

CITY OF ROCKPORT

MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL & CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION JOINT MEETING

5:30 p.m., Tuesday, November 8, 2022

Rockport Service Center, 2751 State Highway 35 Bypass

On the 8th day of November 2022, the City Council & the Charter Review Commission of the City of Rockport, Aransas County, Texas, convened in Joint Session at 5:30 p.m., at the Training Room of the Rockport Service Center, and notice of meeting giving time, place, date and subject was posted as described in V.T.C.A., Government Code § 551.041. Members of the public were able to view the meeting via live stream.

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Tim Jayroe
Council Member Katy Jackson, Ward 1
Council Member Danielle Hale, Ward 2
Council Member Brad Brundrett, Ward 3

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER(S) ABSENT

Mayor Pro-Tem Andrea Hattman, Ward 4

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

George "Doug" Webb
Diedra Amaya
J. Mark Wagnon
Donna Townsend
Thomas J. Blazek, Chair

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

City Manager Vanessa Shrauner
Assistant to City Manager Kimberly Henry
City Secretary Teresa Valdez
Legal Counsel Art Rodriguez, Jr., Messer Fort & McDonald, PLLC
Director of Finance Katie Griffin
Information Technology Director Bob Argetsinger
Public Works and Building & Development Services Director Mike Donoho

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT

Opening Agenda

1. Call to Order.

The Joint Meeting of the Rockport City Council & the Charter Review Commission was called to order by Mayor Tim Jayroe at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, in the Training Room of the Rockport Service Center, 2751 State Highway 35 Bypass, Rockport, Texas.

2. Roll call/Determine Quorum – City Council & Charter Review Commission.

Mayor Jayroe called roll of the City Council. A quorum of Council Members was present.

Chair Blazek called roll of the Charter Review Commission. A quorum of Commission Members was present.

3. Citizens to be heard.

At this time, comments limited to three (3) minutes will be taken from the audience from persons who have signed the speaker's card located on the table in the back of the Training Room of the Service Center and delivered to the City Secretary before the meeting begins, or written comments received by 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting, on any **Agenda** item or any subject matter, will be read and summarized in the minutes of the meeting. Persons wishing to address the Council and who have registered using the Citizen Participation Form will have up to three minutes to speak. In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, Council may not discuss or take action on any item that has not been posted on the agenda. While civil public criticism is not prohibited; disorderly conduct or disturbance of the peace as prohibited by law shall be cause for the chair to terminate the offender's time to speak.

Jeff Hutt, 2201 Prairie Road, addressed the Council & Commission and commented: He noticed there was no avenue by which citizens could submit recommendations. Suggest if a change is recommended, it is followed up in a meeting afterward to allow time for input. Write in as much freedom and liberties for the people as possible. Make it where we can have petitions for ordinances and resolutions.

Kristie Rutledge, 1411 Dana Drive, addressed the Council & Commission and commented: Last week the Charter Review Commission made recommendations for Charter revisions and the citizens have no idea what will be reviewed; there is no other Board that does not have an Agenda Packet. Annexation was discussed and you could say no annexation without the consent of voters. Try to get us an Agenda Packet.

Regular Agenda

4. Receive comments from City Council.

Council Member Jackson stated she had two pages of concerns which she has shared with the City Manager and Legal Counsel. Council Member Jackson said the big concern is Article III; two-year terms for a term limit of 10 years and two years are just enough to learn the job. Council Member Jackson said another big concern was Article VI; elections in May are costly and does not give newly elected Council enough time to have been involved in the budget process. Council Member Jackson distributed and reviewed a cost analysis of election cost (below) since 2018 to Council and Commission Members. Council Member Jackson added she was undecided about term limits and she suggested the Mayor not be elected in the same year as the County Judge. Council Member Jackson stated she will comment on the other items she is concerned with as they are being discussed by the Charter Review Commission.

Elections

<u>Budget Year</u>	<u>Votes Cast</u>	<u>Election Cost</u>	<u>Cost per Cast Vote</u>
2018-2019	365	\$ 8,690	\$23.80
2019-2020	5,430	\$16,530	\$ 3.05
2020-2021	592	\$34,711	\$58.63
2021-2022	1,996	\$27,000**	\$13.53

**Projected

2019 - May Election Ward 3 only
2020 - Nov (due to COVID) Election Mayor only
2021 - May - Wards 1 and 3 only
2022 - May Election Mayor only

May 2022 election
7,921 eligible voters - cost per eligible voter was \$2.08

May 2021 Election
3,164 eligible voters - cost per eligible voter was \$10.97

Narrative -

The City of Rockport, as per its Home Rule Charter, holds elections every year on the May general election date. Wards 1 & 3 on odd years and Wards 2, 4 & Mayor on even years. In recent history, the election for Mayor in 2020 was moved by consensus of the two candidates to November due to COVID concerns.

In general, the cost of elections increases as the number of citizens increase.

