

Sullivan County Charter Commission | Meeting Minutes

Date: August 5, 2026

Location: Government Center, Legislative Hearing Room

Call to Order: 4:00 pm by Acting Chair Bill Liblick

I. Attendance & Administration

- **Members Present:** Bill Liblick (Acting Chair), John Conway (Co-Chair), George Rose, Paul Barnett (Remote), Moreen Lerner (Remote), Camille Johnston, Ken Walter.
- **Members Absent:** Kaylee Roebuck
- **Recording:** It was noted that the proceedings were recorded for the public record.
- **Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Walter requested a change on page 3 (§C3.07) of the July 1, 2026 minutes to reflect the full name and title of the Acting County Manager. Motion to approve previous minutes with the foregoing change made by Ken Walter; Seconded by John Conway. **Motion Carried.**

II. Transcription of Audio - Operational Discussions

- With regard to Commission membership and vacancies, per Legislative Chairperson, Nadia Rajsz, current Commission Member, Kaylee Roebuck, will be removed from membership per resolution dated August 6, 2026.
- Mr. Liblick reminded the Commission that there would be no meeting in September. The next Commission meeting is on Wednesday, October 7, 2026 at 4:00 pm. There will be two (2) new Charter Review Commission members at that time, to wit, (1) William Chellis and (2) Mark McLewin, who will be appointed on August 6, 2026. Once appointed, Mr. Liblick would like for them to review the Charter so that the Commission can get to work starting at the October meeting. He would like to review guests and how to proceed with future meetings.
- Mr. Liblick brought up the issue of County Executive. He has information and resolutions from Ulster County, but these do not need to be studied now. He also has some people who were instrumental in the legislation in Ulster County when they did this. "When we had the last Charter Review Commission that's when they really started with their County Executive... they were a few years old. They did it through the Charter Review Commission. They did it through recommendations that they put together and the change of form of government coming before a resolution, that then came before the Legislature. That's something that we are going to look at, we will interview them, and later weigh in on the pros and cons. "After discussion around reviewing the Codes or continuing to go through the Charter, Mr. Liblick stated that he believed the Commission should proceed by continuing to go through the Charter, have discussion on items that the Commission would like to delve into further, and

then decide, for instance, the County Clerk, to have the discussion on the County's Clerk's Office and invite the County Clerk here. With regard to the County Manager and form of government, have the County manager come before us, equally with the Legislature, to ask what they'd like." Mr. Liblick believed it important to review the Codes as well, stating, "We have equally things that were changed in the Codes and how we want to proceed to have recommendations to the Legislature." Mr. Liblick referenced what was changed from the Charter Review Commission of 10 years ago to the Legislature that was there, prior to the one that Ms. Rajszt is in, where we had chairs come in, where it said that the chair of the Legislature could be a member of a committee, which wasn't previously. Mr. Liblick believed it was something that needed to be reviewed, stating, "We have to remember that the legislative government that came in is different in that the Legislators, a lot of new blood, were not aware of some of the changes that were made and some of the Legislators forgot what the changes were. We had Nick, Nadia, Luis, and Joey. I think everyone else was new, and I don't think that they were informed of the changes that were made to the Code."

- Mr. Barnett raised a question with regard to County Executive that it was discussed, and thought established, that the Charter Review Commission 10 years ago had made a recommendation that the Legislature would adopt the County Executive and the Legislature had not yet taken it up. Nadia said that's for us to do and if we do it, then there will be work for the Charter Review Commission to do, but in the absence of that, didn't think that anything that this Charter Review Commission needed to address with respect to the County Executive because it's now in the Legislature's court.

