

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
OF BOSSIER CITY LOUISIANA TAKEN AT THE MEETING OF
May 7, 2024**

The Charter Commission of the City of Bossier City, State of Louisiana, had a meeting in the Bossier Council Chambers, 620 Benton Road, Bossier City, Louisiana, on May 7, 2024, at 10:00 AM.

Roll Call as follows:

Present: Vicky Whitman, Shane Cheatham, Lee A. Jeter, Sr., Lisa Wilhite, Sandra Morehart, David Johnson,

Absent: Julianna Parks, Panderina Soumas, Preston Friedley, Jr

Also present was ex officio non-voting member: Chief Administrative Officer, Amanda Nottingham and Assistant City Attorney Richard Ray standing in for the City Attorney Charles Jacobs.

Invocation was given by Mr. Johnson

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mrs. Whitman.

Agenda Item called: Approve Agenda

By: Mrs. Wilhite **Motion to approve agenda.**

Second by Mr. Johnson

No comment from the audience.

No comments from the commission.

Vote in favor of motion is unanimous.

Present: Vicky Whitman, Shane Cheatham, Lee A. Jeter, Sr., Lisa Wilhite, Sandra Morehart, David Johnson,

Absent: Julianna Parks, Panderina Soumas, Preston Friedley, Jr

Abstain: none

Agenda Item called: Approve Minutes from April 8, 2024 meeting.

By: Mr. Jeter **Motion to approve minutes from April 8, 2024 meeting.**

Second by Mrs. Wilhite

No comment from the audience.

No comments from the commission.

Vote in favor of motion is unanimous.

Present: Vicky Whitman, Shane Cheatham, Lee A. Jeter, Sr., Lisa Wilhite, Sandra Morehart, David Johnson,

Absent: Julianna Parks, Panderina Soumas, Preston Friedley, Jr

Abstain: none

Old Business

Agenda Item Called: Discussion of Bossier City Charter review of Chapters 1-11, 14,16,17,18,19

Mr. Richard Ray indicated the chapters mentioned are the ones that we have reviewed in detail either in a meeting or workshop. His intentions are to integrate all changes in a draft to provide a complete review document.

Mrs. Amanda Nottingham stated she provided as requested benefits for non-civil service, Fire and Police pay and benefits and the laws applicable.

New Business

Agenda Item Called: Review Bossier City Charter chapter 13 Department of Community Development, Director Mr. Bob Brown

Mr. Brown joined the meeting to provide subject matter expert information to the Charter Commission as we reviewed Chapter 13 Department of Community Development.

Questions:

What does your office do?

Mr. Brown said the Community Development department administers the Community Block Grant from HUD. We are an entitlement city who receives the funding through Congress from the federal government. We receive between \$500,000 to \$600,000 to spend on low to moderate income areas or programs.

Mr. Brown provided a summary of projects in the current plan approved by the Council. They do a four-year plan and every year they provide a one-year plan.

Are there any items in the charter you would like to change?

Mr. Brown indicated he did not have any changes to recommend.

Do you feel the Grant Writer should be a "shall" hire instead of "may" hire?

Mr. Brown said he is the grant writer. It would be good to increase staff.

How is your department staffed?

Mr. Brown said there are three people in the department.

How do you fund the administrative costs?

Mr. Brown stated the grants have a 20% funding and the city funds the rest of the need from general fund.

What can we do to help the community understand the process with the projects?

Mr. Brown indicated he was not sure how to improve it but possibly through the community meetings.

What is the process like to receive funds for different service groups?

Mr. Brown said they advertise on Bossier Press Tribune and the website with RFPs.

Mrs. Nottingham mentioned that "Give for Good" might be a good way to get the information out to the organizations.

Mr. Jeter said the faith-based groups would be a good way to spread the information to groups that help the lower to middle income groups.

Mr. Brown stated we received \$800,000 for Covid 19 related funding.

How many grants do you apply for in each year?

Mr. Brown indicated they had not applied for different grants in the last few years. This is due to the low percentage of getting the grant.

