

# **CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, September 25, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.  
City Council Chambers - City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
815 Washington Street, Reading, PA 19601

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m. by Chair, Pastor Evelyn Morrison on Thursday, September 25, 2025.

### **I. Pledge of Allegiance**

### **II. Moment of Silence or Prayer**

### **III. Roll Call**

Members present: Sheila Perez, Virna Quinones, Carlos Rivera, Adela Rodriguez, Evelyn Morrison, David Myers, Tanya Melendez and Debra Bradford

Members absent: Brian Grubb, Jonathan Mejia, and Ann Sheehan.

Staff present: Edwin L. Stock, Esquire, Solicitor

### **IV. Public Comments - Agenda Related**

There were no public comments. Brian Weiss, a new attorney with Attorney Stock's office was introduced.

### **V. Opening Remarks - Chair**

Chair, Pastor Evelyn Morrison had no opening remarks. Carlos Rivera moved to approve the Minutes of the September 18, 2025 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Myers. The Minutes were approved 8-0.

### **VI. Overview of Charter Review Commission Purpose & Scope**

The strategic plan prepared by Tanya Melendez was presented. Ms. Melendez said this was a plan for guiding the Charter Review Commission with its work. It was a framework. Ms. Melendez indicated her strategic plan could be revised by the Commission. There was robust discussion regarding the strategic plan presented by Ms. Melendez.

Sheila Perez presented comments regarding work done by the 2013/2014 Charter Review Commission.

There was discussion regarding an issue raised by Adela Rodriguez on September 18, 2025. Ms. Rodriguez indicated that it would be important that the Commission's work be

presented in both a primary and general election in order to give the electorate a better understanding of the issues.

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

The proposed letter to City Council was deferred until the October 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

**VIII. Hiring Interpreter Service for Commission Meetings**

There was further discussion regarding hiring an interpreter service for Commission meetings. No action was taken.

Mr. Rivera made a motion to have the solicitor draft a letter to the Mayor and City Council regarding appropriation of funds for the Charter Review Commission, so that the Commission would be able to hire an interpreter service for Commission meetings. The motion was seconded by Ms. Perez. The motion passed 8-0.

**IX. Hiring Recording Secretary/Translator**

There was no action taken regarding hiring a recording secretary/translator.

**X. Election of Secretary**

Mr. Rivera made a motion to nominate Adela Rodriguez to be the secretary for the Charter Review Commission. Ms. Bradford seconded the motion. The motion carried 8-0.

**XI. Finish Review of Current Charter**

The solicitor reviewed Articles VII through XII of the current Charter with the Charter Commission.

**XII. Meeting Schedule**

The next meeting of the Charter Review Commission will be in the Penn Room in City Hall on October 2, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

**XIII. Discussion of Next Priorities & Work Plan**

Due to time constraints, no further discussion regarding next priorities for the Charter Review Commission or a work plan occurred.

**XIV. Public Comment - General**

Francis Morrison made public comment. He indicated there is money from prior ordinances still available for the Charter Review Commission. He indicated that the work of the Charter Review Commission should be published on the internet in both English and Spanish. He made comments about not restricting public comments at meetings to 3 minutes.

**XV. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

A revised, fact-based summary presentation that reflects the updated provision and maintains a neutral, professional tone designed to inform without accusation, while still highlighting why this history matters today.

---

 **Presentation Title:**

**“Lessons from the 2013–2014 Charter Review Commission: Strengthening Ethics and Representation”**

---

**1. Purpose of the Charter Review Commission**

- The Home Rule Charter Review Commission (CRC) is responsible for evaluating the structure, powers, and processes of Reading’s city government.
  - Its recommendations can lead to amendments that shape governance for years to come.
- 

**2. Composition of the 2013–2014 Commission**

- Members were appointed by either the Mayor or City Council.
  - The Commission included:
    - Sitting elected officials (Mayor and Councilmembers)
    - City employees and individuals with close professional ties to city administration
    - Citizens with longstanding involvement in city governance
- 

**3. Key Observations from the 2013–2014 Appointments**

- Several members held positions directly governed by the Charter under review.
- Some appointees had close personal or professional relationships with city officials.

- The selection process did not include public applications, community nominations, or multilingual outreach.
  - There was limited representation from renters, youth, immigrants, and other marginalized communities.
- 

#### **4. Why This Matters**

- When individuals who are subject to the Charter participate in its review, questions of impartiality and transparency may arise.
  - A lack of diverse community representation can result in missed opportunities to address systemic barriers and lived experiences.
  - The absence of public vetting and outreach may reduce trust in the process and its outcomes.
- 

#### **5. What Has Changed**

- A new provision now prohibits elected officials and city employees from being appointed to the Charter Review Commission.
  - This safeguard helps ensure that future reviews are conducted independently and free from direct conflicts of interest.
- 

#### **6. Opportunities Moving Forward**

To build on this progress, the city can consider:

- Establishing a public nomination and application process
  - Requiring conflict-of-interest disclosures and residency verification
  - Ensuring balanced representation across race, class, geography, and lived experience
  - Providing multilingual materials and outreach to engage all communities
- 

#### **7. Conclusion**

The 2013–2014 Commission offers valuable lessons. By reflecting on its composition and process, we can strengthen future Charter Reviews to be more inclusive, ethical, and community-driven—ensuring that every resident of Reading has a voice in shaping our city’s future.

---

Would you like this adapted into a slide deck or translated for multilingual outreach? I can also help tailor it for different audiences—whether city officials, faith leaders, or grassroots organizers.

*Presented By: Sheila Perez @ The  
HRCRC MTG.*