



Office of Community Involvement



Multnomah County Charter Review Committee

December 15, 2021, 5:30-7:30 pm

COMMITTEE MEETING 5

Purpose: Finalize committee decision-making structure and approve bylaws, select co-chairs, explore topics of interest in charter review and options for public comment and engagement.

Attendees

Committee Members

- Annie Kallen (she/her)
- Danica Leung (she/her)
- Georgina Miltenberger (she/her)
- J'reyesha Brannon (she/her)
- Jude Perez (they/them)
- Maja Harris (she/her)
- Marc Gonzales (he/him)
- Samantha Gladu (she/they)
- Theresa Mai (she/her)
- Timur Ender (he/him)
- *Ana del Rocio (she/her) [arrived after the first two votes]*

Absent:

- *Ana González Muñoz (she/ella)*

- *Donovan Smith (he/him)*
- *Meikelo Cabbage*
- *Nina Khanjan (she/her)*
- *Salma Sheikh (she/her)*

Staff:

- Dani Bernstein (they/them), Director of the Office of Community Involvement
- Kali Odell (she/her), Charter Review Committee Program Coordinator
- Katherine Thomas (she/her), Assistant County Attorney
- Allison Brown (she/her), JLA Public Involvement
- Ariella Frishberg (she/her), JLA Public Involvement

In addition, members of the public were welcome to observe the meeting as non-participatory attendees. There were three public attendees during the course of the meeting.

Welcome and Introductions

Allison Brown, JLA Public Involvement, kicked off the meeting with an overview of Zoom logistics and etiquette. The Zoom chat can be found in Appendix A.

Vote: Group bylaws and agreements

The group decided to discuss bylaws before selecting co-chairs while waiting for more committee members to join the meeting.

Kali Odell, Multnomah County, highlighted the revisions that had been made to the bylaws since the last meeting.

- Removing committee members from the committee
 - Currently it says a member can be removed if they miss three consecutive meetings without notifying Kali.
 - There is no process in place to replace committee members, so a removal of a member results in a smaller committee.
 - Any process for removal should not include someone needing to make a subjective decision about whether someone's reasons for missing the meeting are valid.

Discussion

- How many meetings are currently scheduled for the committee?
 - Seven or eight more meetings before the end of the process, but this could change.
- In the chat: "I support changing the language to notification instead of approval."
 - This change was approved by a Fist of 5 temperature check with all members present giving their consent to move forward with a vote.

There were no additional questions about the bylaws or the group agreements. The group indicated they were ready to vote to approve the bylaws document.

Vote

Do you approve the bylaws document and the group agreements document?

- All members (10 members) present at the time the vote was taken voted "Yes."

Selection of co-chairs

Allison Brown, JLA Public Involvement, reviewed the role of the co-chairs and options for a selection process. Three members have shared an interest in being a co-chair: Ana del Rocío, Marc Gonzales, and Theresa Mai. Most of the group would like to have consistent co-chairs for the rest of the process, but some are interested in rotating.

Option 1: Keep one consistent co-chair and have two rotate in/out

Option 2: Have three co-chairs with distinct roles

Option 3: Vote for two co-chairs

- Question: How do the three people running feel about these options?

- Marc: I threw my name in the running as a back-up, so I am happy to go along with what the group wants. I am happy to be a back-up, because I have experience doing this, but I can also step back if the group just wants two consistent co-chairs.
- Theresa: I threw my name in because I have a background in facilitation. I also am happy to go along with what the group wants. It sounds like having two or three co-chairs makes the most sense since most of the group wants consistent co-chairs.
- Having a consistent chair is important because we don't have a lot of time.
- Maybe we could have two co-chairs and one back-up co-chair for instances when neither co-chair is available.

Kali Odell read a prepared statement by Ana del Rocío because she was unable to attend the meeting.

