



Town Council Members Present

Zane Teeters, Jr. – Mayor
Cheryl Marinelli – Vice-Mayor
Kay MacQueen – Council Member
Susan Richert - Council Member
Kim Hanawalt – Council Member

Town Staff

Charles Jacien, Town Clerk
Wally Hoagland, Police Chief
David Langley, Attorney

1. Call to Order

Mayor Teeters called the Special Council Meeting of the Town of Astatula to order at **6:30 p.m.**

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Pastor Steve Lee gave the invocation, asking for guidance in the decisions being made for the benefit of the community, both present and future.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Roll Call

The Town Clerk conducted a roll call.

Present:

- Council Member Marinelli
- Council Member MacQueen
- Council Member Richert
- Council Member Hanawalt
- Mayor Teeters

Quorum: Present.

Proper notice of the meeting was confirmed.

4. Public Comment

Mayor Teeters opened the floor for public comment.

There were no public comments.

Mayor Teeters closed the floor for public comment.

5. Agenda Review

Council reviewed the agenda. Mayor Teeters noted there was only one agenda item and no changes were requested.

The agenda was accepted as presented.

New Business

6. Discussion and Action: Charter Revisions

Mayor Teeters introduced the item and stated that the Council had previously discussed possible charter revisions. He noted that the initial concern was raised by Council Member Richert regarding language related to Council appointments and how appointed seats are held and later elected.

Mayor Teeters stated that after further research regarding charter revision procedures and the Town's prior handling of charter revisions, he recommended limiting the number of proposed charter amendments at this time. He explained that historically, broader charter reviews were handled by a committee, and that placing too many revisions before voters at once could create legal challenges and voter fatigue.

Mayor Teeters recommended proceeding only with a small number of urgent revisions, including clarification of appointment language and removal of mandatory liaison duties. He stated that his own previously proposed revisions could be pulled for now and reviewed later by a citizen committee.

Town Attorney David Langley explained that the Council had discussed several possible charter revisions during prior workshops. He stated that the number of potential amendments was large and could be burdensome for voters. He also advised that a full charter replacement would create an "all or nothing" vote, which could be problematic.

Attorney Langley recommended that Council focus on the most necessary items. He identified Item 3 and Item 12 as related to Council Member Richert's original concern. These items would clarify that Seats 1 and 2 are elected in odd-numbered years, Seats 3, 4, and 5 are elected in even-numbered years, and that

appointed Council members serve only the remainder of the unexpired term for the seat to which they were appointed.

Attorney Langley also recommended consideration of removing mandatory liaison duties from the Charter, stating that those duties could be assigned by policy or resolution instead. He explained that mandatory liaison language could create unnecessary operational and Sunshine Law concerns because Council members may be placed in positions of communicating with department heads outside of formal meetings.

Council discussed whether to include proposed changes to term lengths and term limits. Mayor Teeters expressed concern that changes to Council term lengths and term limits should be reviewed more broadly by a citizen charter committee rather than decided by the sitting Council for referendum at this time.

7. Discussion Regarding Outdated Town Officials Page and Clerical Corrections

Council Member Marinelli raised a concern regarding the Charter page on Municode and the Town website, noting that the first page listed outdated Town officials from 2019.

Attorney Langley stated that the introductory Town officials page did not appear to be part of the official Charter and could likely be removed or updated by ordinance without requiring a referendum. Council discussed keeping the preface and numbering system but removing the outdated officials listing.

Council Member Marinelli also asked whether the Charter could include language allowing the Town to correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and other non-substantive errors without having to place each correction before voters.

Attorney Langley stated that there is generally no statutory exception for typo corrections unless the Charter itself provides one. He advised that a Charter provision could be drafted to allow limited ministerial corrections, provided the language is very specific and includes safeguards to prevent substantive or political changes from being made under the guise of clerical correction.

Council agreed that the Charter should look professional and consistent, especially as the Town prepares to improve its website.

8. Motion: Allow Ministerial/Clerical Corrections to Charter

Motion: Council Member Richert made a motion to allow ministerial errors and corrections to be made to the Charter.

Second: Council Member MacQueen seconded the motion.

Vote:

- Council Member Marinelli — Aye
- Council Member MacQueen — Aye
- Council Member Richert — Aye
- Council Member Hanawalt — Aye
- Mayor Teeters — Aye

Result: Motion passed **5-0**.

Attorney Langley stated he would draft appropriate language and bring it back for Council review.

9. Discussion Regarding Citizen Charter Review Committee

Mayor Teeters recommended that the Town establish a citizen committee to conduct a broader, line-by-line review of the Charter.

He suggested a seven-member structure:

- One member appointed by the Mayor
- One member appointed by each Council member
- One at-large member appointed by majority vote of Council
- One alternate appointed by the Mayor

Mayor Teeters stated that the committee would review the Charter comprehensively and make recommendations back to Council. He noted that the process could take 12 to 14 months and would require volunteers willing to serve without compensation.

S. Richert commented that during a prior Charter review, the committee members served without pay and attended as many meetings as needed.

Council discussed that each Council member would select a resident they believed would act in the best interest of the Town. Attorney Langley stated that the advantage of a committee is that it allows for broader citizen involvement, public meetings, and community discussion before recommendations are brought back to Council.

10. Motion: Proceed with Limited Charter Amendments and Refer Remaining Items to Committee

Council discussed narrowing the proposed referendum items to only the most necessary revisions.

The Council agreed to proceed with:

1. Combining Item 3 and Item 12 into one referendum item regarding election years and appointed Council seat terms; and
2. Proceeding with Item 4, removing mandatory liaison duties from the Charter.

All other proposed Charter revisions would be referred to a future Charter Review Committee.

Motion: Council Member Richert made a motion to combine Items 3 and 12 as one referendum item, to include Item 4 as a second referendum item, and to refer all other proposed revisions to a committee.

Second: Council Member MacQueen seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

- Council Member Hanawalt — Yes
- Council Member Richert — Yes
- Council Member Marinelli — Yes
- Council Member MacQueen — Yes
- Mayor Teeters — Yes

Result: Motion passed **5-0**.

11. Council Discussion

Mayor Teeters opened the floor for Council discussion.

Council Member Marinelli asked about the date shown on the Charter document downloaded from the Town website, noting that it showed a creation date of September 19, 2024. Mayor Teeters stated that he believed the Charter had been modified around that time due to a constitutional issue related to property ownership or residency requirements. Attorney Langley agreed that constitutional corrections can be handled differently from regular Charter amendments.

No additional Council discussion was presented.

12. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Teeters adjourned the meeting at **7:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor Zane Teeters Jr

ATTEST:

Charles Jacien Town Clerk