



City of Tacoma

Charter Review Committee Minutes

March 14, 2024

5:30 p.m.

747 Market Street, Tacoma WA 98402, Conference Room 243

Dial: 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 915 2560 1849

Webinar Link: <https://www.zoom.us/j/91525601849>

Call to Order

Chair Wamback called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: 11 – Katie Baird, Nicholas Carr, Maricres Castro, Patrick Fischer, Bryan Flint, Andre Jimenez, Melissa Malott, Latasha Palmer, Andrea Reay, Rebecca Stith, and Stephen Wamback

Absent: 4 – Silong Chhun (excused), Jason Gauthier (excused), Diamatris Winston, and Lok Yin Wu

Committee Member Wu arrived in person at 5:48 p.m., and Committee Member Winston arrived at 6:11 p.m.

Committee Members Castro, Flint, Jimenez, Palmer, Stith, and Winston participated virtually.

Welcome

No welcome statements were made.

Approval of Minutes

There were no questions or corrections from Committee Members on the minutes from the February 26, 2024, meeting. The minutes were approved.

Public Comment

Public Comment began at 5:39 p.m.

Chair Wamback briefly mention public comments that he received personally which he will forward to the Clerk's Office for official distribution.

Speaking before the Committee:

1. Ann Dorn, spoke on citizen oversight of public system in general, extending citizen's participation in the oversight process including hiring and firing police officers, and giving citizens meaningful involvement beyond CPAC's recommendations.
2. Catherine Lee, spoke on police accountability and citizen oversight, public mistrust, and additional participation in the oversight process.
3. Eric Herde, spoke on police accountability, furthering CPAC's recommendations by extending public participation in police oversight process, and the City ignoring CPAC's recommendations.

Committee Member Wu arrived here, at 5:48 p.m.

4. Oneida Arnold, spoke on citizen oversight of police, more transparency, independent investigation to improve accountability and public trust, the City ignoring CPAC's recommendation, review process and complaint resolution, and strong Mayor form of government.
5. Zephyra B, spoke on police accountability, and expansion of citizen oversight committee including the power to hire and fire police officers.
6. Stacy Oaks, spoke on police accountability, strong citizen oversight committee, supports strong Mayor and Council form of government, and citizen initiative process.
7. Barb Church, spoke on stronger police oversight and public research given to Council but not read due to lack of time.
8. Tyler Sandness, spoke on police accountability, strong citizen oversight over the police department, lack of trust with the police department, higher standards should be expected, and lack of accountability of the City Manager.

Public Comment ended at 6:03 p.m.

Police Accountability Subcommittee Report

Police Accountability

At approximately 6:03 p.m., Chair Wamback introduced Committee Member Jimenez to present for the Police Accountability Subcommittee. Jimenez started the presentation with definitions of words and terms widely used in their report, use of force in law enforcement statistics, and Tacoma Police Department (TPD) transparency and accountability issues. He presented the problem statement the Subcommittee created to help guide the group through the issue of lack of public trust and ensuring impartiality within TPD.

Jimenez acknowledged efforts TPD are currently making to improve accountability such as the 12-Point Plan before introducing the Subcommittee's first recommendation. The Subcommittee proposed the creation of the Tacoma Office of Government Accountability (TOGA), an independent investigatory office, appointed by and accountable to the Council. Jimenez laid out TOGA's purpose, scope, and membership qualifications.

Committee Member Winston arrived here, at 6:11 p.m.

Discussion ensued on the legal parameters especially in hiring and firing of City employees, collective bargaining agreements, labor and State laws, clarity if TOGA replaces the Community's Police Advisory Committee (CPAC), placement in the Charter, language in the Municipal Code, comparable cities with similar programs, clarity on TOGA's focus, clarity on TOGA's board membership, determining TOGA's work, how TOGA coordinates with CPAC, and law enforcement community outreach and feedback.

Civilian Oversight

At approximately 6:40 p.m., Jimenez presented the Police Accountability Subcommittee's second recommendation, which is empowering CPAC. Jimenez presented the Subcommittee's ideas on how to empower CPAC including changing the Committee's name to Community's Police Oversight Committee (CPOC), adding dedicated staff, ability to review police department's progress towards CPOC-identified standards, identify policy changes and community standards, report progress on accountability, as well as track usage of or violation of set standards. The Subcommittee is also considering looking into an advice and consult rule for CPOC regarding collective bargaining agreements.

Chair Wamback called on Allen McKenzie, Police Accountability Subcommittee's guest and current Chair of CPAC to give his personal thoughts, perspectives, and insights on the topics presented. McKenzie touched on the different forms of TOGA in other cities, cost of creating an oversight commission, Council's appetite for change, push back from local union, major role the union has in negotiations, striking of the Municipal Code Section 1.06.075 C7 which prevents CPAC from reviewing evidence or any police misconduct, making CPAC more than an advisory role, union bargaining timing, who CPAC reports to, lack of access to internal police misconduct reports, community generated complaints, possibility of CPAC input on disciplinary actions, and the issue of cost.

Discussion ensued on restructuring who CPAC reports to, CPAC's lack of true investigative powers, and giving mandatory investigative powers to commissions whether its CPAC/CPOC.

Break

The meeting recessed at 7:10 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:20 p.m.

Police Accountability Subcommittee Report (Continued)

At approximately 7:20 p.m. discussion continued on clarification on whether it makes sense for the Committee to take costs and budgetary impacts into account at this point in the discussion, broadening the scope of TOGA not just specific to police accountability, the idea of combining the TOGA concept and Council hiring their own staff concept, empowering Council with investigative authority, questions on how to truly make an independent oversight committee/agency, and structuring said committee within or outside of the Council. After hearing all the questions, comments, and input from the Committee as a Whole, the public, and McKenzie, the Police Accountability Subcommittee decided to revisit this topic and have

additional group conversation. This will allow the Subcommittee to incorporate feedback they've heard and fine-tune their recommendations further.

Other Subcommittee Reports and Discussion

At approximately 7:50 p.m., Chair Wamback asked for brief subcommittee reports. Palmer gave the update for the Power of the People Subcommittee on their upcoming group meeting and the possibility of presenting ranked choice voting by next meeting. Carr provided an update from the Administrative Subcommittee that they are finalizing the Planning Commission language. Chair Wamback gave the update from the Miscellaneous Subcommittee who are working on the preamble and anti-discrimination language in employment. Stith from Form of Government Subcommittee updated the committee on the group's upcoming meeting, looking into fiscal information data from 2014, and change of government recommendation from 2014.

Staff Update

At approximately 8:01 p.m., Sonja Hallum, CRC Liaison, updated the Committee on Neighborhood Councils outreach work. She offered to connect volunteers to neighborhood chairs and help with the arrangements. Stith volunteered to do the presentation for the North End Council, Palmer and Fischer volunteered for Central Tacoma Council. Carr and Reay volunteered to present for the West End and New Tacoma Neighborhood Council meetings.


Hallum also reminded everyone of the planned City Manager meeting and to contact her if interested. She updated on the progress of requested data for change in the form of government staffing model and other cities from the charter model.

Other Business and Homework

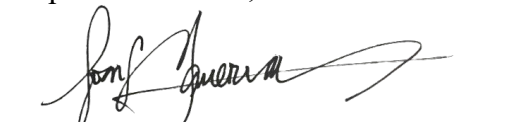
No other business and homework were discussed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.



Stephen Wamback, Chair



Joan Taverna, City Clerk's Office