

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

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

MINUTES

5:00 PM

Room 208, Municipal Building

Committee Present: Jennifer Bowles, Andy Hall, Gene Teague

Staff Present: Kaylin Hernandez

Absent: Barbara Seymour, Kimble Reynolds

1. Call to Order

2. Regular Agenda or New Business

a) Discussion of Timeline for Charter Amendments and Legislative Submission

- Mr. Teague briefed the committee on a prior conversation with Delegate Phillips regarding the submission of Charter amendments for the upcoming General Assembly session.
- Delegate Phillips expressed no objection to submitting revisions this year, although he noted that most localities do not make annual charter changes. He suggested that combining cosmetic and substantive amendments into one legislative package might be more efficient, but he ultimately left the decision to the committee.
- Members agreed to revisit this discussion based on how much progress is made on current revisions before the September deadline.
- The committee considered increasing the frequency of meetings and agreed to meet next week, July 23, at 5 PM.

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

- The committee approved the AI-suggested revisions to §§ 5-6, with manual edits to replace masculine pronouns with gender-neutral terms.
- In reviewing § 7, members discussed the phrasing of the Commissioner of Revenue's duties, particularly the use of "as required" versus "as requested" by City Council. Members favored retaining the original language to avoid unintended changes to the scope of authority.
- Revisions to §§ 6-10 were approved with minor wording adjustments for clarity and gender neutrality.

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- In § 9(c), members raised concerns about the phrase “immediate removal from office” in the context of a Treasurer’s violation. Ms. Hernandez was tasked with researching how this is reflected in state law.
 - In § 10, members amended “shall be removed” to “may be removed” by the City Manager, reinforcing that the authority exists but is not mandatory in every circumstance.
 - The committee agreed that they need to go through the Charter again for consistent word choice and formatting, reorganizing sections as necessary for increased readability and concision.
 - In § 11, members noted that the final two paragraphs regarding officers’ terms and powers might be better placed at the beginning of the section.
- c) Consideration of Language Revision, Chapter 7 (Department of Law)
- The committee chose to retain the original language for §§ 1-2, pending future discussion about the term “Department of Law.”
 - Members approved all AI-suggested edits to § 3(a-g), with minor adjustments to word choice:
 - In § 3(f), “attend council meetings” was rephrased to “attend all council meetings” to emphasize consistency.
 - In § 3(g), “his duties” was updated to “their duties,” for gender inclusivity.
- d) Consideration of Language Revision, Chapter 8 (City Planning)
- The committee approved the AI-suggested revisions to §§ 1-4, but decided to run the original language § 3 through AI for a second time to make it clearer and more concise.
 - Members discussed the term “City plan,” concluding that it refers to the City’s comprehensive plan as referenced in the Code of Virginia.
 - All mentions of a “City plan” in this chapter were updated to “City Comprehensive Plan” for accuracy and clarity.

3. Adjournment