Ms. Rajszt, addressing Mr. Barnett's question, stated, "I believe the way, and I'm not expert, Ulster County approached it was that they made the change in the Charter to accept a form of County Executive. They had a public hearing, they changed the Charter, and then they put it up for resolution on the ballot. They put it up for resolution for the Legislators and then put it up on referendum. I believe that was their process. I have the individual's name that was instrumental in doing this in Ulster. If you'd like, I will send you the name and you can contact him and he could be here at the next meeting." Co-Chair Mr. Conway then asked, "You're not putting it up to the Legislature? Wherein Legislative Chair Rajszt said, "No. I don't believe that that's the way that Ulster did it. I think that there needs to be, and I'm not an attorney, but I believe that it needs to be a Charter change first, within the Code, to accept a form of County Executive form of government, and then put it up on the ballot." Chair Liblick stated that the last Charter Review Commission went through the process, interviewed people and recommended change in the Charter, but the change never happened, and so we have to start from scratch as this is a new Commission and a new Legislature. Ms. Rajszt stated, "There has to be a public hearing on the Legislative and when that change happens, there has to be a public hearing, and then we move forward by putting it on the ballot. This was a 2 year process." Chair Liblick stated, "Correct, it would be, but as I'm trying to explain, it is first something we have to investigate after we're done reviewing the Charter. After we're done with the Code and

interviewing in the process, we then have to have a clear mind and once we understand how government's working, and that's after our research. I think the research will entail interviewing all of the members of the aspect of the County government and then we have to have the discussion. And then we should decide how to proceed. If we're going to make that formal recommendation and say how we should believe it should be handled. Staggered terms were something else we spoke about last Charter Review so, because we're a new Charter Review Commission, and because it a new Legislature really, we might be meeting after a new Legislature comes into being in 2028."

Mr. Barnett stated that the last Charter Review Commission spent a lot of time coming up with a couple of initiatives, but both of them sat and nothing has happened in 10 years, and there were opportunities for the Legislature, along the way, to put it in the Charter and then get it on the ballot, and they chose not to do it. For us to repeat all of that work, and not take up maybe other things that might be able to be done with the Charter, that would be more acceptable?" Mr. Liblick responded, saying, "I think we have to take up those other things, and recommend those other things, if we find other things, but equally we have to recommend if we feel that a form of County government should be changed. So, yes, we have to do all of that, and because we're a different Charter Review Commission, and because the Legislature is different, we have to, again, decide if that's something that we want to take up if we feel that's a form of government. At the last Charter Review Commission, there were a lot of skeptics on the Commission that didn't want ... after the research when we tackled the County Executive, which was the last item we tackled, everyone was for it except Ken. So, it's something that we will have to take up again whether the Legislature, no matter what we suggest, any change of form of government or anything we've liked or implemented, and come up with some good ideas at the last meeting, it's still ultimately up to the Legislature to decide. I don't know by member, we're talking about 9 members, how many of them have really gone through the charter like we did the last few meetings. I'll tell you John is well versed. He's well versed on the history because he's been historian and is part of that and has been around for those 3 other Charter Review Commissions, although not serving on them. Ken and I were on the other Charter Review Commissions.

Co-Chair Conway questioned if the Commission should ask a lawyer to tell us how the process works before we... Chair Liblick stated that was how the process works. "Our obligation right now is to go through the Charter, to interview, to do our due diligence, to do the research." Mr. Conway stated, "We were lobbying under the assumption that we recommended to the Legislature, the Legislature passed a resolution, and then it went to referendum. Now Nadia's saying that's not how it works." Mr. Liblick responded, "I don't think that's what she said. She's telling you how they did something in Ulster." Ms. Rajszt said, "That's how they did it in Ulster. I'm assuming that's how they did it. I sent you that information. If you see their public hearings." Mr. Conway stated that the Commission should get clarification before it starts, to which Ms. Rajszt

responded, "Yes, and that's why I'm going to pass along to you that he's retired already, but that individual that put that public hearing together, that resolution, and the change in Ulster's Charter, so that you understand the process that they took, which makes sense because if you have public hearings, you're now talking about the changes that you're seeing coming forward, right? Instead of just putting it on referendum, which was the questionable part from a lot of the Legislators. If you put on referendum, the people in the public don't know what's going on. They don't know what they're voting on."

Chair Liblick stated, "That was our first question – if there was going to be, when you're trying for the last few months to get something approved, how there was going to be meetings and hearings. We discussed that at the last Charter Review Commission. So, if we have those forms, we have to find out, but I think even before we get to that phase, we have to first review the Charter. I think once we're done with the Charter review and interview process, and we're starting to tackle the County Executive issue, then we have to determine about the public hearings. There's a county, I forgot which, upstate, Luis knows the county, that went to County Executive. I'd also like to get some input if we are going to do a full room search on it, is to get people from Orange, Westchester, Dutchess Counties, to speak with us. Our former congressman, who's running for Assembly now, Mark Molinaro, was the former County Executive of Dutchess County. I'm sure he'd come in here and discuss it with us." Ms. Rajszt suggested a Zoom meeting, which Mr. Liblick stated was another thing he wanted to talk about.

