy is generally the Commissioner's political representative. Lew Benton said he was concerned that the Council might be now given the ability to establish standards that could exclude a particular deputy. Elio Del-Sette said this could become a contentious issue. Lew Benton said Commissioners, at their own political risk, may appoint a deputy that could be somewhat controversial. Mark Lawton said there should be minimal qualifications. Chris Whann said this is a minimal expectation to get qualified individuals. Lew Benton said he was not comfortable with the perception that there were incompetent individuals in this government. Lew Benton said if qualifications are established, it would narrow the field of candidates. Lee Nelson said she remembered City Hall employees appearing before this Commission requesting qualified professional individuals. Denise Polit said she did not believe they were specifically addressing the deputy commissioners.

Mark Lawton said this was an important statement saying that minimal standards should be established. He said it was important to send the signal out that the City wants to raise the level. Tony Izzo suggested that perhaps the education standard might be removed. Elio Del-Sette asked how the qualifications for a deputy mayor might read. Tony Izzo said in that case, perhaps experience would be more appropriate.

Elio Del-Sette said he believed that including this sentence would do harm to the overall charter.

It was agreed the last sentence of the first paragraph would be deleted. It was also agreed that the second sentence under deputies would read as follows, "The City Council may establish appropriate qualifications for any deputy."

Chris Whann moved and Mark Lawton seconded to amend the motion to included the above noted modifications. Ayes all.

Ayes all on motion.

Misc. paragraph d -- Conduct of City Boards: Mark Lawton moved and Chris Whann seconded to approve this section with a few minor modifications. Ayes all.

Title XI Elections: Margie VanMeter said as a reminder the statement from C-30 Supervisors should be added to this section. She noted that one of the changes to this sections concerned publicizing the election timetables.

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C-100 -- Primaries and Municipal Elections: Elio Del-Sette moved and Chris Whann seconded to approve this section of the charter as presented. Ayes: eight; Abstention: one Lew Benton.

C-101 -- Election of City Officers: There was a question on the length of term for the City judge. It was agreed that whatever the state law says would be inserted. Mark Lawton moved and Chris Whann seconded to approve this section with a few minor modifications and the notation that the text from C-30 Supervisors be included in this section. Ayes: eight; Abstention: one (Lew Benton). Motion carried.

C-102 Publication of Election Timetable: Margie VanMeter moved and Mark Lawton seconded to approve this section of the charter with a few minor modifications. Ayes: eight; Abstention: one (Lew Benton). Motion carried.

Rationale Paper: Chris Whann said Tony Izzo would provide Commission members with rationale papers from previous charters. Chris Whann said he hoped that all Commission members would take a section of the charter rather than having the drafting committee do the entire project. He said he would do any necessary editing for the rationale paper. Chris Whann said it was his understanding that the rationale paper needed to be filed with the state. Denise Polit asked what was the time line for the rationale paper. Chris Whann said he believed it needed to be done at the same time the final charter is completed.

C-18a Tax Collector: Mark Lawton moved and Lew Benton seconded to approve this section with a few minor modifications including renumbering and new titles. Ayes all.

C-18c Keeper of City's Financial Records & C-18d Budget Content, Preparation and Administration: Mark Lawton said there had been minor changes to this section in connection with making audits available before the first public hearing. Vassar Curtis questioned the amount of time that was needed by the Finance Department in making this information available. He said he would like to talk to the Finance Department about that issue.

Elio Del-Sette moved and Chris Whann seconded to table C-18c & C-18d. Ayes all.

NEXT MEETING

It was agreed the next meeting would include discussions on the following items: C-76, C-77, C-81, Human Resources Director & Parks and recreation Director, (Chris Whann asked that recommended language be brought that evening), C-8d, C-18c, C-18d, Title VIII, Title IX, Title X, service of papers, notice of injury, C-55 and C-56.

ADJOURNMENT

Mark Lawton moved and Chris Whann seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. Ayes all. There being no further business, Denise Polit adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Moran
Clerk

Approved: