

**Charter Commission  
Information Session  
June 28, 2021, 6:00 p.m.  
Minutes**

**Attendance**

<b>Commissioners</b>					
Name	Present	Absent	Name	Present	Absent
Amira Streeter	X		Hanna Osman	X	
Andrew Speer	X		Karol Collymore	X	
Angela Jones		X	Melanie Billings-Yun	X	
Anthony Castaneda	X		Raahi Reddy	X	
Becca Uherbelau	X		Robin Ye	X	
Bryan Williams Lewis	X		Salomé Chimuku	X	
Candace Avalos	X		Steven Phan	X	
Dave Galat	X		Vadim Mozyrsky	X	
Debbie Kitchin	X		Yasmin Ibarra	X	
Debra Porta	X		Vacancy		

<b>Staff Present</b>			
Julia Meier	Allison Brown (JLA)	Ariella Frishberg (JLA)	Sofia Alvarez-Castro

**Welcome**

Allison welcomed the group. Co-Chair Mozyrsky thanked the public attendees for coming to listen and give input. Co-Chair Chimuku provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

**Public Comment**

Annie Kallen – Representing Equal Vote Coalition. Thanked group for their work and research. The Coalition advocates for equally weighted votes. Voting method is only one way to achieve this equity of voice, but voting is the bedrock of our society. New York City recently started using ranked choice voting, which is not the only form of voting and does leave some with more voting power than others. Encouraged group to be a leader in this change. Encouraged group to reach out to other groups for additional research and information and to carefully scrutinize all information they receive.

Michelle Fawcett – Representing Portland Metro Peoples Coalition (PMPC). Wanted to address concerns raised recently by commissioners. Recommended that the commissioners work with the PMPC to help in information gathering and synthesizing. Also recommended that the commissioners use the PMCP to work on creating a group vision. She outlined the model of visioning that they created for their group.

Mark Stephan – Wanted to highlight the importance of electoral reform, particularly creation of districts, whether multi-member or single-member district representatives. Evidence that districts allow for better connections between elected officials and those they represent.

Walter Weyler – Representing Downtown Neighborhood Association. Very aware of the issues commissioners and residents face due to the current siloed structure of commissioner form of government. A City Manager should be hired to operate and manage city's day to day operations, with Council approving city budget and operating as a legislative body. Also there are too few commissioners

and need geographical districts. Supports the group and offered Downtown Neighborhood Association's assistance in getting the word out to the community.

Donna Cohen – Stated that the document library on the website is not helpful and documents are not in chronological order so not easy to find. Lots of people are doing a great deal of research on many topics for the commission but would like the group to do academic research regarding what other cities are doing. She encouraged the group to engage librarians or researchers for this information. She recently learned that the City of Roseburg's ratio of elected officials to community members (9 reps/ 25,000 population) was significantly better than Portland's current ratio (5 reps/ approx. 2 million population).

Barbara Isaacman – Lives part of each year in Minneapolis. Stated that the government of Minneapolis works better because voting is done by districts. Districts give everyone more of a voice in your neighborhood. At large voting leads to a small group of people, who are more politically active, electing everyone all everyone. Also, it is important to have someone professional be the City Manager. Part of Portland's problem is that it conflates the executive and legislative sides of government and therefore nothing gets accomplished. Hopeful that this time around there will be changes to bring Portland into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Linn Davis – Representing Healthy Democracy. Most Portlanders don't participate in most political or decision-making processes. Outlined how Healthy Democracy works to gain participation through policy juries.

Sandy Chung – Representing the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon. Encouraged group to imbed transparency values in the Charter. Government transparency is essential to democracy and creating greater accountability. It is important to address issues such as systemic racism, mismanagement and corruption of political bodies. To create greater trust between residents and Police, particularly police, transparency is necessary.

Sergio Olmos – Representing the Society for Professional Journalists. Stated he's here to talk about the necessity of trust. Has participated in the worst parts of Oregon in the past year – protests, wildfires, etc. People can disagree but still trust each other. People might not agree with the commission's actions but still trust the work that they did. Provided two examples of other cities who have varying access to public records and how these differences either help or hurt community trust.