- Q: If Ana is having issues accessing meetings is there something else we should be doing to make sure she can attend?
 - A: We are working on that, yes.
- Q: Do either of the other two people want to make a statement?
 - Marc: I can offer consistent leadership and my background knowledge. I don't feel the need to be the face of the committee. Our job is to get things done, and we have many responsibilities to address in a short amount of time.
 - Theresa: I am excited about being part of this committee, especially after hearing Ana's statement, because we are all bringing our lived experiences with us and I think that's so important. I bring the experience of being a first generation American, my parents are Vietnamese immigrants who arrived here after the Vietnam War. I want to make sure this is an equitable space for everyone.
I am a very collaborative facilitator – I don't like talking that much but I do like making sure everyone is heard in the process. So, I can be a back-up for facilitation skills, and I also have experience working in the Oregon state legislature and as a minutes recorder. I can help support in multiple ways.

Allison Brown initiated a Fist of 5 process to see how people feel about having a three co-chair model. All of the committee members present gave four and five fingers up, indicating consent to proceed with that model. Allison Brown confirmed that Theresa Mai and Marc Gonzales were okay with this model, both are.

- The group shared excitement about the three co-chairs and the ways their skills will complement each other.

Vote

Do you vote to approve Theresa Mai, Marc Gonzales, and Ana del Rocío as your three co-chairs for the duration of the charter review committee process?

- All members (10 members) present at the time the vote was taken voted "Yes."

After this vote, the group took a brief break.

Discussion: Subcommittees and review areas

After the break, Kali Odell presented on potential structures for subcommittees as the committee discussed review areas for the charter. Allison Brown encouraged members to share thoughts in the chat as Kali presented or use the “raise hand” function in Zoom.

Highlights:

- Once subcommittees are determined, members can volunteer to be on them. Being on more than one is also an option.
- There are formalities around subcommittees for voting purposes, such as having official subcommittee membership and establishing a quorum.
- Once in subcommittees, the group should spend time planning an agenda and be able to take public comment. They can then research whether they think there should be a recommended amendment and have a detailed report about the recommendation. This should be sent out a week in advance of a general meeting so other members have time to review.