Ms. Rajszt stated, "I have Ulster's Charter and Code as well, I'll pass it along to you so you don't have to dig for it. If you just want to send, or email, everyone that information so that they could look at it and review it. I think that starting with the Charter and changing the Charter, if that's the will of this Board, to move into a County Executive arena, then that would go for public hearing where people would have a chance to come in, listen, and voice their opinion." Mr. Liblick asked, "Are the Legislators, when we get to that phase, going to allow us to run the public hearings or is the Legislature?" Ms. Rajszt and Mr. Walter both replied, "It would be the Legislature." Mr. Liblick then stated, "If the Legislature runs the public hearings, there has to be, before we get to public hearings, some panel discussion whether we sponsor IT, or someone else does, with some people who are experts on County Executive form of government, and people who are experts on a Legislative county government. Some people were arguing with me recently that Orange County had a lot of problems initially, and there was fighting between Democrats and Republicans when they went to that form, and it cost a lot of money. There are also many different ways to doing it when it comes to County Treasurer's Office, keeping elected positions, Comptroller's Office, how you're going to rework a government. Obviously, the County Manager has a contract. If that position is eliminated, how would that come into bearing, would he be hired by the County Executive, would he be an administrator for the Legislature? There are different things."

Ms. Rajszt stated that there are many variables, and the County Executive also has their own attorney. The Legislators have their attorney. So, there are additional layers of cost when you're moving into this direction, but that's the minutia that you're going to be talking about." Mr. Liblick stated that research has to be done.

Mr. Rose stated that the Commission should ask the counties that changed what motivated them to make the change. Chair Liblick believed it's the Legislature and the voters. Mr. Conway stated that the Commission will have to ask what was it before, and what's the difference now that it changed.

Mr. Liblick stated, "A lot of people with criticism believe that we will need a board of supervisors again, we have to go back to that form of government. The fact of the matter is you cannot because of the way voting and you can't take a few Town supervisors and give them control of the small municipalities. That's what happens in county governments. We're just inundated with that form of government, but I think it's something that we have to go into. We are also going to have to have members who are fresh. We've been meeting since May and, hopefully, we will move that along. Again, there has to be these two new people - Are they willing to go through the educational process and commit themselves to come to the meetings? That's our concern. Everyone in this room has been active participants and that's what we want. The other thing we have to touch on is Zoom and again, Nadia, are you meeting tomorrow where would could go through this?" Per Ms. Rajszt, "Yes, we are going to meet tomorrow, and I'm going to ask the County Attorneys again, and I think the hiccup and stumbling block was that this Board is not really voting to make any changes. You are only recommending to the Legislature so because of that, not that I'm an attorney, but the attorney and I agreed that Zoom should be allowed. There shouldn't be any public comment. I'm on many boards where we do Zoom and there is no public comment. However, the public can listen and view, but there's no public comment. So, we're going to further that discussion. To go back to County Executive as to why we would want to go in that direction.

Mr. Rose stated, "Why did the other counties that made the change?" Ms. Rajszt stated that it's a natural progression... it's evolution. Mr. Rose replied that he understood that, but it is something that needs to be heard from them. Ms. Rajszt then stated, "Right, we do need to hear from them, but in my opinion here, this is our next step. Again, when I'm out at NYSAC meetings where there are county executives in comparison to the Chairs, they are elevated. It's like a king walking into an arena. The Chairs come in and it's like 'Oh, they're the Chairs.' We need to elevate our status in this county. We need to move in that direction." Mr. Rose, not disagreeing, stated, "Let's get information from the people that made the change, what happened before, what happened afterward, what improved." Ms. Rajszt believed that there are many out there that would be willing to come, either by Zoom or in person, to talk with the Charter Review Commission about that, and believes it to be the right direction.