Debbie Kaye – Representing League of Women Voters in Portland. Here to encourage transparency in government. Appreciates that the City has included it in their stated values but believes there is work left to do in enacting this transparency. Encourages the Commission to include transparency in the Charter. Information is necessary for the work the League does in education of voters in elections. Government should solicit broad and accessible input on all topics.

Olivia Louise – Representing Participatory Budgeting Oregon. Stated that the weekend's weather confirms a new climate has arrived in our biologic region. When it comes to the climate crisis and other crises we will face in the coming years, the city needs to actively search for those who are working on the solutions. They need to listen to those who are living in the crisis, who frequently have solutions to the issues. Need ways to integrate community input in the Charter. Participatory budgeting empowers the community to make change important to the community. Offered to assist the commission in obtaining public input and participation.

Chanda Evans – Representing Participatory Budgeting Oregon. Stated that participatory budgeting is necessary and important for the democratic participation of community. Outlined how this worked for her former community in New York. Inclusion improves lives, trains future leaders, encourages and supports change, and gets people out to vote on what matters in their community. Portland must be willing to trust their community’s decision on important budget allocations.

Kate Merrill – Representing the Central Eastside Industrial Council. Encouraged the group to move to a centralized, City Manager form of government. CEIC works with HUCIRP, Parks, PBOT, BES, and BPS on clean up of trash issues. With so many bureaus and not centralized leadership there can be overlap, differences in data collection, and agencies have to navigate multiple bureaus to do their work. A centralized form of government can help provide better service.

### **Presentations: Areas of Interest in Charter Review**

Co-Chair Mozyrsky outlined the process for Commissioners to highlight areas they have indicated interest in further researching or discussing.

Police Accountability – Commissioner Collymore stated that the group of interested commissioners met and discussed the following:

1. What do we mean by police accountability? – Citizens should be part of accountability
2. Do we agree that the commission should take this on? – Yes
3. How can amending the Charter address this issue? – Take it on (we don’t know what we don’t know but we need to start)

What’s the plan for working through this topic? Research – Expert Input – Community Engagement.

Commissioner Speer stated that the governance issue is important to him but unknown at this time – i.e. how and where in a different government structure police would report but transparency in this is important.

Homelessness – Commissioner Collymore stated that the group of interested commissioners met and discussed the following:

1. What do we mean by Homelessness? Housing availability (those already homeless and those on the margins)
2. Do we agree that the commission should take this on? – Yes
3. How can amending the Charter address this issue? – Options (goals, funding, treatment, and other support)

What’s the plan for working through this topic? Same as police accountability, Research – Expert Input – Community Engagement. References for work done by other cities:

- Dallas, TX – The Citizen Homelessness Commission advisory body
- New York City – department of Homeless Services
- Philadelphia – Commission of Homeless Services
- Seattle – Charter Amendment Measure 29

Comm Billings-Yun stated that included in expert input are those who are or have experienced houselessness.

Prosper Portland/ Economic Development – Commissioner Kitchin stated the group of interested commissioners met and discussed the following:

1. What do you mean by this topic? Prosper Portland has a section in the Charter outlining their role in economic development and as the Urban Renewal agency for the City.
2. Why do we think Charter Commission should take this on? History of racist outcomes from urban renewal, desire to strengthen language addressing equity and anti-racist outcomes, alignment with other City functions, and economic development is a key function of the City.
3. Do you think this should be a subcommittee? It could be combined with other related topics such as zoning and permitting.

Commissioner Reddy stated that the key to the discussion were around idea of governance and alignment with city as a whole and how best to help at the neighborhood level.

Centralize and Standardize Some City Services – Commissioner Uherbelau stated the group of interested commissioners met and discussed the following:

- What do you mean by this topic? Many examples given in meetings with City officials of competing and overlapping work, which causes confusion, inefficiencies, and, sometimes, harm for the community. Wanted to explore ways to have greater efficiencies and centralization of work – particularly in equity and anti-racism efforts. She outlined several examples that have been given to the commission. The group did acknowledge that many of these challenges could be helped with a change in form of government.
- How to move forward with these issues? Perhaps folding it into the housekeeping recommendations submitted by city staff.

