

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 2, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.
Penn Room - City Hall, 1st Floor
815 Washington Street, Reading, PA 19601

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m. by Chair, Pastor Evelyn Morrison.

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Moment of Silence or Prayer

III. Roll Call

Members present: Evelyn Morrison, Sheila Perez, Tanya Melendez, Virna Quinones, Debra Bradford, Ann Sheehan and David Myers.

Members absent: Carlos Rivera, Brian Grubb, Jonathan Mejia, and Adela Rodriguez

Staff present: Edwin L. Stock, Esquire, Solicitor

There were sufficient members in attendance to establish a quorum.

IV. Public Comments - Agenda Related

There were no public comments related to the Agenda.

V. Opening Remarks - Chair

Chair, Pastor Evelyn Morrison, made the following comments. The Chair feels the Charter Review Commission is meeting its goals as this is the fifth meeting of the Charter Review Commission. Melissa Ventura will check with Mr. Grubb regarding his willingness to participate as a member of the Charter Review Commission. Jaime Baez will be checking with Jonathan Mejia regarding Mr. Mejia's willingness to remain a member of the Charter Review Commission. The Chair mentioned emails and indicated that she would like to be consulted first regarding emails. The Chair mentioned looking for archived documents or ordinances which may contain remaining budget authority for the Charter Review Commission. Ms. Bradford mentioned having an onboarding process for future Charter Review Commissions so that future Charter Review Commissions could begin work immediately. The Chair mentioned that the Charter Review Commission needs to make sure that citizens are represented. Ms. Sheehan commented that City Council Representatives do represent the people of their districts.

The Minutes of the September 25, 2025 meeting were approved. Ms. Bradford made the motion. Mr. Meyers seconded the motion. The written comments that Ms. Perez made

during the September 25, 2025 meeting were made part of the Minutes. The Minutes with the addition of Ms. Perez's comments were approved 7-0.

VI. Overview of Charter Review Commission Purpose & Scope

There was further discussion regarding the strategic plan prepared by Tanya Melendez. Ms. Melendez indicated that she had nothing further to add to the presentation she made at the September 25, 2025 meeting. Ms. Sheehan commented that the NAACP and College Heights Community Council should be added to the list of community organizations to be surveyed. Ms. Sheehan also indicated that BCTV and Spotlight on Berks should be included.

Mr. Myers indicated the survey should include a question regarding whether or not an individual serves on other City Boards or with City organizations.

Ms. Sheehan indicated that a question should be added indicating whether childcare is an issue keeping people from public participation. Mr. Myers also added that this would include taking care of senior citizens or people with disabilities.

Ms. Perez indicated that community organization surveyed should include housing resident councils from Reading Housing Authority, Reading Elderly Housing, and B'nai B'rith. There was discussion about putting the survey together. It was decided that any proposed questions for the survey would be forwarded to Tanya Melendez prior to the October 9, 2025 meeting. Ms. Melendez would accumulate all the proposed questions and then the proposed questions would be reviewed at the October 9, 2025 meeting.

Ms. Sheehan indicated that she thinks people in Reading are not aware of the Home Rule Charter. Ms. Sheehan indicated that an explanation of the Home Rule Charter should be added to the survey.

Ms. Perez indicated there would also be a need to gather information from youth, business owners and property owners.

Chair, Evelyn Morrison indicated that reviewing the survey questions from the 2013/2014 and 2019/2020 Charter Review Commission should be considered.

The Chair also mentioned the SWOT analysis.

Ms. Sheehan asked how many people is the Commission going to survey and asked who would compile the results of the survey.

The Chair indicated that there would be individuals at the local colleges who could be requested to help compile the results of the survey. Mr. Myers indicated he would reach out to the colleges for help with the survey.

VII. Approval of Letter to City Council/Mayor Regarding Extension of Time for Charter Review Commission

As Ms. Rodriguez was not at the meeting, the issue of the letter to City Council/Mayor regarding extension of time for the Charter Review Commission would be held until the October 9, 2025 meeting.

VIII. Hiring Interpreter Service for Commission Meetings

No action was taken.

IX. Hiring Recording Secretary/Translator

The solicitor reported that \$7,000.00 had been allocated to the Commission by the City's Finance Director. Ms. Bradford requested documentation of this allocation.

There was discussion about the job description for the recording secretary. The job description for the recording secretary has been circulated. Ms. Perez emphasized that the compensation would be \$100.00 per meeting and \$40.00 per hour with a two hour maximum for preparation of documents.

X. Finish Review of Current Charter

The solicitor completed the review of the Charter. The prior Amendments to the Charter were reviewed. The provision of the Charter regarding the Charter Board was reviewed.

XI. Meeting Schedule

The solicitor reminded everyone that the remaining meetings in October 2025 are scheduled for the Penn Room.

XII. Discussion of Next Priorities & Work Plan

The Charter Review Commission would like to meet with Council Members from Districts One, Two, Three and Four on October 16, 2025 and from Districts Five and Six and the Council President on October 23, 2025. Letters will be drafted inviting Members of City Council to attend these meetings.

The group decided that any questions for elected officials should be brought to the October 9, 2025 meeting and/or sent to the Chair in advance of the October 9, 2025 meeting.

XIII. Public Comment - General

Joel Reyes asked questions regarding the status of authorities and indicated that the citizens should know whether the authority is a private entity or a City entity.

XIV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.