

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE  
CITY OF WILDWOOD, FLORIDA

January 6, 2025 6:00 PM  
CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM 124

(meeting taped)

**1. Call to Order**

Chairperson Fountaine called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

**2. Proper Noticing**

City staff confirmed there was proper noticing for the meeting.

**3. Roll Call**

Attendee Name	Title	Status
David Fountaine	Chairperson	Present
Derrel Strickland	Vice Chairperson	Present
Andre Nacaxe	Voting Member	Present
Robin Caruthers	Voting Member	Present
Keith Pearlman	Voting Member	Present
Joe Elliott	Ex-officio Member	Present
Ryan Harrison, Jr.	Non-Voting Member	Absent
Trinidy Harris	Non-Voting Member	Absent
Cassandra Smith	Assistant City Manager/CFO	Present
Madison Guinn	Executive Assistant	Present
Joshua Bills	City Attorney	Present

**4. Determination of a Quorum**

Chairperson Fountaine confirmed that a quorum was present.

**5. Comments from the General Public**

There were no members of the public present for the meeting.

**6. Presentations**

There were no presentations.

**7. Action Items**

**A. Minutes for Approval: November 18, 2024 Charter Review Committee Meeting**

Chairperson Fountaine asked the Committee to review the minutes from the previous meeting held on November 18, 2024.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>Passed</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Strickland
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Nacaxe
<b>AYES:</b>	Pearlman, Nacaxe, Strickland, Caruthers, Fontaine

**B. Proposed Charter Review Committee Meeting Schedule**

Chairperson Fontaine requested that the Committee review the proposed meeting schedule he had drafted and engage in a discussion to finalize dates for the remaining meetings. After a thorough discussion, the Committee agreed on the dates for the upcoming Charter Review Committee meetings. The Committee deliberated on holding meetings monthly, with some members suggesting the possibility of meeting every other month instead. The Committee set a target to complete the work by early 2026. Madison Guinn confirmed that she would send calendar invitations to all Committee members after the meeting. The proposed schedule for the remaining Charter Review Committee meetings is as follows:

- o March 3, 2025
- o April 7, 2025
- o May 5, 2025
- o June 2, 2025
- o August 4, 2025
- o September 8, 2025
- o October 6, 2025
- o November 3, 2025
- o January 5, 2026
- o February 2, 2026

**8. Discussion Items**

**A. Review of Article I and Article II of the City Charter**

The Committee concurred that Articles I and II of the City Charter were primarily administrative in nature and in good standing, allowing for a smooth transition to the discussion of Article III, which focuses on the composition of the City Commission. It was agreed that this section would require more time and thoughtful deliberation.

**B. Begin Review of Article III of the City Charter**

The Committee began its discussion on Article III of the City Charter, which addresses the composition of the City Commission. Under the current system, any resident can run for any commission seat, with commissioners being elected at large. A proposal was made to explore the possibility of transitioning to a district-based system, where the city would be divided into districts, and Commissioners would be elected by the residents of each district.

One perspective shared was that all voters should have the right to vote for every Commissioner, regardless of their district, to ensure a broader representation of the city's population. However, concerns were raised about the potential for a district-based system to result in over-representation of certain areas, which could lead to the underrepresentation of others. An alternative suggestion was put forward to consider a system similar to Sumter County's, where districts exist, but all residents vote for all commissioners.

The Committee also discussed the importance of obtaining community feedback regarding the proposed changes. Given that Wildwood's demographics and needs have evolved significantly over the past decade, several members emphasized the need for such input, as the city's growth

is expected to continue. Committee members were reminded that while they are free to speak with residents or individuals outside the Committee (such as commissioners or residents of other cities), they are not permitted to discuss Committee matters with one another outside of public meetings, in compliance with open meeting laws.

Further conversation focused on the potential benefits of districts and how population distribution could influence district creation. Commissioner Elliott offered to contact the Supervisor of Elections office to generate maps illustrating potential district boundaries based on the current population. The Committee stressed the importance of fully understanding the impact of districting before making a final recommendation. It was agreed that a more detailed analysis of potential district divisions would help ensure the most equitable representation for the city.

The Committee decided to take additional time to review the proposed changes, collect further community feedback, and assess districting options. It was also suggested that a meeting with the City Commission be arranged to present the potential options and seek input, ensuring that the Commission's perspective is included in the decision-making process.

Concerns were raised by several members about the possibility that some areas of Wildwood may feel underrepresented. It was noted that residents, particularly from the city's expanding areas, have voiced a need for more equitable representation in government decisions. Members also discussed the historical challenges regarding Wildwood's growth, which has contributed to ongoing debates about fairness in representation.

The Committee explored various approaches to the mayor's position, considering options such as maintaining the mayor as one of the five commissioners or electing the mayor at large, with the remaining positions elected from the four districts. There was also discussion about whether the mayor should be appointed or elected, weighing the benefits of continuity and experience in the mayoral role. Some members raised concerns that the loss of institutional knowledge could occur if new commissioners were elected and chose a new mayor.

A comparison was made to church boards that extend terms to ensure leadership continuity, suggesting that similar practices could be considered in Wildwood.

The Committee then examined the current compensation structure for the mayor and commissioners. There was a discussion on whether to set their salaries in the charter or leave them to be adjusted by ordinance. A proposal to link salary adjustments to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was put forward, but concerns were raised about its legal feasibility under Florida law. It was suggested that the Commission's compensation should be periodically reviewed based on their duties, with a salary study planned to assess the current compensation structure. While it was acknowledged that elected officials may be underpaid considering their multiple responsibilities, no final decision was made.

The discussion also included the process for adjusting salaries in the future, considering whether adjustments should be automatically tied to a set CPI increase or reviewed periodically. While some members felt that linking salaries to CPI might not reflect the city's evolving size and responsibilities, others suggested that the Commission should have the flexibility to set salary increases via ordinance.

The Committee briefly reviewed the rules of order for conducting meetings. While Robert's Rules of Order were mentioned, it was noted that they may not be entirely suited for a smaller board. A resolution from the previous year, which outlines specific rules for meeting procedures, was also referenced. Staff did not express significant concerns regarding the meeting schedule or the need for changes to the charter.

The Committee concluded by emphasizing the importance of continued discussion on city representation and the need for community input. It was agreed that additional meetings may be necessary to fully address all the issues surrounding representation and other proposed changes.

**9. Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made. The meeting was adjourned at 7 PM.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>Passed</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Pearlman
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Strickland
<b>AYES:</b>	Pearlman, Nacaxe, Strickland, Caruthers, Fountaine

SEAL

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE  
CITY OF WILDWOOD, FLORIDA

Date: 2/3/2025

Chairperson: Dal Font