

MINUTES OF MEETING  
2026 CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION  
APRIL 15, 2026

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Members Present: Chris Aiola, Andy Bemer, Elizabeth Gerstenhaber, Collen, Hauer, Chris Klym, Dr. Al Melton, Michael O'Donnell, Pat Roberts, and Peter Sullivan Jr.

Presence Noted: Paul Shipp, City Council President

Administration: Mayor Pamela Bobst

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Council President Paul Shipp opened the April 15, 2026 meeting of the 2026 Charter Review Commission at 6:00 p.m. After requesting roll call, Council President Shipp gave opening remarks to the commission. He introduced himself and thanked the other members for volunteering their service for this commission. He then asked Mayor Bobst for her opening remarks

Mayor Bobst introduced herself to the commission and gave a brief biography of her career with the City of Rocky River. She continued by stating that she has sat through about five charter review commissions and is looking forward to this one this year. She stated that the city charter that is in front of the commission has been amended in the past and this is an important role for all of the members to consider any new approaches and new technologies that may be considered in charter. There are many familiar faces on this commission this year and there are new ones as well. Mayor Bobst stated that she is pleased to see so many faces on the commission that serve on other committees throughout the city. She hopes everyone comes out of this review process with a greater understanding on how the city functions. She wants to make sure that each member can reach out with any questions and that the city Directors are available as well. She has heard that there may be some minor changes coming to commission to consider but believes that this will be a straightforward process.

Council President Shipp administered the oath of office to the Charter Review Commission members with the term commencing April 15, 2026. Each member raised their right hand and repeated the oath of office after him. After the members signed their oaths, he asked all the members to introduce themselves.

Dr. Al Melton introduced himself and stated he is a physician and works for Cleveland Clinic pediatrics since 1988 as the head and now member of the pediatric allergy department. He is married to wife of 44 years this May. He stated that they had two children, one of whom passed away and his child's faith, wisdom, and grace still sustain them. He is also on the parish council of St. Christopher's Church

Chris Aiola introduced himself and stated that he has no experience in government whatsoever. He and his wife have lived in Rocky River for the past five years and moved here from New York City. His background is in film and television and worked in documentary and reality television for about 15 and was a producer that worked on some hit shows and documentary

series. He now has his own production company in town and makes production videos for small businesses. His wife is originally from the west side which is how they landed here and was pregnant at the time with their 5 year old. They now have daughter as well who is 2 and looking forward to working with everyone.

Elizabeth Gerstenhaber introduced herself and stated she and her husband are originally from the New York area and moved here in 2011 for his job. She explained that she has a social work background and in 2020 left the workplace for a while because she had leukemia and this next week it will be three years since her bone marrow transplant and things are looking really good. She has been in and out of various groups and civic organizations within the city and is currently on the board for a small non-profit called “Superhero Project” that works with children and teens with disabilities.

Christopher Klym introduced himself and stated that he has lived in the city close to 40 years total. He has two kids which are both older now and one is finishing up law school, and the other one is in London for graduate school. He was on the charter review commission back in 1996 and then served on the civil service commission as well. He was on city council for 10 years and left in 2021 and now the President of the Parks and Rec. Foundation and looks forward to seeing through this process again.

Andrew Bemer introduced himself and stated that he was the Law Director for city and was elected in 2005 and served 16 years. He stated that he served as Law Director in Olmsted Falls as well. He retired from both jobs in 2021. He goes on to say that he has been a resident of the city for 47 years, has 3 children and was on the Rocky River Board of Education for 12 years before he became Law Director. This is forth charter review commission. He is very pleased to see that other former members are back to help and knows this will go very smoothly.

Michel O'Donnell introduced himself and stated that he grew up in Rocky River and graduated high school here. He and his wife moved back to the city after school, and he is an attorney by day. He was on the 2004 charter review commission and served on city council for 10 years. He is very pleased to be back here and looks forward to working with all of everyone and through the process.

Pat Roberts introduced herself and stated that she has lived in Rocky River for about 40 years and has a blended family. She has 5 children all of whom went to St. Christopher's and then Rocky River High School. She has worked in a variety of settings, currently a nurse, master's prepared, and a nurse practitioner, and her specialty is emergency department and also served as a consultant for the big 3 here. She stated in her spare time, while living in Brunswick, she was the chairman of the zoning board for a number of years. That was during a turbulent time because the farmers were selling big plots of land to developers who wanted to just build a lot of houses. She is happy to be here, and this is her second time and was a member of the 2020 charter review commission.

