



## CITY OF COCONUT CREEK CHARTER REVIEW BOARD MINUTES

**Government Center  
4800 West Copans Road  
Coconut Creek, FL 33063**

**Date: April 2, 2025  
Time: 5:00 p.m.  
Location: Public Meeting Room  
Adjacent to Commission Chambers**

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Craig Valvo at 5:03 p.m.

### 2. PRESENT UPON ROLL CALL:

Chair Craig Valvo - District E  
Vice Chair Alex Escoriza - District D  
Jonathan Ahlbum - District A  
David Mintzes - District B

#### **ABSENT:**

Mohammed Razib - District C

Also present: City Clerk Joseph J. Kavanagh, Deputy City Attorney Kathy Mehaffey, and City Attorney Terrill C. Pyburn.

City Attorney Pyburn noted that the meeting was being conducted live with a quorum physically present and explained the procedures for the meeting.

### 3. REVIEW OF CHARTER SECTIONS

Chair Valvo noted a member of the public was present and invited public comment.

Nancy Fry, 5341 Flamingo Place, Coconut Creek, shared feedback on the Board's previous discussion regarding Single Member Districts and March elections. She asked the Board to keep in mind that, given the current voter turnout trends, less than 1,000 people would be electing each Commissioner. She commented that the districts on cycle with the mayoral election would have a much greater influence due to a greater incentive to turn out for that election. She questioned whether low turnout for March elections was a referendum on what residents value or on March voting. She stated she thought the response to November ballot initiatives was an indication that the public did not want March elections. She noted the time frame to request a mail-in ballot and lack of early voting available for March elections and stated that the Wynmoor turnout numbers were evidence that when people have access to resources, they can get to a polling site. Ms. Fry highlighted the percentage of turnout in District 4 compared to population and stated this was on par with November turnout numbers in other districts. She stated March elections were a strain on schools, impacting operations every election cycle and resulted in trouble accessing polling places. She asserted that her experience was that the partisan influence was higher in March than in November, because the political parties were busy with other races in November. She stated if the State required a move to November elections, sitting Commissioners would have their terms extended.

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Chair Valvo responded briefly. He stated both subjects had been touched on in the past, and it was his intention to further discuss at this meeting. He commented on the proposed legislation to change all municipal elections to November and stated he was interested in learning more about extension of terms and whether this was up for discussion. City Attorney Pyburn advised that someone's vested right to their existing term could not be taken away. She noted legislation had passed through committee in the Senate, but it did not have a companion bill in the House, so it was unlikely to pass this year. She stated City staff had provided comments regarding ambiguity surrounding extension of terms and the bill's author had agreed to take the comments under advisement when bringing the legislation back in the next session. She reviewed potential scenarios. Discussion continued. Chair Valvo asked if shortening any of the terms had been discussed when working out the move to an elected Mayor. City Attorney Pyburn stated the Commission discussed it, but it was ultimately not the direction they voted in, so the item that went before the voters was to extend terms.

Ms. Fry asked if holding an election in November 2028 but not seating the Commissioners until March 2029 so they still fulfilled their entire term would be legally prohibited. City Attorney Pyburn stated this was an interesting question, and noted the work of the Redistricting Board was also a factor. She stated she had not seen case law specific to this question and would need to investigate. Board Member David Mintzes stated this would create a lame duck situation that may be uncomfortable. Discussion continued.

Vice Chair Escoriza asked for clarification on whether recommendations of the Charter Review Board would be voted on individually or bundled together. Deputy City Attorney Mehaffey stated they would be bundled when the subject matter was related. City Attorney Pyburn provided additional details.

Vice Chair Escoriza stated he did not necessarily support Single Member Districts, but putting the question to the democratic process might be interesting.

Chair Valvo commented that he had also started from this position, but in getting feedback from others and weighing pros and cons, cons to include the Commission becoming more territorial, especially on budget matters, had been raised. Deputy City Attorney Mehaffey pointed out that Section 808 – Recall, was applicable and had not previously been part of this discussion. She noted that State law required that a recall of a Commissioner in a Single Member District would be processed the same way. She pointed out the percentage of signatures required would be of the District, not City-wide.

Mr. Mintzes shared that he had also gotten feedback, and learned newly-elected Mayor Jackie Railey did not support a move to Single Member Districts. He stated he liked to think people would still serve the entire City but understood the fear. Discussion continued regarding districts and the redistricting process.

Vice Chair Escoriza commented that it would be nice to know how the four (4) new Districts would be made up before deciding on a move to Single Member Districts. Consensus was to continue on with review and revisit this discussion with a full Board.

Deputy City Attorney Mehaffey stated the Board had previously requested shorter language to address amendments to the Charter in Section 907. She advised that Section 906 had been determined to be a more appropriate location, and shared the revised language for discussion as follows:

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### Section 906. - Amendments to Charter.

- a. The Charter may be amended by any one of the following:*
  - a1. As provided by the Florida Statutes.*
  - b2. By a Charter Review Board as provided for in Section 907 of this Article.*
- b. In the event that there is more than one Charter Amendment on a ballot at the same election and the results of the elections on those Charter Amendments creates a conflict between the approved Charter Amendments, then each Charter Amendment shall go into effect in respect to the provisions that are not in conflict and, where there is conflict, the one receiving the highest affirmative vote shall prevail as to the provisions in conflict.*

Vice Chair Escoriza commented that the changes were easy to understand.

