

**CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
CITY OF MARTINSVILLE, VIRGINIA**

Thursday, May 1, 2025

MINUTES

5:00 PM

Room 208, Municipal Building

Committee Present: Jennifer Bowles, Andy Hall, Barbara Seymour, Gene Teague

Staff Present: Eric Payne, Kaylin Hernandez, Patricia Hairston

Absent: Kimble Reynolds

1. Call to Order

2. Regular Agenda or New Business

a) Discussion on Charter Review Committee

- Mr. Payne and committee members discussed public perception of the Charter review process and emphasized the importance of transparency and trust.
- The committee reaffirmed its goals, including improving general readability and engaging stakeholders throughout the process.
- Members expressed a desire to schedule a check-in with the City Council to formally introduce the committee, share their timeline and objectives, and publicly communicate the scope and intent of the Charter review process.

b) Consideration of Language Revision, Powers of the City

- Ms. Hernandez presented AI-recommended revisions for the full Charter, as can be found in the Martinsville Charter Excel Sheet created and shared by Mr. Teague.
 - The initial prompt entered into ChatGPT for each section is as follows: Can you please rewrite for grammar, syntax, and conciseness? Simplify the language and make the paragraphs shorter while keeping the professional tone and legal diction where it is most necessary. The purpose is a city charter, and the audience is the general public.
 - Follow-up prompts reemphasized the purpose of the text (i.e., City Charter) and audience (i.e., general public). Some sections had to be ran multiple times to be more concise or improve readability.
- Ms. Seymour shared that the committee could run the revised language through ChatGPT to crosswalk it with the state code,

**CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
CITY OF MARTINSVILLE, VIRGINIA**

Thursday, May 1, 2025

suggesting that they could replace redundant language in the Charter with simple references to the applicable code.

- Ms. Hernandez informed the committee that all working documents, including spreadsheets and drafts, are now stored in a centralized SharePoint site for easy access and collaboration.
- The committee agreed to begin reviewing the “Powers of the City” section, which includes 37 enumerated powers:
 - Ms. Hernandez will group the 37 powers into five sections for delegation among committee members. She will send the grouped list to Mr. Teague, who will assign portions to members.
 - Members will review the AI-generated language and offer proposed revisions based on their review and legal references.

3. Adjournment