

Sullivan County Charter Commission | Meeting Minutes

Date: July 1, 2026

Location: Government Center, Legislative Hearing Room

Call to Order: 4:05 pm by Acting Chair Bill Liblick

I. Attendance & Administration

- **Members Present:** Bill Liblick (Acting Chair), Paul Barnett, Moreen Lerner, Camille Johnston, George Rose, John Conway, Ken Walter.
- **Members Absent:** Kaylee Roebuck
- **Recording:** It was noted that the proceedings were recorded for the public record.
- **Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve the June 3, 2026 minutes by Moreen Lerner; Seconded by Ken Walter. **Motion Carried.**

II. Operational Discussions

- **Charter Review Commission Vacancy and Absenteeism.**
 - There was inquiry as to interest in filling the vacancy left by William Lothrop in the Charter Review Commission. There are currently eight (8) members, but it was stated that there must be nine (9) members on the Charter Review Commission. **Of note, three (3) people submitted letters of interest for Mr. Lothrop's position on the Commission. Said letters are to be reviewed by the Legislature, who will appoint the chosen candidate.**
 - Mr. Liblick asked if any members had received notification from Commission Member, Kaylee Roebuck, as to whether she would be attending this evening's meeting. No one had received any such notification. Mr. Liblick indicated that he would like a motion to be made to the Legislature. Mr. Walter indicated that attendance of members must be reviewed to determine if Ms. Roebuck should be a member of the Charter Review Commission. A resignation of the member may be requested. Mr. Liblick noted that Ms. Roebuck has yet to attend any meeting. Mr. Walter made a motion to have the Legislature to review the attendance of Kaylee Roebuck and make a determination if she should be retained on the Charter Review Commission, or another member should be sought. All members concurred.
- **Open Meetings Law & Hybrid Access:**
 - With regard to Zoom/videoconferencing, Mr. Liblick indicated that the Legislature is in support of the Charter Review Commission meetings having the ability to be held via Zoom, and a motion regarding same would be made at the July Legislature meeting to honor the Charter Review Commission's request. **Of note, if the Legislature approves the Commission meetings to be held via Zoom, further follow-up with Lorne Green of the ITS Department will be required concerning proper set up of equipment, training, use of ITS staff (if needed). Currently, Commission meetings will commence at 4:00 pm unless it becomes necessary for County ITS staff to be utilized, which may then require a 3:00 pm start, but that will be further down the road.**

- There is still a question as to the allowance of public comment during a Commission meeting held via Zoom. The Commission may not be able to have meetings via Zoom when there will be public comment. Mr. Liblick stated that it may be necessary to hold some meetings at different locations or at different times. All members are okay to keep the meetings at 4:00 pm. Any exceptions will be figured out at that time.
- **Attendance at Future Charter Review Commission Meetings:**
 - Mr. Barnett indicated that he will not be available for the August 5, 2026 meeting. Mr. Liblick and Mr. Rose will not be available for the September 2, 2026 meeting. Mr. Barnett made a motion not to hold the September 2, 2026 Charter Review Commission meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Lerner. All members concurred.
- **Vice-Chair v. Co-Chair of the Charter Review Commission:**
 - Mr. Rose noted that there is no Vice Chair for the Commission. Mr. Liblick stated that he would like a Co-Chair so that there are two (2) people who can conduct meetings. Ms. Lerner made a motion suggesting that Mr. Conway be Co-Chair for the Charter Review Commission (on which he's served twice previously and knows the County's history), which was seconded by Mr. Walter, and received unanimous consent by remaining members.

III. Continued Reading & Discussion of County Charter

Mr. Liblick continued to read the Charter where he left off at the June 3, 2026 meeting, to wit:

§C2.02. Powers and Duties, Paragraph N through the conclusion at **§C11.04 Administrative Legislation**, which is blank. **Of note, the only sections referred to hereunder are the sections that the Commission members wanted to make note of for further, future review.** All other sections were read, and no further notations were considered at this time.

§C2.02, Paragraph N:

- After reading of Sub-Paragraph (1), Mr. Walter suggested the Commission make a note of this section for further review.

Paragraph O:

- After reading of Paragraph O, Mr. Walter suggested the Commission make a note of this section for further review.

Paragraph Q:

- Mr. Rose questioned further review of this section concerning the time frame and the succeeding year's operating budget with the County Manager and County Treasurer. If there's a County Executive, the Sullivan County Charter will need to be amended.

§C2.05. Clerk to the County Legislature.

- Mr. Walter questioned if there was an issue in what the Charter says and what is practiced.
- Ms. Lerner and Mr. Rose questioned the definition of the word "qualified" as it relates to the appointment of a successive Clerk. This should be defined.