Subcommittees Discussion

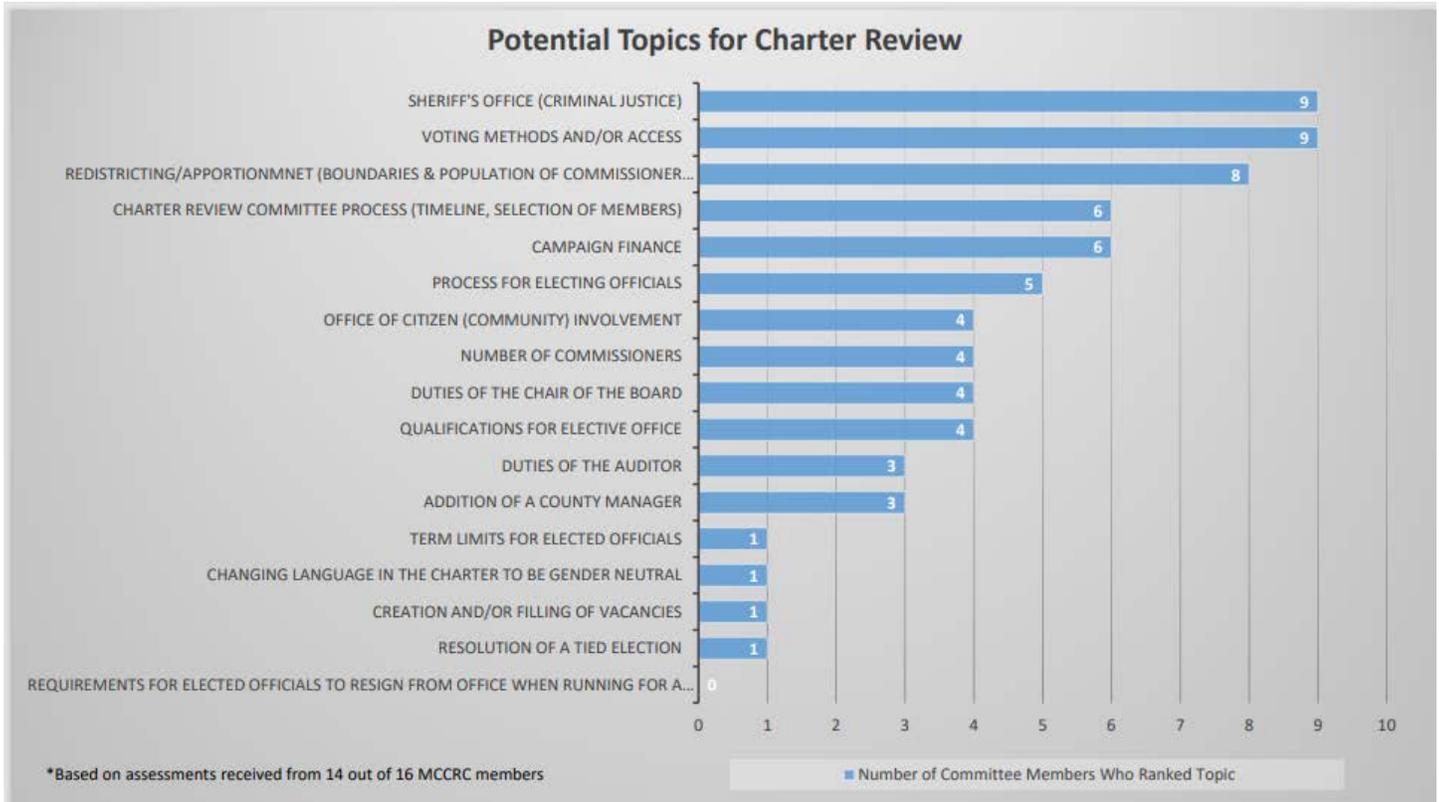
- Question: Could we lower the quorum requirement to two or three people so that subcommittees don't struggle to get work done because people aren't showing up?
 - Katherine's response: There are no legal barriers to setting the quorum low, but an implication would be that every time the two or three members meet, they would be having a public meeting. It may impact their ability to communicate.
- Question: Can you eliminate the quorum requirements for subcommittees?
 - A: The risk of that is you wouldn't have a limit on who can make decisions, and it would be difficult to know when the committee convened or how to make decisions.
- Everything that we do is a public process, so we should have a structure for that, which means a base level of quorum.
 - Response: Eliminating the quorum would not eliminate public meeting requirements, which include requirement to notice the meeting, keep minutes, and have accessibility for the public to attend.
- Even if subcommittees don't have a quorum, we can still move forward with discussing and moving toward consensus. As long as we have a quorum for chairs and co-chairs, we can still move toward consensus with the group without having a formal vote. When we vote, we can reach out to members to ensure we would have a quorum.
 - Katherine: The quorum is the minimum number of people needed to conduct business, which includes deliberations and gathering information.
- Question: Would it be possible to have a guest who was not providing testimony without a quorum?
 - A: No, that would be considered gathering information, which is a part of the committee's business. A quorum of the subcommittee would be required.

Kali clarified that subcommittees are formalized, and members commit to attend meetings and should recognize that if they can't make the commitment, they should formally resign in writing so they do not count toward quorum requirements. Members should be aware of the time commitment for joining a subcommittee.

Allison also pointed out that a certain amount of trust would be required within the group, so members could count on their cohorts to do the work required for the committee. Everyone was in agreement on the subcommittee structure, and they discussed how many subcommittees might be possible for the group within the timeframe. This might require streamlining topics and working as a group to find the committee's top priorities.