P.J. Sullivan introduced himself and stated he was a resident of Rocky River twice now. The first was when he moved here in 2017 to 2020. He and his wife moved here after about 8 years of active duty in the army and lived by the library while he was in law school. They then moved

downtown for about 2 years and then recently moved back to Rocky River in 2022. They have a 2-year-old daughter. By day, he is an attorney in downtown Cleveland and one weekend a month and two weeks out of the year, is a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserve. He is happy to be here.

Colleen Hauer introduced herself and stated that she has been on the Rocky River League of Voters for about three years. Coincidentally, she retired about three years ago and worked in finance her whole career and as a trader at McDonald and Key and then got a job in private wealth management after that. She stated that she does a lot of volunteer work as well. She grew up in North Olmsted and went to Magnificat High School. She is happy to help and wants to have fun, some laughs, and do some good work.

Council President Shipp next stated that the next item on the agenda is the election of a chairman and vice chairman of the committee. He asked Andrew Bemer to give some background and overview of the positions so all members can get a better understanding of the role. After the election, there will be a presentation about the charter review commission then discuss the assigning the articles to review on a weekly schedule.

Andrew Bemer began his discussion by stating everyone has the past meeting minutes of the last charter review for reference. He went on to review the previous elected schedule of articles. Commission Secretary Mike Greco reiterated the schedule set forth by the Board of Elections for the submission of any changes and then Council President Shipp stated that council may not necessarily have to read the charter legislation three times council and that they will not change anything that comes from the Charter Review Commission. He stated that we are looking at more at 6 to 7 weeks for the commission to meet.

Andrew Bemer went on to say that what council does is more a ministerial act in adjudicating the recommendations that go to the ballot. What this committee presents to council, council puts their approval on it and then goes to the Board of Elections. All this needs to be done before 90 days of the election. What the commission needs to do this session is break up the articles for each weekly meeting. Each meeting is when we tell everyone what this week is about, the commission will make recommendations regarding any changes and will discuss if anything bothers any member about the article(s). He stated that there hasn't been any charter review commission that hasn't discussed the term of office for mayor and council. He stated that it is always a point of discussion but again, things change and it is always worth discussing. The meetings should be confined to about an hour and will meet at 6:00 PM. He continued by stating that if there are items that they want for further discussion, we will put on the "further discussion" agenda and at the end and then will make a collective decision of what items should be amended and sent to the ballot.

Secretary Mike Greco did go and make a copy of the minutes from the last charter review commission for all of the members so they can review the previous weekly schedule from 2020.

Council President Shipp then addressed the commission members on what the weekly meetings will look like. Each week, one or two sections of the charter will be up for review and discussion with the commission. There will be a member of the commission who will be assigned the

weekly review. That member should be prepared with questions regarding the article under review, facilitate the discussion and there will be weekly guests as well who will be invited to the committee meeting that can help with any questions that members may have. For example, next week will be Article 2 and 3 for review and address the Mayor and City Council. He stated he will be inviting the members of council to the meeting for any questions members may have and Mayor Bobst will be there as well. These guests, for example a City Department Director, may give their opinion about the article but it is up to commission on what to do. After each week, if there are any changes then the commission will create a master list of considered changes of which members will review at the last meeting then. Again, for the guests, Council President Shipp asked members to think of them as witnesses. They are here for testimony if the members want to think of it that way. Part of this process is research and members may choose to look how other cities do this process, and another part of this process is the question-and-answer testimony. We have many members here with very different backgrounds and that is very important because we want that mix of views for this process.

Charter Member Michael O'Donnell stated that to put a finer point on Council President Shipp's point is that the commission makes recommendations of changes to council. Once council approves it, then it goes to the Board of Elections for the city to vote on. The commission does not have the authority or power to make these changes just to be clear. Mayor Bobst then stated that this commission has a great deal of authority in that council cannot override the commission's recommendations for the ballot. The Board of Elections will write ballot language for the recommendations that come from all of you. She stated that Charter Member O'Donnell is correct that the commission does not send it to the Board of Elections directly. Charter Member O'Donnell stated it goes to a vote by the people. They, the voters, are going to like the commission's changes or they will not.

