



INFORMAL MEETING OF AUGUST 7, 2023

Informal Meeting of the City Council was held in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, City Hall, on Monday evening, August 7, 2023.

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Elizabeth Kazinskas called the meeting to order at 6:30 o'clock p.m.

ATTENDANCE

City Clerk Titi Siriphan called the Roll of Members. Eleven (11) Councillors present were present including President Elizabeth Kazinskas and Councillor James Boone, Craig Cormier, Ronald Cormier, Aleksander Dernalowicz, Karen Hardern, Dana Heath, Judy Mack, Paul Tassone, George Tyros, and James Walsh.

President Kazinskas announced that the Informal session was called for agenda item number 11023, the Charter Review Committee Final Review recommendations. This has been in the City Council; it has gone before the Charter Review Committee and several of their meetings. It was referred by the City Council to the Committee of the Whole and the Law Department on June 20th. There is an informal meeting this evening followed by City Council Regular Meeting at 7:30 PM, which will give the council the opportunity to vote on the item. The informal meeting is to discuss the items in an informal setting, and we will begin with any Councillors who would like to begin on any items regarding the charter review committee's recommendations.

Councillor James Boone stated that Section 6, the City Council should be allowed to vote and approve the appointments for City Solicitor and Assistant City Solicitor. In Section 32, he agrees with the seventy five percent (75%) salary but questioned if that includes the current salary on top of that. He also stated that he has not received a response from the Committee as to why certain sections were deleted.

Councillor James Walsh had a comment regarding Section 6. The current Charter reads "All heads of departments and members of municipal boards, except the school committee, the city clerk, city treasurer, city auditor and city collector of taxes, officers whose election is provided for by this act and officials appointed by the governor, shall be appointed by the mayor, subject to confirmation by the city council; but the city solicitor shall be appointed by the mayor, without confirmation by the city council." The Charter Review Committee recommends that the Assistant Solicitor does not need City Council confirmation and Councillor Walsh disagrees. The charter does not to be changed for that position. It is a creation by city ordinance. He thinks that the City Council should have some input int the Law Department

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positions. He agrees that the City Solicitor being appointed by the Mayor, not subject to City Council approval, he does not agree with the Assistant Solicitor's position. Councillor Walsh's recommendation is to remove Section 6 of the committee's recommendation.

Councillor Ronald Cormier mentioned that he and Councillor James Walsh were around during the time the Assistant Solicitor position was created. The position was created with the intent of having Council confirmation. The position was created when they could not contact the City Solicitor. The assistant position was created when the Solicitor was not available for legal assistance. He does not see the need for removing confirmation for the Assistant Solicitor's appointment.

Councillor Georg Tyros agrees with the comments of Section 6. He wanted to clarify the earlier question about Section 32, "the acting says the acting mayor shall be entitled to the compensation as city council president in addition to 75% of the current rate of the compensation of the mayor," which he personally is in favor of because they are navigating both jobs at the same time.

Councillor Karen Hardern agrees with the comments of Section 6. She mentioned that it is important for the Council to have a voice involved with the appointment.

Councillor Judy Mack mentioned that during the Charter Review Committee meetings, Sections 34 & 35 were being removed in regard to the Massachusetts General Law stipulations.

Councillor George Tyros mentioned an additional item that was in the City Solicitors last statement and his correspondence about replacing any gender specific language to gender neutral language. It is important to change this into the 21st century.

President Elizabeth Kazinskas did speak with the City Solicitor about gender neutral language, and he did suggest changing it to gender neutral language because other communities had their charters sent back to include that language.

The Council had a straw vote to have the recommendations referred back to the Law Department to remove changes Section 6 and review, line by line, and change the language to gender neutral pronouns. All Councillors voted "yea" to the referral.

The Informal Meeting concluded at 6:49 p.m.

Accepted by the City Council: September 5, 2023