May 2019, Ward 3 and two school district races are on the same cumulative report from the Election Administrator. Overall turnout was 5.80% with 365 votes in Ward 3 at a price of \$23.80 for each vote

November 2020, the Mayor's Race had 5,430 votes cast and only cost \$3.05 for each vote cast

May 2021, Wards 1 and 3 were contested. Of the 3,164 eligible voters, only 592 votes were cast at \$58.63 per voter.

May 2022, the City had a contested race for Mayor. 1,996 votes were cast by 7,921 eligible voters at a cost to the City of \$13.53.

Council Member Hale thanked Commission Members for their willingness to serve; it is a huge commitment. Council Member Hale encouraged the Commission to give citizens every opportunity to participate, and she understands this is on a fast track. Council Member Hale stated large Agenda Packets are not always going to be available. Council Members Hale said she believed the Charter should be reflective of State Statutes as they pertain to annexation; State law precedes the City Charter, and we should follow that. Council Member Hale stated the most input she has had from the community is regarding term length; she is concerned whether people will be willing to run for office if the term is four years. Council Member Hale said she has worked with other communities and when you move an election to November, the costs are less, but the time and costs for candidates does increase and that is something for consideration; it becomes a different type of political issue and municipal government is non-partisan.

Commission Member Webb stated he believes that it should state in the Charter that the City has to provide services to all previously annexed areas before they can annex more.

Council Member Hale stated that will be something that follows State Law and not deviate from that. Council Member Hale added she liked that the City Charter is an easy read and a simple read is best.

Council Member Brundrett thanked the Commission and citizens for the input received thus far.

Council Member Brundrett he agrees the Charter should follow State law regarding annexation and suggested the time period of 10 years to allow de-annexation if City services have not been provided. Council Member Brundrett said he agrees with Council Members Jackson and Hale on elections, and he is all for term limits-don't want career politicians in the City. Council Member Brundrett stated he did recognize Council Member Hale's concern about terms because there are not a lot of people beating down the door to run for City Council and he also agrees with Council Member Jackson that with two-years terms, you are just getting your feet wet, and he would agree that a longer term may be appropriate. Council Member Brundrett commented it is expensive to run an election and with a November election the cost would be shared. Council Member Brundrett asked the Commission to take a good look at the Article that deals with the City Manager, City Secretary and City Engineer to make sure we are following the Charter, and make sure Council is doing their job.

Mayor Jayroe thanked the Commission and said the Commission will work through this process and then present a document to Council and put to an election. Mayor Jayroe stated the things he has heard that people are most unhappy about are annexation and the City's authority in the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Mayor Jayroe said there is a provision in the Charter where investigations can be conducted by the City Council and then the Council shall provide by ordinance penalties, and he has not been able to find any. Mayor Jayroe stated the section regarding the City Attorney or City Engineer should state it can be a firm. Mayor Jayroe commented he appreciates the work Council Member Jackson did regarding the cost of elections and there needs to be something done about that cost. Mayor Jayroe added he is sure the Charter Review Commission will be able to come up with answers and he appreciates their willingness to serve and he appreciates citizen comments.

Commission Member Amaya stated she was concerned about the ability of citizens to provide input to the Commission Members. Commission Member Amaya said they feel they do not have a path to communicate to the Commission.

Council Member Brundrett asked if the City could provide the Commission Members with a City email address and they could receive input that way or comments to the City Council and everything will funnel through the City Secretary.

Legal Counsel reminded everyone there will be a required public hearing at the end of the process to allow for citizen input.

Commission Member Amaya said she did not want to have to readdress things and she thought City email addresses was a good idea.

Commission Member Wagnon stated emails will not do much good unless there are Agenda Packets. Mr. Wagnon said his worry was that if it is not on the Agenda, the Commission cannot discuss it.

Council Member Brundrett asked if an Agenda Packet could be done and the entire Charter be put in it each time.

City Manager Shrauner suggested all Charter Articles that have not been reviewed be put on the Agenda.

Commission Member Wagnon said that is better than what we have; citizens will have the Charter and proposed changes.

City Manager Shrauner said proposed changes will not be in the Agenda Packet unless the Commission Members send them in advance.

Mayor Jayroe said he agreed the citizens need to know what the Commission is going to talk about.

City Manager Shrauner said staff will try to prepare an Agenda Packet with proposed changes to the Charter.

Kristie Rutledge commented she liked the direction the Commission was going.

City Manager Shrauner explained the Agenda Packet for next week's Commission meeting has been posted and it will be amended.

5. Section by section review of City Charter.

There was no section-by-section review of City Charter due to lack of time.


6. Discussion and recommendation for future agenda items.

There was no discussion of future agenda items.

7. Adjournment.

At 6:23p.m., Council Member Jackson moved to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Council Member Brundrett. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVED:


Tim Jayroe, Mayor

APPROVED:


Tom Blazek, Chair

ATTEST:


Teresa Valdez, City Secretary