Commissioner Chimuku stated that there may be a broader question around what bureaus an elected official should be able to oversee or manage, particularly concerns around elections. Do some bureaus need to be run completely independently?

Commissioner Billings-Yun acknowledged there are two distinct concerns; 1) overlap of work between bureaus and 2) ethically issues around things like whether an elected official should be overseeing any part of elections.

Budgeting and Contracting – Commissioners Ye and Osman provided overview of the discussion from the group of interested commissioners:

- Considerations including form of government changes that could impact budget process, how to reimagine/align budget process to achieve desired outcomes, contracting improvements to help business owners.
- Should this be a subcommittee? Yes – budgets demonstrate priorities, if form of government changed budget sections should be updated, how do other cities handle budgeting?

Expanded Voter Rights/ Eligibility - Commissioners Ye and Reddy provided overview of the discussion from the group of interested commissioners:

- Considerations include expanding eligibility to younger people (16+), expanded access based on residency vs. citizenship, expanding digital access (petition signatures)
- Should this be a subcommittee? Yes – Citizenship determined at the federal level, but most local decisions not related to federal or state level decisions, everyone impacted should have a seat at the table, this is our opportunity to be proactive.

Auditor's Office – Commissioners Mozyrsky and Chimuku highlighted discussions had by the group of interested commissioners including:

- Concerns around word-choice, programing, decision making, as well as house keeping items that the Auditor submitted to the commission.
- Accountability and transparency – funding is very important those being audited are the ones providing the funding limiting accountability and transparency. Provided example of voter approved police accountability budgetary confusion.
- If group has a transparency subcommittee, some of these issues could be covered there.

Commissioner Galat stated that there is lots on intersectionality between this topic and many other issues, might not need to be it's own subcommittee, but the topics do need to be discussed.

Permits – Commissioners Kitchin and Galat provided overview of email discussion between interested commissioners:

- Streamlining process, ensuring bureaus work together on issues which have connection or conflict between bureaus
- Some of these issues may be handled by different form of government, but other might need to be looked at by a subcommittee, along with zoning-related issues

Imbedding Community Values/ Adding a Preamble – Commissioners Streeter and Chimuku outlined the discussion they had:

- Preamble would be the introduction to the Charter – set the tone, codify values, define key words
- Perhaps have a bill of rights, equity impact statement for external policies, standards and benchmark metrics, and actions to operationalize outcomes
- How will preamble impact charter? What will community input look like? How can equity lens be applied to the charter?

Mental Health – Commissioner Osman stated that this issue is important to her because it intersects with so many other city-wide issues. Often mental health is not culturally specific in our City. Are there ways to improve this in the charter? How can we focus on vulnerable communities?

Zoning – Commissioners Osman and Kitchin outlined the discussion they had:

- It interconnects with other issues the city is facing
- Zoning is a tool to improve racial, social, and health equity
- Current code often in conflict with state code
- Current language centered around permits, compliance and nuisance/complaints
- Provided an example of changes Boston enacted

Campaign Finance – Commissioner Castaneda stated this issue is important to him because:

It refers to how funds are raised and spent to promote candidates, initiatives, or measures  
High cost of campaigns limits candidate pool - most people support campaign limits and limiting influence of major donors

There should be a subcommittee to figure out what's working and what needs improvement

Open & Accountable Elections/ Bureau Independence – Commissioner Chimuku stated that the idea is to combine all the election-related work together and find a way to make them as independent as possible.

Municipal Bank – Commissioner Lewis stated it's not just a municipal bank, but a people's bank – keeps money in Portland, helps with needed investments and creates more economic power for everyone. Can be used to further things such as affordable housing, student loans, small business lending. Other cities and states have already done this. Could be combined with Participatory Budgeting process.

