

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF BRAZORIA

CITY OF LAKE JACKSON

BE IT KNOWN that the Charter Review Commission of the City of Lake Jackson met on Tuesday, August 8, 2023, at 6:31 p.m. at 25 Oak Drive, Lake Jackson City Hall, with the following in attendance.

Will Brooks	Council Liaison Rhonda Seth
Bill Yenne	Councilmember Chase Blanchard
Lisa Pauls	Councilmember Vinay Singhania
Amy Tasto	
Mark Swirsky	

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JULY 25, 2023, MEETING

The minutes from the July 25, 2023, meeting were not approved, but the motion made by Mr. Yenne and seconded by Ms. Tasto was deferred. Mr. Swirsky expressed a desire for his questions regarding qualifications for the mayor's role to be included. He will capture his concerns expressed in the July 25 meeting and send them to Ms. Pauls so a revised version can be presented at the August 22 meeting.

#### REVIEW THE 2021 CHARTER REVIEW REPORT

Mr. Brooks mentioned that the corrected version of the Charter had been distributed to the group, and it appears that most of the recommendations of the previous Charter Review Commission have been adopted. There are a few questions remaining, and the Commission will discuss each as the pertinent section of the Articles is reviewed in our meetings. Mr. Brooks suggested that we continue to review whether everything was done or what the reasoning was if it was not. The revision for Section 1.04 was made, as was the General change referenced to use the word "councilmember" rather than councilman. These were the recommended changes covered in the July 25 meeting discussion.

#### DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS WITH COUNCILMEMBER CHASE BLANCHARD

Councilmember Blanchard mentioned an area of concern regarding some unwritten rules that are practiced in the business conducted at Council meetings and preparation for such. He said that he had been contacted by some individuals who had concerns, and he was unable to bring those to Council or put them on the agenda because of some unwritten rules.

One example stated was that to put something on a Council meeting agenda, at least two Councilmembers must ask for the item to be included. Councilmember Blanchard said he had yet to find that rule in the Charter. Section 3.10 Rules of procedure seem to apply in this case and give the city council freedom to determine its own rules of procedure. Mr. Yenne and Ms. Seth said writing up such rules for the city council would be a good exercise and eliminate frustration.

The City council had a strategic planning session on Governance in February and did discuss some of its operating rules. Councilmember Blanchard was unable to attend that session due to a work commitment.

Another area of concern was the power or lack of such for individual council members to bring issues to council from certain department employees. Mr. Yenne provided some perspective on past situations and how they were handled. The chain of command for city employees would encourage them to go to their

individual supervisors or department heads and then, if they still needed help, to Human Resources or the City Manager. Mr. Yenne stated that he always told people he could not help if he did not know about an issue.

The discussion also centered around understanding the meaning of council “inquiring into the conduct of any office, department or agency of the city and make investigations as to municipal affairs.” Mr. Yenne stated that this power (in Sec. 3.07 Powers of the city council, item (e)) referred to the council, not individual council members. Sec. 3.13 Investigation by the city council also refers to the council as a body. These examples were cited to better understand how Councilmember Blanchard’s concerns might be addressed.

Mr. Brooks suggested that a special city council meeting could be requested to discuss council governance.

#### DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS WITH COUNCILMEMBER VINAY SINGHANIA

Councilmember Singhania said he appreciated everyone’s work on the Charter Review Commission. One item he wanted to bring to the commission’s attention is term limits for Mayor (3), which are currently not aligned with Councilmember term limits (4). He suggested making it four. Mr. Yenne mentioned that term limits had gone to the voters, and the extension of term limits to 4 for council members was approved, and the extension of term limits for the mayor was not approved. It may be too early to bring this to the voters again.

Councilmember Singhania also brought up that the selection of Mayor Pro-Tem that has recently been practiced was not working. Mayor Roznovsky mentioned this issue at the last meeting. It often results in the least qualified (newly elected) member being selected rather than a process that would truly select someone more qualified to serve in that role whenever necessary. Councilmember Seth agreed that the current system is not working and that Council should discuss other alternatives.

Councilmembers Blanchard and Singhania each left the meeting after their comments were concluded.

#### DISCUSSION AND AGREEMENT ON ARTICLES 3.01 – 3.04 (a)

Sec. 3.01(a) – No change

Sec. 3.01(b) – No change

Sec. 3.01(c) – No change

Sec. 3.01(d) – Mr. Swirsky asked how the mayor’s successor is qualified (mentioned in line 2). He was referred to Sec. 3.02 on Qualifications, which will be discussed later—no change to this section.

Sec. 3.01(e) – No substantive change – recommend that an indent be removed to align with (d)

Sec. 3.01 (f)(1-3) – No substantive change – recommend formatting change so alignment is consistent.

Sec. 3.01 (g) – No substantive change – recommend removal of an indent to align with (d).

Sec. 1.03 (c)-(g) – No change

No change to history notes or Amendment notes listed under Sec. 3.01 in its entirety, or the Charter Cross reference.

Sec. 3.02 Qualifications – Mr. Swirsky asked about the qualifications of Councilmembers and how the items listed in this section are verified. Mr. Yenne explained that the City Secretary meets with each person interested in running for office, and the potential candidates must meet each of the items listed.

Councilmember Seth offered to bring the book she was presented with when she met with the City Secretary.

Mr. Yenne stated that the items listed in Sec. 3.02 are intentionally broad to allow many interested in running for office. Mr. Swirsky brought up leadership qualifications, and the commission discussed the difficulty in consistently judging what qualifies as a leadership position. The wisdom of leaving decisions to the voters was mentioned by Mr. Yenne and discussed by the group.

Ms. Pauls asked about looking at whether a potential candidate had served on a city board or commission. Ms. Tasto responded that she did pay attention to this when looking at candidates but thought it should not become a requirement. Having fewer requirements to run in the Charter gives the most power to the voters.

No change is recommended for Sec. 3.02. Qualifications or the Amendment note following.

Sec. 3.03 – No change

Sec. 3.04(a) – No change

AFFIRM THE NEXT MEETING DATE AND DRAFT THE AGENDA

August 22, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

Review the remainder of Articles 3 & 4; be prepared to discuss Articles 5 & 6 if time permits.

Discussion and comments with Councilmember Seth and City Attorney Sherri Russell.

Mr. Yenne will not be at the next meeting.

COMMISSION ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

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Will Brooks, Chair

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Lisa Pauls, Secretary