*Chair Valvo called for a recess at 5:47 p.m., and the meeting reconvened at 5:59 p.m.*

Consensus was to move forward with the changes to Section 906, as presented.

Vice Chair Escoriza referenced previous discussion on designating the Police Chief as a Charter Officer. Deputy City Attorney Mehaffey advised this change would require a new Charter section. She noted the sections related to the City Manager and City Attorney were provided as examples.

Chair Valvo asked whether the Police Chief becoming a Charter Officer was synonymous with the Police Chief reporting directly to the City Commission. City Clerk Kavanagh explained a Charter Officer could be defined as any position specifically provided for in the Charter. Deputy City Attorney Mehaffey stated the question previously brought up was whether the Police Chief should be hired and fired by the Commission. Chair Valvo stated he was in favor of the Police Chief answering to the City Manager. Consensus was to make no change.

Chair Valvo opened a discussion on Commission compensation. He noted that if the elected Mayor would be involved in larger issues and responsible for a larger area, he would be in favor of allocating additional expenses. Vice Chair Escoriza stated that under Section 303.c (2), the Commission sets the expense allowances. City Clerk Kavanagh explained that under the current resolution, the Fiscal Year 2025 budget provided \$36,000 for the Commission as a whole, which breaks down to \$600 per month for each Commissioner. Discussion continued regarding expenses covered under this line item. Chair Valvo suggested a recommendation to the Commission that the Mayor's allotment be 1.5 times the Commissioners' allotment. City Attorney Pyburn asked if the recommendation would be for the current Commission, or for the elected Mayor. She noted the amount was adopted annually through resolution as part of the budget process. Discussion continued. Mr. Mintzes pointed out that the Charter language, as written, allowed the Commission to increase the expense allowance. Consensus was to include in the Board's communication to the Commission a recommendation that the Commission consider increasing the expense allowance for the elected Mayor.

Vice Chair Escoriza noted previously-discussed changes to Section 907 to align the review with elections going forward, as follows:

### Section 907. – Charter Review; Charter Review Board.

*In January, 1980 [2030/2032], and every five (5) [six (6)/eight (8)] years thereafter, the Commission will in January appoint a Charter Review Board...*

Vice Chair Escoriza commented that a change to six (6) or eight (8) year intervals would allow the recommendations of the Charter Review Board to align with the general election or get the rotation in sync. Chair Valvo stated it was clear to him that ten (10) years was too long and five (5) years was the wrong number, as it did not match up.

Deputy City Attorney Mehaffey asked if the Board sought to recommend that the Commission consider a change, or to include the item in the changes proposed to the voters. Discussion ensued. Consensus was to move forward with a draft ordinance with options at first reading to be clarified between first and second reading based on direction of the Commission.

City Clerk Kavanagh noted that when the Charter Review question came up in 2020 with a recommendation for 10-year intervals, it barely failed and was presented on its face without additional context to educate voters on how the change would better align with elections.

Mr. Mintzes sought to revisit the topic of Single Member Districts. He stated he was in favor, but also saw the downsides, so was open to hearing more thoughts on it. Discussion ensued briefly. Consensus was to wait to discuss the issue further with a full Board present.

City Attorney Pyburn returned to the list of pending topics to address. She asked if there was further discussion to be had on the issue of moving the Municipal Election to November.

Chair Valvo highlighted pending State legislation, which would preempt the discussion, and asked if there was a benefit to making a change when it would be undone by the requirement. He asked if there was a chance the State language would have flexibility to defer to the Charter. City Attorney Pyburn stated it could, but that was not included in drafts she had reviewed. She noted that the recent Charter change, which required a move from five (5) Districts to four (4) Districts, was also a factor. Discussion continued.

Vice Chair Escoriza stated he was fine with leaving it, as the momentum was already moving toward November elections. City Attorney Pyburn advised that if there was insecurity as to whether the State would move forward with the bill and the Board felt strongly about it, an amendment could be proposed or recommendation made. Chair Valvo asserted that if the Board were to make an amendment, the logistics of the election cycle would need to be worked out. City Attorney Pyburn stated staff could research the options. Discussion continued. Consensus was to leave the language as-is.

Deputy City Attorney Mehaffey explained next steps. She stated after the final two (2) issues on the list were decided, staff would provide the Board with a full draft of the changes and ballot language. The Board and staff discussed the process briefly.

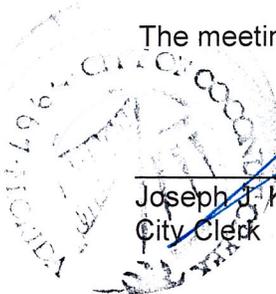
City Clerk Kavanagh reviewed the schedule of remaining meetings, as follows:

- Tuesday, April 8 at 5 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 16 at 5 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 23 at 5 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 30 at 5 p.m.

Mr. Mintzes highlighted a potential personal conflict with the April 23 meeting.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.



  
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Joseph J. Kavanagh, MMC  
City Clerk

  
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Date