

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JERSEY VILLAGE
2024 CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION**

October 15, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.

The 2024 Charter Review Commission of the City of Jersey Village, Texas, convened on October 15, 2024, at 6:02 p.m. in the Civic Center, 16327 Lakeview, Jersey Village, Texas.

A. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Rick Faircloth at 6:02 p.m. The following Commissioners were present for the meeting:

Rick Faircloth	Denise Reaneau	
Simon Hughes	Ashley Hart	
Erik Robertson	Sean Anger	
Beatriz Menendez	William Walker	A1
Brian McCauley	A2	

Council Members attending this meeting were as follows:

Mayor, Bobby Warren
Council Member, Drew Wasson
Council Member, Sheri Sheppard
Council Member, Michelle Mitcham
Council Member, Connie Rossi
Council Member, Jennifer McCrea

City Staff attending the meeting were as follows:

City Attorney, Justin Pruitt
City Manager, Austin Bleess
City Secretary, Lorri Coody

B. Conduct Public Hearing giving all interested residents of the City of Jersey Village the right to appear before the Commission and provide any recommendations that they may have for amendments to the City's current Charter.

Chairperson Faircloth opened the public hearing at 6:03 p.m., stating that the purpose of the hearing is to give all interested residents of the City of Jersey Village the right to appear before the Commission and provide any recommendations that they may have for amendments to the City's current Charter. He called upon the following individuals to give input:

With no one desiring to speak at the public hearing, Chairperson Faircloth closed the public hearing at 6:04 pm.

C. Citizens' Comments - Any person who desires to address the 2024 Charter Review Commission regarding an item on the agenda will be heard at this time. In compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, unless the subject matter of the comment is on the agenda, the City staff and Charter Review Commissioners are not allowed to discuss the subject. Each person is limited to five (5) minutes for comments to the Commission.

There were no Citizens' Comments.

D. Consider approval of the minutes for the meeting held on September 4, 2024.

Commissioner Hart moved to approve the minutes for the meeting held on September 4, 2024. Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion. The vote follows:

Ayes: Commissioners Hughes, Robertson, Menendez, Reaneau, Hart, and Anger
Chairman Faircloth

Nays: None

The motion carried.

E. Receive input from the Mayor and Members of the City Council on how well the City is operating under the existing Charter and consider any recommendations the Mayor and the Council Members may have for amendments to the existing Charter.

Chairperson Faircloth introduced the item. He first recognized that a quorum of the City Council was present. He then called upon each member of the Council to address any issues with the Charter as follows:

Mayor Warren – Mayor Warren thanked the Commissioners for serving, stating that we only do this every four (4) years, and it is an important process. He does not have any particular issues with the Charter. For the most part, things work well, which is a benefit from having a Charter in operation since 1986.

Council Member McCrea – Council Member McCrea also thanked everyone for being here. She believes that the way things are done is working well. It is important to discuss change. But she has nothing specific at this time.

Council Member Rossi – Council Member Rossi does not have anything major. However, she would like to know if there have been considerations about the terms for City Council in the past. She would like to discuss moving from two-year terms to four-year terms. As a new Council Member, she believes that a two-year term is a good term length; however, she believes that it takes a while for new members to get on board with what is going on in the City. City Elections are held in May. The 2024 Election was held in May. She wondered if the City is considering elections in November. She mentioned the problem with Harris County not agreeing to run the City's May Election this year.

The history of discussions had by the Commission concerning elections was discussed. It was mentioned that back in perhaps 2012, the Commission discussed moving from two-year terms to four-year terms. It was also discussions in the past about the City being divided into Districts. These were discussion points in the past, but no recommendation was made to make a change to the Charter.

Mayor Warren stated that he recently served on a State-wide Committee concerning election contracts. During those discussion, He learned that the State has to pass a bill that allows the City to change from May to November, as currently there is no law that supports this. He

explained that it was mentioned during those discussions that there were budget implications for some cities that did make the move from May to November.

Some members of the Council liked that we have a ballot in May. It was discussed that given Harris County elections fall under the County Clerk who MAY but not SHALL assist local entities with elections, moving to November may be problematic.

This May 2025 the County will run the election for the City. The option to move to November elections was discussed. The current process was discussed in detail to include the ramifications to the City.

Council Member Wasson – Council Member Wasson spoke to the last amendment process and the changes that were made to the Charter in 2021. He does not have anything that stands out that the Charter prohibits or allows to happen that is problematic.

Council Member Sheppard – Council Member Sheppard mentioned that she was the last Chairperson for the Charter Review Commission back in 2020. She gave a brief summary of what was discussed back then, to include gender wordsmithing, red light cameras, election cycles, etc. She spoke to the flexibility that the current Charter offers such as the ability of Council to pass Resolutions and Ordinances. Therefore, she believes that what we have works well. There is no need at this time to make any amendments.