According to Mr. Liblick, people came from different counties to Sullivan County at the last meeting, in addition to Steve Acquario from the NYSAC. Mr. Liblick stated, "Everyone that was interviewed said that we should proceed. I didn't understand you meant that other counties did it. They did it for a few reasons. They did it financially. They did it because it's an accountability of government. When you have 9 legislators like you have now, everyone has 1 vote. Nadia might be the Chair of the Legislature, but she's one of 9 votes. Then there's gridlock, gridlock between the 5:4 vote, or gridlock with personalities. When you have the form of the County Executive, you have checks and balances. What they did in Ulster County, they dramatically reduced the size of the legislative body because of the County Executive, so they increased the districts as a cost effective means, but there's a check and balance of the government. The Legislature would still be here checking the County Executive, but the people would have someone to look at and experience, or not. They vote the person in or out, whether they be popular or not be popular. I'll give you an example - the government of the State of New York was here yesterday, and she went specifically to Hasidic communities and day camps, but Nadia is the Chairman of the Legislature and no one in this Legislative body was informed of it, and it was like ... (In the background, someone said something that sounded like, "It's a right of election.") It doesn't matter if it's a right of election because the Town of Bethell was there, because she went to one of the new Hasidic communities in Bethel, and they were invited, but were they invited by the Governor's office or by the Hasidic community?"

Ms. Rajsz then stated that when there is the State of the State address, the County Executives get invited into Chambers. The Chairs do not. The Chairs stay in another room.

Mr. Rose then stated, "I'm a Political Science major. Obviously, I have a strong philosophy on this. They should elect the leader. That's my opinion."

To which Mr. Liblick replied, "That's always been my opinion as well, good or bad, of the government. Again, that's something that I think we have to go into. So, the Zoom aspect, hopefully, we will get that resolved tomorrow at the meeting. I know all of the Legislators at the meeting were supportive of it, and it should be. There will be certain meetings when we make recommendations, and has nothing to do with County Executive, to come to the public to get their input of how they think the County Clerk's Office is operating, the Treasurer's Office is operating, the County is operating. How the County roads are operating. Those are things that we want to get input on. It's unfortunate that we have two (2) new members coming in but that's hopefully in October."

Mr. Walter stated, "We didn't have new members join the last one as we were going through."

Mr. Liblick replied, "Yes, we did, but we didn't have in the beginning, initially, like that. Nadia had to leave because she was elected to the Legislature. Brian left. Jay passed away, I think. We did have that. It's a long process. Back to today's meeting, where we left off at the last meeting, we completed the review of the Charter. Should we hold off now going through the Charter of what we wanted to discuss until the next meeting?"

Co-Chair Conway suggested that the Commission hold off until October on the Code because there will be the two (2) new members in attendance to refresh.

Mr. Liblick agreed, and continued, "Again, with public comment, Nadia, if you explain it to them tomorrow, if anyone brings this up, we will have public comment at certain meetings when we want their input. The type of meetings we're having now are meetings where people can come to speak because we always end the meeting with an item for public comment. Someone asked me the other day, are the meetings filled with people. I said 'no' because the meetings are boring right now what we're doing now. We're basically going through by-laws of an association and seeing how they run, and if we want to make changes, and recommendations to that. There are no hot bed issues right now. If there were a hot bed issue, we would have people in here commenting, like the time that about the Sheriff's patrol being implemented in the Charter. We had a lot of people speaking why they thought it should be in the Charter, which was one of the major things we did, and staggered terms, and, apparently, the Legislature loved that that recommendation. Yes, Ken."

Mr. Walter stated, "The Charter is not very distinct on that. In fact, C1.05 does not mention the process. We should have a legal opinion from the County Attorney's office on the process."

Mr. Liblick questioned if Mr. Walter was talking about the County Executive process, to which Mr. Walter stated, "On changing the Charter." Mr. Liblick further stated, "You have to go to the Legislature - we make the recommendation."

