



# TOWN OF GLASGOW, VIRGINIA



## MEMORANDUM CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

Malcolm “Shane” Watts  
Mayor

Date: July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020

From: Eric S. Pollitt – Town Manager

To: Planning Commission

Subject: July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Charter Review Committee Minutes

CC: Mayor, Council, Jane Higginbotham

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Town Council:

Andrea Bradley, 2021

Barrett McFaddin, 2021

Aaron Britton, 2020

Andy Ryan, 2020

Sonny Williams, 2020

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Eric S. Pollitt

Town Manager

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Jane Higginbotham

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Grace Crickenberger

Town Attorney

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Angel Poole

Chief of Police

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Jeff Rankin

Wastewater Operations

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Chris Flint

Public Works

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Below is a summary of the July Charter Review Committee meeting:

1. Call to Order – called by Mayor Watts at 6:03 PM.
2. Present: Mayor Shane Watts, Councilman Sonny Williams, Tom Camden, Boyd Walker, Town Manager / Clerk Eric S. Pollitt.

### **Reports and Updates**

#### **3. Workshop Discussion**

##### **A. Mayor & Council Duties**

- Mayor Watts – We do need a vice mayor in case I’m at work on an emergency and we have a meeting or for ceremonial purposes.
- Tom Camden – Is that elected or appointed?
- Town Manager Pollitt - In most communities they are appointed by Council at each January meeting from among the councilmembers.
- Boyd Walker – Longest serving mayor should serve as vice-mayor.
- Mayor Watts – It would relieve some pressure on council knowing there is someone who can step up in my absence.
- Mayor Watts – I like the idea of seniority to prevent conflicts.
- Tom Camden – I like the idea of the senior councilmember serving and so forth in absence of mayor and vice-mayor.
- Tom Camden – The idea of four years, you get enough momentum going in 4 years, where every 2 years by the time you understand everything and get going they could get voted out or quit.
- Boyd Walker – I don’t agree at all, it is too tough to get people interested in running for council.
- Mayor Watts & Councilman Williams – The person must live here for at least one year as a resident and registered to vote in town.



# TOWN OF GLASGOW, VIRGINIA



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- Councilman Williams – There should be a code of ethics and they must be up to date on their taxes.
  - Tom Camden – I think there is a conflict of interest for council to have business directly from the town or be employed by the town directly
  - Mayor Watts – Agree, the employment with the town is a major conflict of interest.
  - Mayor Watts & Councilman Williams – It is up to Town Manager Pollitt to hire and fire the employees and Council doesn't hire, fire, or manage the employees.
  - Town Manager Pollitt – The committees are there to provide oversight of both the manager and employees. They let everyone involved know there is accountability.
  - Mayor Watts – The day-to-day should be left up to the manager.
  - Boyd Walker - \$50 is a joke for the Mayor. I think the pay should be increased.
  - Mayor Watts & Councilman Williams – We should stick with one meeting a month and have 4 members present.
  - Town Manager Pollitt – We can discuss council code of ethics and rules of procedure at the annual retreats, then we could discuss pay throughout the budget process.
  - Tom Camden – an event like the 1969 flood would be a great reason to meet at a special meeting.
  - Mayor Watts - We need more leeway between the manager and mayor to take action in an emergency.
  - Town Manager Pollitt – An event like the pandemic is a great example of the need for an emergency provision. This might be better suited in the administration ordinance than charter.
  - Mayor Watts – Council was elected to vote and shouldn't abstain unless there is a conflict of interest and should disqualify themselves from voting.
  - Boyd Walker – People are elected to vote which is Council's job. They set the policy.
  - Mayor Watts – I think the mayor should only vote in a tie.
  - Councilman Williams – I agree the mayor should vote only on ties and no veto power either.
  - Town Manager Pollitt – This year, we had the mayor nominate the members of the committees to the council. It was up to Council approve the nominations. The process should work like the nomination of a judge, the executive nominates but the governing body confirms and or appoints.
  - Tom Camden – It is a great idea at the retreat to go over the committees, their goals, and who you think should be appointed on there.
  - Mayor Watts – I want the chairman of each committee to remove the members rather than the Mayor. This gives the chairman some responsibility and takes pressure off the Mayor.
  - Town Manager Pollitt – Having citizens involved on committees is a great opportunity to groom committee members to run for Council. Now that we have committees that meet regularly, we should have more citizen engagement overall sparking interest in the town.
  - Tom Camden – How do we define disorderly behavior for councilmembers?
  - Mayor Watts & Councilman Williams – People who are not abiding by the Town's policies, ordinances, and or paying taxes. Also personal conduct in the community or rockbridge region.
  - Mayor Watts – We should add if you are under local, state, or federal investigation we should have the right to suspend the member.
  - Councilman Williams – If they are guilty of a felony they should be thrown off, or other crimes that would make the town look bad.



# TOWN OF GLASGOW, VIRGINIA



- Mayor Watts – Instead of fining the members we should just withhold pay whether it comes to missing a meeting or disorderly conduct.
- Town Manager Pollitt – At the next annual retreat, council should craft & adopt a code of ethics & conduct along with rules of procedure, such as proper notice to miss a meeting.
- Town Manager Pollitt – It would be best to have a clear policy in place for council to follow when calling a special meeting and fill vacancies to prevent future confusion and misunderstandings.
- Mayor Watts – We should have something that states council should fill it.
- Councilman Williams – I think Council should appoint someone to vacant council seats, regardless if they didn't run or failed to earn a Council seat in an election.
- Boyd Walker – What do we do with councilmember who miss 3 consecutive meetings?
- Councilman Williams – If they miss 3 meetings consecutive or not they should be removed.
- Tom Camden – Should we qualify the missing of meeting with due cause or something that could justify it? It is one thing to miss a meeting for medical reasons, it is another for no reason at all.
- Mayor Watts – I think council should have at least 5 members present to vote another member off.
- Mayor Watts – I think council should have at least 5 members present to vote for another mayor in case of vacancy.
- Town Manager Pollitt – The thought behind having 5 present is to prevent 4 members from kicking off the 3 other members.
- Councilman Williams & Mayor Watts – Anyone that has town property should turn it in once they know they are no longer serving the Town.
- Mayor Watts – I think the chief of police should be appointed by the council but should work for the manager.
- Town Manager Pollitt – Here is where it gets confusing for the manager and police chief. If the chief retires, why couldn't I place an ad in the paper for the job and hire them? Who does the hiring and firing if council appoints? What happens if
- Tom Camden – The chief of police should report to the Town Manager.
- Boyd Walker – It is surprising that it isn't clear who the police chief reports to.
- Mayor Watts – We are reviewing the charter to clarify this process. I don't think the police chief should be answering to Council for day-to-day. We should look into state code to see if the police chief can report directly and hired by TMs.
- Town Manager Pollitt – I'll email VML for clarification of state code.
- Mayor Watts - We need to look at town manager next time and if we have time discuss administrative departments.

Next Meeting: July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020