

**City of Longwood
2019 Charter Advisory Committee**

Longwood City Commission Chambers
175 West Warren Avenue
Longwood, Florida 32750

**MINUTES
August 22, 2019
6:00 P.M.**

Present: Chair Matthew McMillan
Vice-Chair Johnnie Richardson
Member Deborah Poulalion
Member Rex Anderson Sr.
Member Kate Crockett
Dan Langley, City Attorney
J.D. Cox, City Manager
Michelle Longo, City Clerk

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chair McMillan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 25, 2019**

Member Anderson moved to approve the minutes of July 25, 2019, as presented. Seconded by Vice Chair Richardson and carried by a unanimous voice vote.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Frank Scheraldj, 105 Markham Court, Longwood. He said he would like to speak on the discussion about the election of the Mayor by the people. He said I have often found it odd that of the seven cities in Seminole County, Longwood is the only one that the people do not get to choose who the Mayor is. I would like the consideration of the Committee and the City to change that and allow the citizens to elect the leadership as far as the Mayor is concerned.

4. **REVIEW OF CHARTER**

A. ARTICLE IV. CITY OFFICERS

Section 4.01. – City Clerk reviewed with no comments or recommendations.

Section 4.02. – City attorney reviewed with no comments or recommendations.

Section 4.03. – Appointment and term of office of City Clerk and City Attorney reviewed with no comments or recommendations.

Section 4.04 – Appointment of City Manager; qualifications; compensation reviewed with no comments or recommendations.

Section 4.05. – Removal of City Manager reviewed with no or recommendations.

Discussion ensued on the process and whether it took place all at one hearing.

Section 4.06. – Temporary/acting City Manager reviewed with comments on the wording for a temporary absence as it related to holidays and weekends in 1(a).

Mr. Cox commented on how this works in practice and noted while he had a short hospital stay, he suggested Chief Dowda be designated as the Temporary City Manager.

There was a recommendation to clarify and readjust the language.

Section 4.07. – Powers and duties of the City Manager reviewed with comments regarding the use of the word “all” as it relates to employees in b(1). It was noted this authority does not include the City Clerk or City Attorney. Comments were made about the City Manager being excused from Commission meetings by the Mayor in b(3) and does not address any recourse if he does not attend.

Discussion ensued on being excused from meetings. It was noted the Mayor serves as the Chairperson for the meetings. Mr. Langley pointed out the City Manager also has an employment contract which outlines his duties and the Charter does not necessarily provide every level of detail. No recommendations were made.

Section 4.08. – Performance review and evaluation reviewed with a question regarding when the annual review takes place.

Mr. Langley said he believes it is noted in the employment contract and based on hire date.

Mr. Cox replied it is in the employment contract and is done a year from the hire date which in his case is the end of April.

No recommendations were made.

B. ARTICLE V. ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT

Section 5.01. – General provisions reviewed with no comments or recommendations.

Section 5.02. – Personnel policies reviewed with no comments or recommendations.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. ARTICLE III, SECTION 3.03 (a). ELECTION OF MAYOR

Member Poulalion asked what problem were we trying to solve by having a Mayor and if there was an issue that we were trying to correct. She wanted to discuss what problems these changes may cause if we were to implement them.

Chair McMillan said he has had different conversations with the citizens of Longwood and other areas to ask about their thoughts. The general understanding seemed to be that a Mayor is a position generally elected by the people and their expectation of City Hall is that the Mayor is the responsible person. If citizens move to the City and did not know how often the position of the Mayor is changed, and do not see the name on the ballot, then maybe there is not the accountability needed. The threshold issue for me is the expectations of what the people think the Mayor is and the general civic discourse that matches their expectations. This is the reason why I want to get into more of this discussion.

Member Anderson said we should all be interested in the benefits of the election of the Mayor. I have spoken with numerous residents of Longwood, past administrators, past Commissioners, and two past attorneys relative to the issue at hand. I learned from various contacts, over 27 since I stopped counting, that apparently, we have two Commissioners that seemingly have made this issue a priority. One woman even told me that a certain Commissioner wanted the authority to hire and fire City Employees. Another told me that her husband told her a seated Commissioner was pushing for this issue as his City legacy. She further said her husband overheard a discussion at a bar. I feel that members of this committee have a duty to do their own research. For us to sit here representing the citizens of this City and recommending a

change that has been in effect for decades, is in my opinion, a very weak undertaking brought on by at least two City Commissioners. I personally do not think this committee should entertain any action at this time. We need to see and review any changes that would benefit this City's residents.

Chair McMillan recommended doing more research on this matter, speaking to members of the community, and inviting them to participate in public comment. He would also like to further discuss what the powers of the Mayor entail.

Discussion ensued and it was suggested to invite people to come and speak during public participation.

Chair McMillan said he would like to cover Article VI, Financial Procedures through Article IX, Initiative and Referendum at the September meeting. Then complete the rest of the Charter at the October meeting. He noted we can stay in session until June if we need to.

Vice-Chair Richardson said he still stands firm on his commitment to recommend we have a Mayor duly elected by the citizens of the City of Longwood and not an appointed Mayor by the Commission. I too have done my homework, I too have talked to people, and I have the consensus they are in the same ball game that I am in. We might not be able to change anything to this section regarding changing the Mayor's position from an elected to an appointed one, based on what we have to do to review our Charter, but I do not want this to die off in vein. I want to have serious discussions on this to determine if the citizens in Longwood prefer to have an elected Mayor represent them or a City Commissioner represent them. I take the position that City Mayor is an elected official for a number of years like the Commissioners are. I believe the Mayor should be the focal point and not one of the part-time Commissioners. He would like the Mayor's position to be full-time although he does not know if this additional salary would be beneficial or detrimental. My position is clear, I want to see an elected Mayor by the people.

Member Anderson said the Mayor is already elected by the people. The Commission is selecting a chair to serve them, which holds the title of Mayor. Adding a full-time Mayor position would be very expensive as it would add an extra salary and extra benefits. This is something we need to think about.

Discussion ensued about how the Mayor is elected, if they are a strong Mayor, if they are part-time or full-time, and what the Mayor's responsibilities are.

Member Crockett asked how we can get information out to the City and its residents to inform them of the issues being discussed here. She suggested the use of social media and if there may be implications.

Mr. Langley said it could be posted on the City's social media site.

Discussion ensued on how to engage people to join these meetings and participate in public discussions.

Chair McMillan proposed posting all meetings on social media.

Mr. Langley addressed a question regarding a survey and soliciting public input. He noted this would not be confidential and private, it is all subject to public records and inspection if it relates to City business.

Vice-Chair Richardson clarified he is not against the current makeup of the City Commission. I am not against any particular person on the Commission. I think Mayor Morgan is doing an outstanding job representing the City, not only because of his notoriety but also because of his special interest in making sure the City of Longwood is well represented. He is genuinely interested in this City. If he was an elected official as the Mayor representing this City on a full-time basis, we would go so far in bringing this City forward into the future. Although this Charter is very old and the makeup of the Commission has been this way for so many years, I think it is about time that we finally let the people elect the Mayor, not the Commission.

6. AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Chair McMillan said he would like to keep the discussion regarding the Mayor on the agenda as old business. He said for the next meeting in September he would like to cover Articles VI, Financial Procedures through Article IX, Initiative and Referendum. For the October meeting, he would like to have Article X, Miscellaneous Provisions, Article IX, Transition Schedule, and Article XII, Public Safety.

Vice-Chair Richardson asked if it would be prudent to invite Lisa Snead, Director of Finance, to join the next meeting and clarify questions on financial matters.