Andrew Bemer addressed the members in that they can contact Mike Greco, the Charter Secretary, to help them find a contact with other cities if they want some questions asked. The members are certainly free to do their research in regard to what other cities do. Andrew Bemer did state there was an issue regarding the date of primary elections. Mayor Bobst then clarified the role of council and when it they were held. The discussion continued regarding the cost of holding the primaries and it was pointed out that the number of primary candidates on the ballot was a separate issue.

The focus of the meeting then turned back to the meeting schedule, article assignment and the election of chairman and vice-chairman. Mayor Bobst additionally stated that the schedule from the 2020 Charter Review was in good cadence and seemed to be the right organization for that timely weekly review. Charter Secretary Greco then went to get copies of the former schedule for the members.

Council President Shipp opened up the floor to discuss the chairman and vice chairman election. Elizabeth Gerstenhaber nominated Andrew Bemer for chairman of the committee and Pat Roberts seconded it. Motion passed by unanimous acclamation. Christopher O'Donnell nominated Chris Klym to be vice chairman and Andrew Bemer seconded it. Motion passed by unanimous acclamation. This generally means that Andrew Bemer will run the meetings and Chris Klym will run the meeting when he is not here.

The Commission then discussed how they wanted to move forward with the review process. After discussion and agreement to model the 2026 Charter Review Meeting Schedule to the last commission's structure, the following schedule was agreed upon:

April 22, 2026: **ARTICLE II – THE MAYOR**  
**Discussion Leader: Michael O'Donnell**  
Invited Guest: Mayor Bobst

**ARTICLE III – THE COUNCIL**  
**Discussion Leader: Michael O' Donnell**  
Invited Guests: City Council Members

April 29, 2026: **ARTICLE IV – ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS**  
**Discussion Leader: Andy Bemer**  
Section 1. General Provisions  
Section 2. Department of Law  
    Invited Guest: Michael O'Shea, Law Director  
Section 4. Department of Public Safety Service  
    Invited Guests: Rich Snyder, Director of Public Safety-Service

**ARTICLE VII – FINANCES**  
**Discussion Leader: Colleen Hauer**  
Invited Guest: Jonathan Lindow, Director of Finance

**ARTICLE IV – ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS**  
**Discussion Leader: Colleen Hauer**  
Section 3. Department of Finance  
Invited Guest: Jonathan Lindow, Director of Finance

May 6, 2026: **ARTICLE V - CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**  
**Discussion Leader: Pat Roberts**  
Invited Guests: Civil Service Commission, All RRPD and RRFD personnel

**ARTICLE VI – BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**  
**Discussion Leader: Pat Roberts**  
Invited Guests: Members of Boards and Commissions

May 13, 2026 **ARTICLE VIII – INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL**  
**Discussion Leaders: Peter Sullivan, Jr.**

**ARTICLE IX – NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**  
**Discussion Leader: Peter Sullivan Jr.**

May 20, 2026 **ARTICLE X – GENERAL**  
**Discussion Leader: Chris Klym**

May 27, 2026 **REVIEW OF MASTER LIST OF ITEMS FOR FURTHER**  
**DISCUSSION AND ITEMS TO BE MOVED TO THE BALLOT**  
**LIST**

June 3, 2026 **CONTIINATION OF THE REVIEW OF MASTER LIST OF ITEMS IF**  
**NEEDED**

Vice Chairman Klym did ask to make sure that the public will be able to make public comment during the meetings. Charter Secretary Greco stated that the meetings are now on the community calendar on the city’s website. Charter Secretary Greco also stated that all invited guests will be notified properly when their particular article is ready to be reviewed. Also, a master list of recommendations will be kept as each weekly meeting progresses.

Mayor Bobst did recommend to the charter members that if they did have any questions for the invited guests, that it is helpful if they received them before the meetings so that they have a chance to research any information that is needed to give an accurate explanation to the commission. She stated that this is always helpful for the process.

Chairman Bemer concluded the meeting asking all the members if they understand what a charter does. He asked them to read the handouts that were sent to them because he stated that these articles are the best and easiest explanation of how the document works in Ohio. These documents help distinguish how the courts in the state struggle to in trying to distinguish what is general law and what is the opportunity of the general government to self-govern.

The next meeting of the Charter Review Commission will be held at 6:00 p.m. on April 22, 2026. The invited guests will be Mayor Bobst and all members of Rocky River City Council.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

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Date

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Andrew Bemer, Chairman

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Mike Greco, Charter Secretary

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Chris Klym, Vice Chairman