Workers' Rights – Commissioner Lewis stated this is about moving power of the people into the workplace by having a Workers Bill of Rights. A subcommittee could reach out to a variety of experts to make workers lives better.

Racial and Gender Justice Commission – Commissioner Reddy stated that this would help to set a tone for city to focus on equity. The proposal is to have a committee/commission to focus on equity between sunset of our commission and the start of another commission. Several Cities have similar committees. To evaluate policies, practices, and code changes which would impact the City's ability to deliver on race and gender equity. Could be explored along with the subcommittee potentially working on imbedding values or adding a preamble.

Tax Governance and Equity – Commissioner Reddy stated she was going to remove this as a potential subcommittee.

### **Discussion: Subcommittees**

Committee took a moment to update or elaborate on subcommittee options in the group spreadsheet.

### **Next Steps**

Julia outlined the next steps for potential of creation of additional subcommittees.

Next meetings are July 20 and 22.

### **Meeting adjourned, 7:59 p.m.**

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Diana Shiplet, Executive Assistant to the CAO and CFO

### Meeting Chat

17:54:15 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) to All panelists : It's dropped to 114 at our house-yay! 😊

17:58:18 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) to All panelists : You know it's hot when Dave is inside...lol

17:58:38 From Steven Phan (Commissioner) to All panelists : You read my mind Debra

18:01:20 From Candace Avalos (Commissioner) to All panelists : At Verde today we all kept our videos off for energy conservation :) I plan to keep mine off, I'll come on to smile every now and then :)

18:01:32 From Candace Avalos (Commissioner) : At Verde today we all kept our videos off for energy conservation :) I plan to keep mine off, I'll come on to smile every now and then :)

18:01:37 From Candace Avalos (Commissioner) : (forgot to post to attendees)

18:01:38 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) to All panelists : Lol...yup

18:05:05 From Candace Avalos (Commissioner) : we can't hear your ac!

18:08:17 From Ariella Frishberg (she/her), facilitation support : timer isn't quite working yet, so sorry!

18:08:28 From Ariella Frishberg (she/her), facilitation support : Annie K.  
Michelle  
Mark

18:11:02 From Victor (interpreter) to All panelists : Buenas tardes, hay interpretación disponible en español para esta reunión. Por favor presione el icono del mundo en la parte inferior derecha de su pantalla de la computadora o si tiene un dispositivo móvil, presione los 3 puntos (...) y de esa manera va a poder acceder la interpretación en español. Cualquier pregunta, envíe un mensaje por el chat o levante la mano virtual por el zoom para ayudarlo. ¡Gracias y bienvenidos!

18:12:27 From Allison Brown (Facilitator) : Up next, Mark  
Walter  
Donna  
Barbara

18:13:18 From Victor (interpreter) : Buenas tardes, hay interpretación disponible en español para esta reunión. Por favor presione el icono del mundo en la parte inferior derecha de su pantalla de la computadora o si tiene un dispositivo móvil, presione los 3 puntos (...) y de esa manera va a poder acceder la interpretación en español. Cualquier pregunta, envíe un mensaje por el chat o levante la mano virtual por el zoom para ayudarlo. ¡Gracias y bienvenidos!

18:16:14 From Ariella Frishberg (she/her), facilitation support : apologies the timer app appears to have decided it is too hot to join our meeting this evening.

18:20:57 From Allison Brown (Facilitator) : Next up, Barbara, Linn, Sandy

18:28:16 From Allison Brown (Facilitator) : Sandy, Sergio and Debbie Kaye next

18:30:55 From Allison Brown (Facilitator) : I see two Sergio Olmos in the audience: Sergio, can you raise your hand so that I can add the right one into the meeting?