Charter Review Topics Presentation

Kali Odell shared a slide showing the potential topics committee members had shared an interest in reviewing. The goal of discussion was to look at what areas committee members had expressed interest in, not to do a preliminary vote on any specific topics.



- The committee must also review the section of the Charter that establishes how salaries are set for the Board of Commissioners, the Sheriff, and the DA.

Additional topics shared by committee members:

- Compensation for Charter Commissioners
- How does Multnomah County support School Districts?
 - *Not usually something the County is involved with.*
- What is possible re: MCSO and DA?
- Removing citizenship as a qualification when not required by state/federal law so that legal residents who are not yet citizens may serve and/or hold as many positions as possible, for instance, serving on the civil service commission.
- Funding proposals/revenue measures.
 - *Need clarity from member who wrote this about what they meant.*

Charter Review Topics Discussion

- Question: What is the difference between voting method and process for electing officials?
 - Kali answered: There may be some overlap there but there are some differences, such as with voting methods, which would be a process for electing officials but focused on voting methods. This might be something to put together as a topic.
- Question: Are any of these topics outside of the scope of Multnomah County Charter Review?
 - A: Everything that was filled out are things already in the Charter. There might be some limitations, but once in subcommittees, members can ask if things that they want to do might be outside of the scope of the committee and figure out the limitations. We can be more useful once we have an idea of what we want to do, and there will be a back and forth between the subcommittees, committee, and the larger committee.
- I'd like to see staff or community members make recommendations on grouping topics and then the committee approve the topics. Subcommittees could be empowered to not take things on if there is low interest.
 - Members of the committee began grouping topics in the chat (found below).
- Question: Will there be flexibility within subcommittees if topics change in importance?
 - A: Yes, if this is what the committee wants to do. It might be a good idea to have multiple topics within subcommittees.

Public Comments

Kali Odell shared the written public comments that had come in since the last meeting.

- Proposal from County Auditor Jennifer McGuirk, supported by two members of the Auditor Community Advisory Board, Rachel Sowray & Diane Odeh
 - Change how the Auditor's budget is set and increase that budget's share of County general funds to increase the Auditor's capacity
 - Codify the Good Governance Hotline in the Charter
 - Establish an Ombuds Office
 - Ensure Auditor's access to timely information from County departments
- Carol Chesarek, individual from the public
 - Review the impact of the 2016 Amendment on campaign finance contributions to determine if there is a detrimental impact for candidates of color
 - Explore adding a "Rights of Nature" provision to the Charter to increase protections for natural areas within the County
- Charter Review Committee: Office of Community Involvement
 - The Office of Community Involvement (OCI) proposes changes to the Charter Review Committee selection process and timeline
 - Shorten the application period for committee members and extend the amount of time the committee has to do its work

- Change the selection process to reflect County districts rather than senate districts and charge OCI with the application and selection process
- Make it clear members can still serve on the committee even if they move between districts during the process
- Create process for filling vacancies if a member leaves the committee
- Explicitly allow for the committee to choose its leadership structure more flexibly

Discussion

- I feel that County districts don't do enough to further equity within currently marginalized communities. Can we engage marginalized communities in East Portland and other areas to improve public health impacts related to political districts?
- Question: Has there been research on how campaign finance contributions have impacted candidates of color?
 - A: I'm unsure if research has been done since the 2016 amendment was implemented. The county's contribution limits went into place in August. This might be something the group can spend time looking at.

The group did a fist of five on the subcommittee structure document and all members agreed that they were comfortable with this document and the procedures outlined. They decided to think about grouping topics and work on them at the next meeting.