Article III. The County Manager.

§C3.00. County Manager.

- The meaning of the language “as otherwise provided by New York State law” was questioned by the members, and it was agreed that this needed to be looked at further.

§C3.01 Appointment, Suspension and Removal [Amended 9-8-1994 by L.L. No. 6-1994; 5-23-1996 by L.L. No. 3-1996; 2-18-1999 by L.L. No. 2-1999; 11-15-2007 by L.L. No. 18-2007; 2-21-2013 by L.L. No. 2-2013].

- Mr. Liblick noted the changes in this section, further stating that the current Legislature extended the County Manager’s term for one (1) year after election. When a new Legislature is elected, the County Manager will remain in said position for one (1) year after the election to maintain continuity.
- Ms. Lerner questioned if staggered terms were recommended, would that change the County Manager’s term. Mr. Liblick stated that it could not because of the terms of the County Manager’s contract. Mr. Liblick stated if staggered terms came into effect, there would still be 4 or 5 but it depends upon how it’s staggered. Then, after staggered terms were approved, the Legislature would have to revisit this portion of the Charter.
- Mr. Barnett questioned the language “terms and conditions” stating that it was vague. Mr. Walter stated that the meaning of this may be addressed further in the reading of this section of the Charter.

§C3.02. No Concurrent Employment.

- Mr. Barnett raised the question as to whether this section was “limiting” and believed it required further review.

§C3.04. Residency.

- The definition of the word “elector” was questioned. Mr. Liblick stated that the Commission may want to add different locations as the term “elector” does not mean residence. This requires further review.

§C3.05. Annual Performance Review. [Amended 9-8-1995 by L.L. No. 6-1994].

- Mr. Liblick questioned if there was a written report concerning the annual performance review of the County Manager, and if the report was public. This was noted to return to for further review.

§C3.06. Powers and Duties. [Amended 9-8-1994 by L.L. No. 6-1994].

- Several members stated the need to review the sub-sections further, with Mr. Barnett stating that the amount of duties listed from “A – O” seemed unrealistic for one person, with mention that the County Manager delegates duties. It was noted that there is no mention of the Deputy County Manager in the Charter and what those duties are. (Mr. Walter stated that this would be done by resolution.) It was stated that the Chief Executive Officer is involved in everything and some of that work is then delegated.

§C3.07. Acting County Manager. [Amended 9-8-1994 by L.L. No. 6-1994].

- Ms. Lerner stated that she took issue with the absence of the word “qualified” in this section, and should be defined. Legislator Luis Alvarez stated as an example, that both the County Manager and Deputy County Manager are out of the office and that “Ed” is the Acting County Manager in their absence. Mr. Alvarez stated that you would look at the resolution for the qualifications of the Deputy County Manager position, further stating

that the positions are created by Civil Service. It was noted that “Civil Service” is not mentioned in the Charter.

Article IV. County Attorney

§C4.00. Department of Law. [Amended 9-8-1994 by L.L. No. 6-1994; 1-25-1996 by L.L. No. 2-1996].

- Mr. Liblick questioned the use of the term “elector” in this section, and Mr. Barnett stated that this section needed to be evaluated with regard to “termination only for cause.”

§C4.01. Powers and Duties [Amended 9-8-1994 by L.L. No. 6-1994].

- Mr. Walter indicated that this section needs further review stating that the County Attorney is hired by the Legislature and is only responsible to them, and the County Attorney only has attorney/client privilege to the Legislature and no one else.
- Mr. Barnett questioned if the County Manager oversaw the County Attorney. It was mentioned that the County Manager has access to the County Attorney, but the County Attorney answers to the Legislature. If there was a County Executive, there would be two (2) sets of attorneys. If there’s an employee issue, the employee must hire their own attorney as the County Attorney strictly prosecutes or defends on behalf of the County.
- Legislator Alvarez made a notation that there used to be a Social Services Attorney, which ended with Colleen Cunningham, and still remains vacant. Mr. Liblick stated this was a change in the Code. There was a question if the County Attorney handling these types of matters was a conflict with regard to children, confidential information, social service issues, etc. This should be reviewed further.
- Legislator Alvarez stated that the County Manager does not have an attorney. A question was raised if a new commissioner will affect the Charter.
- It was questioned if all of the Legislators have read the County Charter.
- Ms. Lerner questioned if the term of the County Attorney should be reviewed.

Article V. County Treasurer

§C5.01. Powers and Duties. [Amended 9-8-1994 by L.L. No. 6-1994].