18:33:13 From Allison Brown (Facilitator) : Debbie K, Olivia, Chanda and Kate up next

18:47:39 From Ariella Frishberg (she/her), facilitation support : sign up to provide testimony at the July 22nd meeting :  
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ZNZ5EmDhiU2ziDyTqmMG5lCxivp0q3xGkUAW5LLMywZURURHV1A4R0VTMTc5OUhDUEQzUINURlIZNy4u>

18:47:45 From Julia Meier (Project Manager) to All panelists : I am going to try a different computer with the hopes that my connectivity improves. BRB

18:48:28 From Ariella Frishberg (she/her), facilitation support : email written testimony: CharterReview2020@portlandoregon.gov

18:52:27 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) to All panelists : Please repeat what group this for those listening

18:52:38 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) to All panelists : Perfect - thank you

18:53:07 From Allison Brown (Facilitator) : Folks who are joining: the chat is to gather questions from fellow Commissioners, not public attendees. Thanks!

18:55:09 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) : That was a good summation-thank you Karol!

18:55:21 From Karol Collymore she/her (Commissioner) : Thank YOU, Debra!

18:56:07 From Andrew Speer (Commissioner) : Thank you Karol!

18:57:03 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) : I think these issue priority conversations are and will really illustrate the "interconnectedness" of these things.

18:57:56 From Robin Ye (he/him, Commissioner) : Agreed! I think these subcommittees really more as division of labor rather than these issues/concepts being separated in any real way

18:58:14 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) : Agreed

19:00:45 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) : Love that Melanie

19:00:46 From Hanna Osman (Commissioner) to All panelists : That was well said! Thank you

19:01:06 From Karol Collymore she/her (Commissioner) : Thanks, teams. And thanks to Julia for editing my decks.

19:04:56 From Karol Collymore she/her (Commissioner) : First names! I love it.

19:05:44 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) : I'm curious to know how addressing police accountability and homelessness will be different or better than the groups/commissions/offices that are currently in place and are being created -- are there specific issues within these topics that aren't working? For example, police accountability with transparency of records or building in a better structure to fund resources to alleviate homelessness, like permanent supportive housing

19:06:17 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) : Similar to economic prosperity - is it possible to get more specific? - like emergency economic assistance or permits/zoning

19:08:15 From Candace Avalos (Commissioner) : Imfao

19:08:22 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) : Lol

19:09:25 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) : Commissioner Streeter I don't know that I can fully address this question but my initial thoughts are around the accountability, transparency ,

19:09:51 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) : and efficiency that are consistently in question under the current processes

19:10:51 From Karol Collymore she/her (Commissioner) : Commissioner Streeter, I think part of the reason we need some subcommittees is to flesh out the work and see if we really need to add/subtract or do anything at all. I do think all this would be more clear if we all agreed we don't want the current form of commission as it sits, then we could dive in much deeper with the rest.

19:17:12 From Andrew Speer (Commissioner) : Piggybacking on what Karol shared, I think having more subcommittees allows us to have public engagement on specific topics. I do think that some can be combined, but do agree that we out to be mindful as to the number of committees.

19:17:54 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) : Yup yup

19:19:13 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) : Are there state preemption issues to sort out with the expanding voting rights?

19:22:09 From Robin Ye (he/him, Commissioner) : Portland & Multnomah County are home chartered, so the state cannot tell us what we can or cannot do for city-based decisions

19:22:15 From Candace Avalos (Commissioner) : Go Salome Go Salome! <3

19:22:41 From Hanna Osman (Commissioner) : I did not know that Robin

19:22:46 From Vadim Mozyrsky (Commissioner) to All panelists : I will defer to Commissioner Chimuku at every opportunity.

19:23:08 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) : I think there are some home rule clarifications that we will need.

19:23:31 From Robin Ye (he/him, Commissioner) : \*sorry, let me clarify that the state can tell us how to do a great deal. When it comes to defining our own form of election and who can vote, we have more liberty to decide for ourselves. But it's these questions that deserve a subcommittee to investigate :)

19:23:58 From Hanna Osman (Commissioner) : Thank you for the clarification!

19:26:20 From Raahi Reddy (Commissioner) : on expanding voting rights: I think we need to do the research and give it the time it needs to explore options--and really to do what we can to grow the numbers of Portlanders who can have a say in this government--so let's go exploring!

19:29:28 From Candace Avalos (Commissioner) : You covered it! :)

19:30:22 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) : What happens when you have conflicting missions?