Mr. Brown stated the only change needed to help with the long-range plan and strategy would be to add another employee to assist with grant writing and assist with HUD requirements.

Agenda Item Called: Review Bossier City Charter chapter 15 Department of Human Resources, Director Mr. John "Trey" Tomasek III.

Mr. Tomasek joined the meeting to provide subject matter expert information to the Charter Commission as we reviewed Chapter 15 Department of Human Resources.

Questions:

What does your department do?

Mr. Tomasek stated the HR department is responsible for recruiting, new hire on-boarding, benefits, review, and update policies to comply with city, state, federal laws, and the non-civil service accrual tables. Included in our department is the daily mail functions incoming and outgoing.

What is your staffing?

Mr. Tomasek indicated his department is fully staffed in alignment with the charter.

What is the role of the Personnel Board outlined in the charter?

This is the equivalent to the civil service board in which grievances from the employees are heard and given a decision.

The personnel board is five people according to ordinance 78-5. The proposed changes remove the appointment by the chancellor of Bossier Parish Community College and transfers it to the Mayor. Non-civil service City employees vote on two of the appointments.

15.07 A change in the charter is requested to add a requirement to meet two times a year.

Are there any other changes in the charter needed to facilitate your long-term goals and strategy?

Mr. Tomasek said there are no other changes needed.

Would it be helpful to add to the charter a requirement to have a wage study every five years?

Mr. Tomasek stated it would be good and help everyone stay on target.

What are your thoughts on moving Risk Management to Legal?

Mr. Tomasek indicated the legal department has been managing for a few years and has no problem with the move.

Are there changes in the charter that would help your department to ensure Bossier City pays equal pay for equal work?

Mr. Tomasek said the current salary study would help with this. The study included input from the employees on their current work. Mrs. Nottingham informed that the salary study could lead to the consolidation of positions and pay scales.

Does the current Personnel Board match the demographic of the employees?

Mr. Tomasek indicated it is all male with one African American male just appointed by the Mayor.

Mrs. Nottingham suggests that the two elected employee representatives should possibly be from different departments.

Does the city have Employee training on a yearly basis on the benefits available to them?

Mr. Tomasek stated the city has a benefits fair every year during open enrollment.

Is the Personnel Board invited to the benefits fair?

Mr. Tomasek stated it is not, but agreed this would be a good idea.

Is there an ombudsman type call in system for employees to have a way to report or discuss anonymously issues such as sexual harassment or unsafe work environment?

Mr. Tomasek said no and did not believe there was a need.

Agenda Item Called: Discussion regarding Charter remaining Chapters 20-22

Chapter 20 Department of Public Utilities

Mrs. Morehart asked if there was a need to address recycling in the charter for the water facilities?

Mrs. Nottingham indicated it would fall under the regulations from the state and federal agencies.

20.02 Does this need to include that the Director is required to follow all state and federal laws and regulations to ensure accountability?

20.08(e) Should the charter include a requirement to increase water based on projections of overall expenditures? More discussion is needed in this area to follow.

20.09 Customer Services Division moved from Department of Finance to Department of Public Utilities – Does it any change the fund from Enterprise zone to general fund?

Mrs. Nottingham stated it does not. It is funded from Enterprise fund now. She also asked for a 20.09 title change to Water Billing or something similar. Final change of the shift of departments will be determined in the next few weeks.

The next workshop meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2024 at 6:00 pm in the Civic Center. We will plan to cover the Chapter 21 Department of Information Systems (new) and Chapter 22 Amendments to the City Charter.

Tentative May 21, 2024

By: Mrs. Morehart Motion to adjourn

Second by: Mrs. Whitman

Adjournment – 12:01 pm

No comment from the audience.

No comments from the commission.

Vote in favor of motion is unanimous.

Present: Vicky Whitman, Shane Cheatham, Lee A. Jeter, Sr., Lisa Wilhite, Sandra Morehart, David Johnson,

Absent: Julianna Parks, Panderina Soumas, Preston Friedley, Jr

Abstain: none

Respectfully submitted:

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