- **§C5.01. Paragraph D** – The paragraph states, “Borrow money in the name of the county as authorized by the County Legislature.” Ms. Lerner raised the question as to where the County Manager fit into borrowing money. Mr. Walter stated that the borrowing money is “bonded, and because the County Treasurer is an elected position, that title reports to the public, not the County Manager. The County Treasurer is not under the supervision of the County Manager.
- It was mentioned that if there was a County Executive, the County Treasurer position would be eliminated. The position would be a comptroller under the County Executive. Mr. Conway noted that there is a choice of Legislature and do charter. However, if there is a County Executive, the voters make the determination, not the Legislature. There was a discussion that elected officials do not necessarily have to be qualified for their position, they received more votes than their competitors.
- Mr. Barnett questioned the qualifications, or whether financial skills were a qualification for the County Treasurer position. It was stated that there were not necessarily qualifications, per se, for elected positions. The County Manager is hired by the Legislature. The County Attorney has to be an attorney, but the Deputy or Assistant County Attorneys do not say so concerning qualifications.

- The original intent of the Sullivan County Charter was questioned. Mr. Liblick stated that the Commission will have to review the County Code because it is part of the Charter. Mr. Walter stated the Charter is like the Constitution, and the Code institutes that framework into the Charter. Mr. Walter further stated that he believed the Commission should look at the Code to see if there are items therein that need to be memorialized into the Charter so that it cannot be changed so easily. Other members agreed. It was further stated that the Legislature could change the Code back.
- It was mentioned was if the code could be changed pursuant to public hearing, or by permissive referendum if someone petitions for it. Any changes do not take effect for 30 days. Mr. Liblick stated that it is his belief that the (9) Legislators do not remember or recall all of the changes in the Code or are familiar with the changes that have been made within it.
- Mr. Conway stated that if something is codified in the Charter, it is then not easily changed by the Legislature. Mr. Liblick stated that as the Charter Review Commission, the Codes needed to be identified and reviewed. Mr. Conway suggested putting education requirements in the Charter for the Legislators. Mr. Liblick reiterated that the Legislators are elected officials. Mr. Conway then asked if once elected, could the Legislators then be made to meet certain requirements. Per Legislator Alvarez there are certification requirements that must be met.

Article VI. County Clerk

§C6.01. Powers and Duties.

- Mr. Liblick mentioned that this section does not state that the County Clerk runs the Department of Motor Vehicles, and asks if this should be put in the Charter. It is then stated that this is in the Code. The Department of Motor Vehicles is the largest revenue stream in the County. This revenue comes into the County and goes into the general fund. The County Clerk is an elected official with the salary being less than other County positions with a raise only after the election. The salaries of the County Treasurer and Sheriff were questioned.
- Ms. Lerner stated that she would like to see an organizational chart.

Article VII. Sheriff

§C7.00. County Sheriff

- Mr. Conway questioned what the residency requirements were for the Sheriff as it is not stated in the Charter. Legislator Alvarez stated that there had been a past residency issue with a Sheriff living in Pennsylvania.

§C7.01. Duties and Powers.

- After reading the three (3) duties of the Sheriff, Mr. Rose stated that he has an issue that such a public facing, important position has no qualifications. It was stated that the qualifications would be in the New York State Constitution.
- Ms. Lerner questioned if elected positions were working. It was stated that law enforcement for Towns and Villages are at the whim of Town Boards and Village Boards.
- Mr. Walter stated that there is underservice by law enforcement.

- It was stated that various departments and the Sheriff are invited to Legislative meetings and give a report. The Board of Elections is a quasi-State agency. The Coroner has no qualifications and varies by County Charter.

Article VIII. District Attorney

§C8.01. Duties and Powers.

- Mr. Walter stated that the District Attorney's income is controlled by the Judge's income.
- It was mentioned by Mr. Liblick that the District Attorney wanted a discussion of the Codes with regard to Social Security and the County Attorney.

Article IX. County Auditor

§C9.00. County Auditor

- Upon reading of this section, it was noted that the County Auditor is an appointed position, not elected.

Article X. Coroners

§C10.00. Coroners

- It was mentioned that the Coroners' qualifications are governed by New York State law.

Article XI. General and Transitional Provisions

§C11.02. Charter Clarification. [Amended by 9-8-1994 by L.L. No. 6-1994].

- Ms. Lerner stated that the County Legislature can interpret the legal laws with the Home Rule law. Each Town and Village has its own Home Rule Law. What about the Sheriff? Mr. Liblick stated it was the Legislature. Constables are under each Towns control.

IV. Adjournment

- **Motion to Adjourn:** Ken Walter; Seconded by Paul Barnett. **Motion Carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:03 pm.**
- **Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 5, 2026, at 4:00 PM.**