Next Steps and Closing

Allison and Kali wrapped up the meeting with the following items:

- Kali sent a survey asking whether members would be available for an additional meeting in January. Nine members (quorum) would be available on January 11th at 6-8pm. There was a general consensus from the group that this would work for members. Kali Odell will add this date to the calendar and ask members to officially RSVP to determine whether a quorum can attend.
- The public comment form is live and people can submit comments until the Friday before a meeting so materials can be sent to committee members for review. Comments submitted after Friday would be reviewed at the following meeting. Comments have no limits, but there will be language surrounding being mindful of the capacity of volunteers.
 - Question: Can members engage and respond to public comment during meetings?
 - This should be decided by the group in a future meeting.
- There can be discussion around public engagement and ways people can comment (such as by submitting video), and an engagement subcommittee can meet to work with the public. Members can volunteer for this.
- The committee will continue to refine topics and subcommittee areas.
- The next meeting will be on January 11, so members should look for a calendar invite and RSVP.
- Volunteers for the community engagement subcommittee will receive more information.

Appendix A: Zoom Chat

Jude Perez: I'm switching laptops. be back in a bit

Maja Harris (she/her): By-laws!

Allison Brown (she/her): Hello Jay's cat!

J'reyesha Brannon: haha :)

Maja Harris (she/her): I'm support changing the language to notification instead of approval

Samantha Gladu (she/they): same

Theresa Mai (she/her): Same

Maja Harris (she/her): Happy to move along!

Maja Harris (she/her): Marc, I think you're experience would be very valuable!

*your

Annie Kallen she/ her: Maybe two co-chairs and a back-up chair if both of those people are gone at a particular meeting?

Samantha Gladu (she/they): Powerful - I like three co-chairs

Jude (they/them): I'd be happy with either 3 or 2 co-chairs

Maja Harris (she/her): Thanks for your willingness to take this on, Marc, Theresa and Ana!

Timur Ender (he/him): My sense is that Marc, Theresa, and Ana will supplement each other quite well. I think you each bring different, valuable traits so thanks for being willing to be in this position.

Annie Kallen she/ her: Agreed Timur

J'reyesha Brannon: ^ agreed

Jude (they/them): +++++

Samantha Gladu (she/they): yes

Annie Kallen she/ her: I could use 5 min

Samantha Gladu (she/they): Yes please!

Marc Gonzales (he/him): I think this will work well with the different backgrounds and experiences, thanks.

Robbie N. he/him: This is my first time as a Multnomah County bystander. That testimony the absent member was powerful moving testimony. I am a member of BIPOC member and recipient of Public Hero Award as well. I can emphasize as well. Good fist of five procedures. Probably, I will write a public testimony statement in Febuary. Congrats to your Co-Chairs.

I had leave since this was the fifth Zoom meeting for today. Kali has my contact info. My last comment is an important issue that Zoom access is an important issue. Yes, this county needs put more effort t address this issue. It is happening to all their advisory groups.

Samantha Gladu (she/they): Thank you for being here, Robbie, and for your observations. I love fist to five!

Ana del Rocio: Hello, everyone. My apologies for arriving late. I had a meeting in Woodburn and was stuck in traffic.

Allison Brown (she/her): Ana! Glad you're here and congratulations: you're one of our co-chairs :) We can fill you in shortly

Theresa Mai (she/her): No worries. Congrats on becoming a co-chair!

Samantha Gladu (she/they): Hi Ana - congratulations on being elected a co-chair!!! ❤️👏

Danica Leung (she/her): We just heard your prepared statement to Kali and it really resonated with us. Thank you so much for sharing it!

Ana del Rocio: Ha! What wonderful news. Thank you :). It is a sincere honor. I can't wait to get started and work with co-chairs and all of you on making this review process impactful and transformative!

I do appreciate some quorum requirement as a democratic practice – we've been appointed to serve as a body and I wouldn't feel comfortable making decisions without as much of that body together as possible.

Ariella Frishberg, she/her, JLA: and, a committee member could attend subcommittee meetings without being an official member of that subcommittee, correct?

Ana del Rocio: I am catching the tail end of this discussion but I agree that mutual trust for sure is important. The reciprocal commitment on the county side is to provide coordination and scheduling support to make meeting attendance as accessible to as many subcommittee members as possible.