19:34:16 From Julia Meier (Project Manager) : Are you thinking subcommittee for the preamble?



19:35:41 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) : Yes

19:35:59 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) : What is the connection with county services? Or nonprofits?

19:36:53 From Vadim Mozyrsky (Commissioner) : Agreed. Mental health, behavior health, and disability should be part of the equity considerations.

19:37:12 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) : Agreed

19:37:34 From Melanie Billings-Yun (Commissioner) : And of homelessness

19:38:12 From Melanie Billings-Yun (Commissioner) : Houselessness is a major challenge to mental health.

19:38:48 From Vadim Mozyrsky (Commissioner) : Yes, definitely intersectionality with homelessness as many self-identify with a disability or behavior health needs.

19:39:46 From Vadim Mozyrsky (Commissioner) : \*per the point in time count

19:40:33 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) : I can barely hear Anthony

19:40:47 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) : and I'm at 100% volume

19:42:45 From Candace Avalos (Commissioner) : Anthony, I didn't put this on my priorities but I should have! As someone who ran on the OAE system I've got lots to add...put me on your committee! :)

19:43:11 From Anthony Castaneda (Commissioner) to All panelists : Yes! Join the party, Candace

19:43:48 From Comm Chimuku (she/her) : Me as well

19:44:11 From Anthony Castaneda (Commissioner) to All panelists : Sorry about the audio. Trying out new headphone and thought I had it set up.

19:47:18 From Julia Meier (Project Manager) to Allison Brown (Facilitator)(Privately) : Raahi's power just went out. She is going to try to call in

19:47:32 From Allison Brown (Facilitator) to Julia Meier (Project Manager)(Privately) : Got it! I'll look for her in the attendees list

19:48:52 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) : Is it too late to add another item??

19:49:25 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) : Excellent - thank you

19:49:53 From Vadim Mozyrsky (Commissioner) : Transparency & Accountability Subcommittee?

19:54:00 From Robin Ye (he/him, Commissioner) : So we don't need to mark form of gov't or city council elections right?

19:54:10 From Robin Ye (he/him, Commissioner) : it's up to 5 outside of that?

19:55:17 From Karol Collymore she/her (Commissioner) : Thanks all for the great work.

19:55:40 From Vadim Mozyrsky (Commissioner) : finished

19:55:43 From Hanna Osman (Commissioner) : Thank you all! I will do the survey tomorrow morning.

19:55:48 From Andrew Speer (Commissioner) : I'm done

19:55:50 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) : completing now!

19:55:58 From Debra Porta (Commissioner) : Doing now

19:56:08 From Debbie Kitchin (Commissioner) : done now

19:56:09 From Bryan Lewis (Commissioner) to All panelists : doing now

19:56:11 From Becca Uherbelau (Commissioner, she/her) : I'll complete the survey right after we all hop off.

19:56:16 From Robin Ye (he/him, Commissioner) : completed

19:56:33 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) : Should we use this form to signal what groups we want to be on?

19:56:47 From Steven Phan (Commissioner) to Allison Brown (Facilitator)(Privately) : Completed

19:56:54 From Amira Streeter (Commissioner) : oh...oops. I'm very decisive lol

19:56:59 From Comm Chimuku (she/her) : Done  
19:57:36 From Melanie Billings-Yun (Commissioner) : Done  
19:57:40 From Dave Galat (Commissioner) : I would like revisit and fill this out tomorrow.  
19:57:56 From Yasmin Ibarra (Commissioner) to All panelists : doing it tomorrow  
19:58:34 From Bryan Lewis (Commissioner) to All panelists : done  
19:58:53 From Anthony Castaneda (Commissioner) to All panelists : done  
19:58:57 From Melanie Billings-Yun (Commissioner) : Great meeting! Learned a lot.  
19:59:03 From Bryan Lewis (Commissioner) to Barbara Isaacman and all panelists : I would love  
to chat you can contact me at bwlewispx@gmail.com  
19:59:29 From Anthony Castaneda (Commissioner) to All panelists : Thank you, Chairs