

**MINUTES**  
**VILLAGE OF CUYAHOGA HEIGHTS**  
**SPECIAL COUNCIL WORKSHOP**  
**5:00 PM**  
**AUGUST 1, 2016**

**ROLL CALL: BIRO, BLOAM, DUSZYNSKI, HARRIS, HENLEY, SHOEFLER**

The Mayor thanked Council for being able to assemble in such a short period of time, so that we could have this information before the business meeting next week. Before he turned the meeting over to Mr. Volek, the Charter Review Chair, the Mayor stated for the record that the members of the Charter Review are not compensated in any way for their time and efforts. They came together with very busy schedules, and he would like to thank them all, Shireen Mitchell, Wendy Santiago, Cindy Krenisky, Rick Centa, and Dave Volek. They all had very good questions and discussions, and took their obligation very seriously. Mr. Volek will go into more details on the recommendations, but he wanted the members to know that we all appreciate their efforts. With that being said, the Mayor introduced Mr. Dave Volek, Chairman of the Charter Review Commission.

Mr. Volek passed out a letter to Council explaining the recommendations of the Charter Review Committee, and asked Clerk Unger to place it on file, and inserted as part of the Minutes.

Mr. Volek thanked Council for assembling on such short notice, but if we put an issue on the ballot in November, we have to have it in by August 20th, so we had to act quickly.

The first issue we addressed was four year terms for Council. Many of the surrounding communities are changing to four year terms, but with four year terms, we run the risk of losing all of our Council members, Clerk, and Mayor at the same time, and we don't think this is a

sound idea. Our recommendation to Council, is to put staggered four year terms on the ballot for Council. This way, only three members would run every two years, and it would still give them four year terms.

Mr. Volek stated that the members of the committee took their responsibility seriously, and they had many spirited discussions before coming to their conclusions. He told the Council that there are many new residents, and they would like the recommendation to be placed on the ballot in November, and let the voters decide.

The second issue that the committee addressed is the Clerks position. Mr. Volek stated that we have done this before. Mr. Volek, and Clerk Unger were on the same Charter Review Committee eight years ago, and we thought we were tightening up the requirements by adding a two year business degree, but as government finance changes, we don't feel it is enough, as Mr. Unger will also attest.

The rules have changed since the old Mayor Bacci days. No longer do you just write out a check and record it in a journal. Now you are dealing with the changes in health care that is being mandated by the Government, administering grants for all the departments and keeping strict records in order to send to the government, borrowing large sums of money, and all the restrictions placed on us by the rules and laws of municipal finance. The job of Clerk has changed from years past, and the qualifications asked for in the Charter to run for that position are no longer sufficient to do the job. The job encompasses many qualifications and responsibilities, and actually made our current Clerk sick over having to learn everything in his first year.

Council's job is to protect the Village, and if we added language for Finance Director, Chief Financial Officer, or Clerk to encompass all the criteria to do the job in the Charter, it would become a mess.

So we felt the best way to do it would be to have the Mayor create the position of Finance Director through the legislative process, and we think this is the way it should be handled. We feel that Council should put forward legislation creating this position, and it should be appointed by the Mayor, with the approval of Council.

Now we have the elected Clerks position by Charter and we don't feel that this position should be taken away. If there is going to be an appointed Finance Director, the Clerks position should continue to be a voted position, but the responsibilities should change by legislation. We all believe that the current Clerk is doing a good job, but we also know that he doesn't want to do it forever. So we were looking at this as an exit strategy for the current Clerk, and a succession plan for the Finance Department.

We feel that this should all be done by legislation. We felt that if it was a Charter change, it would have a hard time passing, and ultimately the requirements would have to be tightened up and it would be so restrictive that no one would run for that position. We believe that this would create a bigger monster than we already have, so our recommendation to Council is to change the position legislatively instead of a Charter change. This will protect the Village for the future that our Finance Department is run by capable employees, and we continue to have an elected position for the Clerk, with limited responsibilities.

Ms. Duszynski asked about previous Charter Review Committees, and mentioned that the qualifications for the Clerk position were added because of their recommendations. Mr. Volek stated that yes, we did add qualifications to the position, but not the qualifications that were recommended. Council reduced the qualifications recommended so it was not out of reach of most residents. We asked for a four year business degree with accounting experience, and Council agreed to make it a two year business degree with six months of business experience. This passed, but it is not enough qualifications to run the Finance Department.

What we are suggesting can be done by Council through the legislative process, except the four year terms for Council. That initiative has to be placed on the ballot. Mr. Volek stated that the vote for these measures was unanimous in his committee. Everyone believed that the change in the Finance personnel should be done through legislation, and not a Charter change.

Ms. Henley said that the seniors were asking about term limits for Council. Mr. Volek stated that the last election for Council only had seven people running. If you put term limits in place, you might not have enough people to fill the positions.

Ms. Harris asked the Mayor if you change the Clerks title to Clerk of Council, would that be a charter change. The Mayor responded by saying that we don't need to change the title, we would

just change the duties, responsibilities, and compensation and go from full time to part time. The Clerk and I have been working out some strategies to make this a seamless transition that would help everyone.

Ms. Duszynski stated that the only way we can handle this is if the current Clerk is on board with the changes. The Mayor stated that Mr. Unger has been in all of the conversations concerning this change, and he is on board, but the message has to come from the Clerk's office that this is what is right for our Village, and that he supports the change.

Ms. Biro asked that we focus on the position, and not the person. The Mayor agreed and said that it is about the position, and not the person, and literature and support is needed by the Clerk to explain to the residents why this is good for the future of our community.

Council thanked Mr. Volek and his committee for doing an outstanding job in the recommendations that they brought to Council, and Mr. Volek for helping Council understand the process they went through. They were glad that all the recommendations presented were unanimous by all the committee members.

Mayor Bacci also asked Council to get in contact with the voters to let them know that there is a special election this month, and they need to get out and vote.

WHEREFORE, there being no further business before this Council, Ms. Duszynski made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Schoeffler. All voting aye, none opposed; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm.

