

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

Wednesday, July 2, 2025

MINUTES

5:00 PM

Room 208, Municipal Building

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

Staff Present: Kaylin Hernandez

Absent: Kimble Reynolds

1. Call to Order

2. Regular Agenda or New Business

a) Consideration of Language Revision, Chapter 5 (City Manager)

- The committee discussed the authority to appoint and remove positions, noting the need to clarify the roles of City Council, City Manager, and constitutional officers in this regard.
- Members approved the AI-recommended revisions to § 2(b), with manual edits. However, they agreed to revisit terminology used throughout the Charter, namely the interchangeable use of “City employee” and “City officer” to ensure clearer distinctions between constitutional officers.
- The committee reviewed and approved the AI-suggested revisions to § 2(c-i), changing masculine pronouns wherever mentioned to gender-neutral alternatives for inclusivity.
- The committee considered combining § 2(a-i), reviewed the AI-suggested unified paragraph, and approved the revision.

b) Consideration of Language Revision, Chapter 6 (City Officers)

- The committee reviewed the AI-recommended edits to § 1, noting that this section is a relatively recent addition to the Charter. They reiterated the importance of distinguishing between a “City officer” and a “City employee,” as previously discussed in Chapter 5, § 2.
- Regarding § 2, members asked if the section is better suited for an internal administrative policy. The section states that a former officer must deliver city property to their successor within 10 days or face a \$500 fine. Further discussion is needed to discern what type of officer this section refers to.
- Members discussed how to better differentiate between City Officers and Constitutional Officers.
 - City Officers (e.g., jailer, collector, clerk, city attorney, and city manager appointed by Council)

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- Constitutional Officers (e.g., treasurer, sheriff, commonwealth's attorney)
 - Members felt § 3 might be misplaced because the section references the mayor and council powers. They will revisit to see where else it could fit.
 - The committee discussed the language used for § 4 regarding the commonwealth's attorney, especially the use of "shall" versus "may" and whether incorporating "shall" might be unnecessarily restrictive.
 - Review of Chapter 6 will continue at the next meeting.
- c) Review of Chapter 3 § 2, Combination of Sections
- Ms. Hernandez presented a draft revision combining subsections (a) through (i), as requested at the previous meeting.
 - She explained that each subsection addresses a distinct aspect (e.g., introduction in writing, required language, adoption timeline, effective date, and provisions for emergency ordinances). She proposed edits that consolidate all references to emergency ordinances at the end of the section for improved organization.
 - The committee approved the restructured version and agreed to revisit whether the final sections should be in paragraph form or in bulleted format for clarity and readability.
- d) Review of Chapter 4 § 2 Power Revision
- Ms. Hernandez suggested the committee revisit the proposed revision to Chapter 4 § 2, as requested at the previous meeting.
 - Ms. Hernandez reported that the Circuit Court Judge is fully funded by the state treasury, consistent with the Code of Virginia.
 - The committee agreed to retain the provision using the word "may," and to add a reference to the applicable section of the Code of Virginia, rather than restating it in full.
- e) Discussion of Charter Amendment Process
- In considering the timeline of the charter review process and the likelihood of presenting amendments to Council and the General Assembly this year, Mr. Teague said he could draft a memo to City Council regarding next steps.
 - The committee will continue this discussion at the next meeting.

3. Adjournment