Mr. Walter stated, "We make the recommendation and the Legislature can accept or deny it. If they accept, then what happens afterward? We should understand it." Mr. Liblick replied, "That's between the Legislature and the County Attorney. What I believe is that they make the proposals and there are public hearings." Mr. Walter further stated, "Right, but everyone should know what that process is, one way or the other." Mr. Conway interjected saying, "That's what I said 20 minutes ago - that we should bring a lawyer in to tell us how it's supposed to work." Mr. Liblick asked, "Can we have one of the County Attorney's come to the next meeting?" Ms. Rajs stated, "I did go in there to see if Khalid was here, but he had left already. So, at the October meeting, we need to tell them ahead of time. He's the one that's assigned here to come to that meeting."

Mr. Liblick stated, "We would appreciate it. So, we will have two (2) new members, hopefully. And, we will have the attorney here so that we can ask him questions. I think he's more familiarized with us, and we're more familiar."

Mr. Walter stated, "They need to be in contact with open government because there's a conflicting look on the way that you read it, and sometimes they look at a Charter Commission one way, for whatever reason, or it depends on the set up of the Charter Review. It could be as Nadia said, we're just a group and we can do what we want, or we can come under more of their purview. They have to do the research." In response, Mr. Liblick stated, "I think in Ulster County, what Nadia was trying to say, they did come more under a purview where they had different powers." Mr. Walter replied, "That's up to the County Attorney and open government." Mr. Liblick responded, "That was the County Attorney and the Legislature giving them that permission." To which, Mr. Walter replied, "The committee on open government should give us a straight answer more than anyone else. That's all."

Mr. Liblick, then stated, "Okay. Anything else? Anyone on Zoom have any suggestions or comments?" Moreen made a comment (inaudible), to which Mr. Liblick asked if she thought 40 minutes was wasted. She did not think it was wasted, but suggested there must be a better way.

- Mr. Walter asked if the Commission adopted the prior meeting minutes, to which Mr. Liblick replied, "No, we will."
- Chair Liblick asked, "Anyone have anything to say? Do you think there's anything else we should cover today? Anyone? George? John?"

Mr. Rose and Mr. Conway both replied, "No."

Ms. Rajsztz stated that she had a question – "Are you going to be sending out, emailing everybody, the stuff that I emailed you and John?" To which Mr. Liblick replied, "Yeah, sure, but I think we have to wait until we have the new members. They'll be appointed tomorrow?" Ms. Rajsztz confirmed that the new members would be appointed on Thursday, August 6, 2026. She further stated, "I will email you Ulster's charter. This way you can read through that and do a comparison." Mr. Liblick replied, "And any other counties with charters. Not just ..." Ms. Rajsztz confirmed that she will reach out to Orange County since she's is there.

- Mr. Liblick stated, "I think it's a waste to go through stuff today when we know two other people are going to be at the next meeting. I think we are all familiar right now, and I think we have a good, active body here. I think we're all knowledgeable of what our mission and assignment is. We know that two other people are coming in here."

- Ms. Lerner wanted to confirm that the Legislature was picking the two people for the Commission and that the next meeting is not until October, which Mr. Liblick confirmed, also stating that one of the new members is also an attorney.
- Mr. Conway reminded that the previous minutes need to be approved.
- Mr. Liblick asked if there was anything else to discuss. There was not, and Mr. Walter stated he'd like a correction to the previous minutes on "§C3.07 for clarification, third line down, after the name Ed, please insert Commissioner of DPW so it's known what position he holds within our government." Mr. Liblick replied, "Okay, did we hear that when we take the minutes... as long as it went through. Anything else? Anymore Commissioner comments? Public comments?"

Mr. Walter asked to continue with the adoption of the minutes. Mr. Rose was appreciative of the detail. Mr. Liblick reminded the Commission that the audio of the minutes is located on the website as well. Mr. Walter moved to adopt the minutes with the insertion of the Commissioner of DPW. Mr. Conway seconded, and all were in favor.

- Mr. Liblick reminded members that there must have 5 members present for a quorum to be an official meeting.

III. Assignments & Future Planning

Welcome/Orientation of new members
 Zoom Meeting Capability – ITS implementation of equipment
 Continue reviewing the Charter
 Review Ulster County, County Executive form of government
 Review the Code
 Discuss future guests

IV. Adjournment

- **Motion to Adjourn:** Camille Johnston; Seconded by George Rose. **Meeting adjourned at 4:37 pm.**
- **Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 7, 2026, at 4:00 PM.**