Council Member Mitcham – Council Member Mitcham has a suggestion. She explained that during her first year on Council, it was a lot to digest with little training. While she attended the mandatory training programs, which was quite helpful, it does not contain any of the local information that is needed. As a result, she would like to see a training manual that helps new City Council Members improve their service to the City. She believes such a training manual would encourage more residents to consider running for City Council.

The training manual was discussed by the Commission and City Council, and that such a manual would help to make a City Council Member's position less overwhelming.

The Open Meetings Act was discussed and how that law guides public meetings.

Some felt that the Charter is not the place to include City Council training. However, as an idea conceptually, it makes great sense. Different scenarios for training were discussed.

City Attorney Pruitt explained that the qualifications for office are dictated by the State so our Charter cannot change this. However, having the training manual, aside from the Charter, would be helpful.

City Attorney Pruitt spoke to the requirements for terms of office that exceed two (2) years. He stated that having such terms exceeding the current two (2) year terms may be problematic in that should an existing Council Member announce for another office on the Council they must vacate their current seat. For example, if a Council Member who is currently in year one (1) of their three (3) year term announces to run for Mayor, they would have to vacate their seat, leaving two (2) years in the term unserved.

Accordingly, term limits in general were discussed by the Commission, particularly when members of the Council are appointed to fill unexpired terms and how this affects term limits.

Districts were discussed. The Commission wanted input from the Council concerning same. Prior discussions pointed out that Districts would cause problems budget wise and accomplishing goals for the City as a whole. Additionally, the prior discussion was that it may be hard to fill Council positions within Districts for the City. Keeping it as is wherein members represent the City as a whole works well. Also, setting up the Districts may be problematic.

Discussion was had concerning the actual running for office and the process for same.

Majority Vs. Plurality voting was discussed, as well as ranked choice voting.

Article IV of the Charter was discussed (initiative, referendum and recall petitions). There are limits placed in this Article that may be placed to prevent abuse of the system. Some wondered; however, if these limitations need to be reviewed to ensure the limitations are practical. These limits were discussed by the Commission. City Attorney Pruitt explained the process to include limits verses more stringent rules that govern initiative, referendum and recall petitions.

The idea of having the Charter require voting by the residents on expenditures over a certain amount was discussed. As a practical matter, this practice was discussed. The pros and cons of such a practice was discussed. It was the consensus of Council that such a change to the Charter would not be practical and would hamper progress for the City as elections can only be held twice a year by State law. It was pointed out that if there was such a requirement implemented with say a \$3M limit, the purchase of the Champions Baptist Church Property would not have been possible as it would have taken too long to make the decision, and the property would have been purchased by someone else. It was felt that if the problems with requiring a vote by the residents were explained to the residents it would be helpful.

The City Secretary position was discussed. This is an important position, and it is important that this stay as is in the Charter. The separation of power is important.

Citizen involvement in City business was discussed.

Encountering issues not covered by the Charter were discussed and the benefits to have guidelines on what to do when such issues are encountered. It was felt that the City does fairly well in such instances by relying on State Law, Case Law, City Attorney advice, etc.

The Death Star Bill passed by the last Legislature was discussed. It is aimed at Home Rule Cities, stating that the City cannot put any rules or laws in effect concerning specific fields such as Real Estate, Agriculture, etc. This bill is currently being challenged.

Section 9.4 - Tort Liabilities and the 6-month notice was discussed. This might be in the Texas Tort Claims Act. However, this requirement is most likely covered by State Law and our Charter cannot trump State Law. City Attorney Pruitt confirmed that this is in State Law.

The Mayor not having the power to vote was discussed. It was felt that the current system works well.

There is a provision that requires three (3) members of Council to call a Special Session (Section 2.09). This provision was discussed.

With no other discussion by the Council and Commission, Chairman Faircloth called the next item on the agenda as follows:

F. Consider any other possible amendments to the City's current City Charter.

Given the discussion had during the previous item, no further discussion was had on this item.

G. Review the dates, times and/or agenda topics for future meetings and make any necessary changes.

City Secretary Coody reminded the Commission of the upcoming meeting dates as follows:

10-30-2024 - Receive input from the City Manager on how well the City is operating under the existing Charter, consider any recommendations for amendments to the existing Charter, and consider proposal to council for amendments to the Charter.

TBD – (If Needed) Preparation of Final Recommendations of the 2024 Charter Review Commission to Council to be submitted at the City Council Meeting to be held on November 19, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

The Commission will need to select a date to prepare their Final Recommendations.

The Commission has set November 13, 2024, at 6 PM as a date to prepare Final Recommendations should an additional meeting be required.

H. Adjourn

There being no further business on the Agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.



Lorri Coody, City Secretary