I like form to follow function, so it would be great to determine what we want to focus on as a group and then decide the appropriate committee structure to accomplish that work.

Annie Kallen she/ her: Good point Ana.

Maja Harris (she/her): What is the difference between voting methods and process for electing officials?

Marc Gonzales (he/him): Are any of these topics subject to State law rather than County authority?

That question was about the list of rated topics.

Timur Ender (he/him): As I'm thinking about subcmtes in my head, I'm seeing it this way. I organized it in my head this way because with the first subcmte, if you touch one thing, it seems like it is a fairly linked web to everything else.

Govt structure & Govt inputs

DA/County Mngr/Sheriff

Voting methods/access

Number of commissioners/

duties of chair/

campaign finance/

Apportionment

Process for electing officials

Charter process

Auditor

Charter Review Cmte process

Ofc of Community involvement

Ariella Frishberg, she/her, JLA: Thanks for being here with us for the meeting, Carol!

Samantha Gladu (she/they): I'm grateful for the Auditor crew and OCI crew being very prepared, and being our first public testimony!

Ana del Rocio: No academic studies that I know of as of now, but lots of anecdotal evidence and local-level analyses about the impact and potential impacts of restricting dollars in any way towards the election of a historically excluded group in public office.

Theresa Mai (she/her): Thank you, Ana!

Samantha Gladu (she/they): Like Timur, I'll offer an idea around grouping!

County Gov

- auditor
- office of community involvement
- charter review process
- county manager
- salaries
- charter language gender neutral

Legal System

- sheriff
- DA
- auditor (I'm really curious about how the auditor can influence equity outcomes for the sherrif and DA)

Elections

- voting methods / process for electing officials
- campaign finance
- districts
- resolution of tied election
- requirements for elected officials
- number of commissioners
- creation and/or filling of vacancies

Marc Gonzales (he/him): nice grouping!

J'reyesha Brannon: Those three are really good

Ana del Rocio: I'd appreciate time to review lists and rationales after this meeting

Theresa Mai (she/her): I really like your grouping, Samantha!

J'reyesha Brannon: 3 is a very reasonable number of subcommittees too

Timur Ender (he/him): I like it, Samantha. 3 is a manageable amt. I probably will only be able to commit to 1

Allison Brown (she/her): Proposal: Meet on January 11th 5:30-7:30pm

Annie Kallen she/ her: My only concern is if we can be sure that a quorum will be able to attend.

Allison Brown (she/her): 6-8pm

Timur Ender (he/him): I'm down for 1/11

Annie Kallen she/ her: I think there should be a limit.

J'reyesha Brannon: I agree with Maja

Samantha Gladu (she/they): I love that idea!

J'reyesha Brannon: yes please!

Timur Ender (he/him): Great points Maja and I don't necessarily have a strong opinion.

Marc Gonzales (he/him): I agree that a limit of two pages is reasonable. I've witnessed extended and sometimes repetitive testimony at public meetings in the past. Again, we have only two hours for each meeting.

Danica Leung (she/her): As a legislative intern, I saw a lot of long-winded, excessive pdfs sent to our email, so I would appreciate a limit (not necessarily two pages) so that we can provide adequate attention to all public comments!

Theresa Mai (she/her): I would like to volunteer!

Ana del Rocio: Clarifying question for my memory: Are we allowed to engage with/respond to public commenters during these meetings or is there a listen-only requirement?

Marc Gonzales (he/him): That could work.

Ana del Rocio: Thanks!

Samantha Gladu (she/they): Tri-chairs!

Timur Ender (he/him): Great job tonight everyone. I feel like we got through a lot of work today

Maja Harris (she/her): I'm happy to volunteer re community input as well!

Annie Kallen she/ her: Very productive today! Thanks everyone!

Samantha Gladu (she/they): Thank you community input/engagement group!

Jude (they/them): community engagement