

**MINUTES
WORKSHOP
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MARCH 24, 1999
7:00 P.M.**

Members Present: Councilor Johnson, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Berry, Councilor Landry, Councilor Rawding, Councilor Reese, and Mayor Wil Boc.

Absent: Councilor Wilson and Mayor Pro Tem Perry.

Mike Bobinsky, Bob Long, Jack Story, Jack Buckley, Earle Goodwin, and School Board Member – Trudy McAtavey.

1. DISCUSSION RE:

A. Staggered Term Limits

The Mayor opened the workshop and stated he is in favor of forming a committee to develop and implement this. He stated it gives a strong advantage to the people.

The Mayor stated this would allow the council to be more persuasive.

Jack Story stated this idea has been around for a number of years. The subcommittee has recommended this idea. There are a couple great advantages.

- 1) greater continuity in city government
- 2) less chance of turnover in any one year

In 1990, seven (7) of nine (9) city councilors were turned over.

Jack Buckley clarified staggered terms. He stated there would be three (3) new councilors every year out of nine (9).

Mr. Buckley stated the purpose of the 3-year terms is to guarantee that the majority of the council would be in place every year. Two-year terms do not work that way. One year there would be five (5) new councilors and four (4) new councilors the next year.

Berry stated he is concerned about a 3-year term. He stated it seems like a long time, but 3-year terms make it easier to hold on to the continuity.

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Landry stated he likes the idea of staggered terms. He stated he is not sure about 3 years versus 2 years. Landry would like to look at the consecutive term limits – 3 terms as they are currently.

Landry asked what the cost would be.

The City Clerk stated it costs approximately \$3,000 per election.

Johnson stated he is interested in the wording of the prior charter change regarding consecutive terms. He stated he thinks it's a good idea.

The Mayor stated he does not want to force this on the School Board. He stated he feels the School Board would have to vote on this on their own.

Rawding stated we already went through this process and stated he is opposed. He stated this would cost more money. Rawding stated it might lower the voter turnout. He stated it would also be more confusing to the citizens.

Rawding stated he feels turning over an entire City Council is not bad for the City of Dover. He stated the people may want to turn over the whole council from time to time. Rawding stated this is taking power away from the voters.

Berry stated his concern is people don't know who their councilor is. He stated we should all run at large. Berry stated that perhaps it would increase the number of people who would run for office.

Johnson stated it is cause for concern that people do not know who their city councilor is. He stated it might focus attention on ward races. Johnson stated he feels staggered terms are still a good idea.

The Mayor does not agree with Rawding. He feels people do know their ward councilor. The Mayor stated he feels the Mayor should answer to the people every 2 years. He stated he may offer this amendment.

Landry stated maybe we should compromise by retaining this institutional memory and by retaining power of the people. He stated he has not made up his mind as yet.

Schmidt stated he referenced the terms of a couple of years ago. He stated we can't have it both ways. The House of Representatives turns over every 2 years. Schmidt stated in principle he is in favor of the idea of continuity.

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Jack Story is not sure of Schmidt's statements. He stated he feels the Mayor is really an at large City Councilor.

Jack Story stated the item that came up in the subcommittee was it doesn't take the majority of the council to change in order to make a big change in the makeup of the entire City Council.

Trudy McAtavey stated she feels this is long overdue in Dover. She stated a number of years ago, she and Earle Goodwin did a little survey of 2,500 people or so. Ms. McAtavey stated the overwhelming choice was people wanted everyone elected at-large. She stated at the time, the sitting council did not go along with it. Ms. McAtavey stated she would like the School Board to be included in this.

Berry asked if the council could get some statistics on how many communities do run staggered terms.

Schmidt stated with regards to people not knowing their ward councilor; the constituents that are paying attention do know who the councilors are.

Rawding wants to keep this within the 'theme' of the charter. He stated if we are going to have a referendum we should leave it up to the voters. Rawding stated we should have the option to leave it the way it is.

Rawding stated he agrees with the Mayor on how to word the question on the term limits.

Johnson stated he wants the city council to decide exactly what the referendum question would be. He stated we don't want to complicate the issue.

The Mayor stated when we do a resolution, we will vote.

Bob Long stated he doesn't feel the proposal is cast in stone. He stated we would like to go through the process to see if there is a better way to stop some of the confusion that comes with the question. The city council may decide on some modifications of the proposal. Mr. Long stated he favors staggered terms in some form. He stated the current proposal or some version of it should be presented to the public.

Schmidt asked if we could propose a sunset provision for a certain period of time to try it.

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The Mayor stated we could, but he doesn't feel this would be necessary.

Johnson stated that is an option any council has. He agrees with the Mayor that it is not necessary.

Ms. McAtavey stated if you do decide to do this, she would like to have the public educated, there should be something more than putting it in the local newspapers, i.e., a mailing to the registered voters.

The Mayor agreed. A mailing may be too costly; however, we could publish numerous articles in the newspaper.

Berry moved to adjourn, seconded by Schmidt.
Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

The council moved to the City Manager's Office for the non-public session

2. NEW BUSINESS

3. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RE:

- A. LABOR NEGOTIATIONS
- B. MUNICIPAL WATER DEVELOPMENT PROPERTY

Judy Gaouette
CITY CLERK