



Agenda – Thursday, June 13, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.
Citizen’s Charter Study Committee
City Hall Council Chamber (Third Floor) – 601 S. Buchanan (in-person)
Teams (virtual)

City Council Representatives (non-voting members)			
Councilmember Tom Scherlen		Councilmember Les Simpson	
Name	Nominated by	Name	Nominated by
Chair Freda Powell	Simpson	Vice Chair Gary Pitner	Simpson
Donna Ward	Stanley	Rodney Hill	Tipps
Michael Haning	Stanley	Dean Crump	Tipps
Toby Hudson	Scherlen	Sandra McCartt	Craft
Kim Benson	Scherlen	Audrey Castillo	Craft

1. Call to order
2. Review and adopt Agenda
3. Public comment
4. Discuss and confirm Committee consensus focus areas from June 6 meeting:
 - a. Number of councilmembers – seven (one mayor, six councilmembers)
 - b. Terms of office – four-year staggered
5. Discuss and determine preferred alternate City Council composition and election method:
 - a. Current system – Mayor and Councilmembers elected on an at-large, citywide basis; all residents vote for Mayor and Councilmembers.
 - b. Hybrid 1 – Mayor and some Councilmembers elected at-large (citywide) and some Councilmembers required to live in a specific geographic district with citywide voting on all seats.
 - c. Hybrid 2 – Mayor and some Councilmembers elected at-large (citywide) and some Councilmembers required to live in a specific geographic district with voting on that seat limited only to voters living within that specific geographic district.
 - d. Hybrid 3 – Mayor elected at-large (citywide) and all Councilmembers are elected to represent a single, specific geographic district (single member district). Each Councilmember is required to reside within the area they seek to represent and voting on that seat limited only to voters within that specific geographic district.
6. Discuss and determine preferred election calendar (assuming seven-member Council; four-year staggered terms) – May vs. November; odd vs. even years:
 - a. May, alternating odd years: Example – 2025: all seats on ballot with Places 1, 3, 5 serving until 2027, thereafter every four years; Mayor and Places 2, 4, 6 – on ballot in 2025, next stand for election in 2029.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Electorate familiar with this election calendar	Traditionally lower voter participation in May elections
Maintains community focus on local elections held in May, odd numbered years	

- b. November, alternating even years: Example – May 2025 all seats on ballot: Places 1, 3, 5 serving until November 2026, thereafter every four years: Mayor and Places 2, 4, 6 on ballot in 2025, serving until 2028, thereafter every four years.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Provides manageable transition to four-year terms on alternate calendar	Potential voter fatigue – City elections at the end of a larger, more complex ballot with state and national issues
Potentially higher voter participation due to November general election attention on state and national elections	Loss of voter focus on local, City election issues due to competition for voters’ attention on local elections

7. Discuss and determine preferred Charter provisions regarding Mayor and Council recall requirements:

- a. The Current City Charter requires signatures of 30% of the registered voters, with “one-fifth (20%) certifying that they had voted for that officer(s) in the election in which that officer was elected. Signatures to be returned to City Secretary within 30 days of the affidavit of recall.
- b. The Current City Charter for initiatives or referenda requires signatures of 5% of registered voters to qualify for the ballot; 120-day signature gathering period.
- c. Comparison cities: One has no recall provision, four require 20% or less, and five require 30% or more registered voter signatures.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Reducing the signature threshold of the percent of registered voters’ signatures may make it more practical to recall an elected official – more accountability for office holders.	Current requirements make it almost impossible for a petition seeking to recall an elected official to succeed.
Changing the signature threshold of the percent of registered voter signatures and number of days for signature gathering to align referendum or initiative petitions promotes more equity across all issues.	

- 8. Discussion and determine if any change to the City Charter to allow the City Council, in addition to appointing the City Manager, becoming the appointing authority for the City Attorney, and/or other City officials.
 - a. The current City Charter reserves to the Mayor and City Council the appointing authority of the City Manager, all other employees are hired, supervised, and evaluated under the City Manager’s authority.
 - b. Some comparison cities designate the City Council as the appointing authority for all key leadership positions – City Manager, City Attorney, City Secretary, etc.
 - c. Of the ten comparable cities, the City Council in seven cities have appointing authority for the City Attorney; two provide hiring of the City Attorney by the City Manager, subject to City Council confirmation; and one city reserves City Attorney hiring authority to the City Manager.

Advantages	Disadvantages
City Council appointment of the City Attorney emphasizes that the City is the client and that the privilege is held by the Council.	Having the City Council as the appointing authority may introduce more politics in the offices of the City Attorney, etc.
Enabling the City Council, rather than the City Manager, as the appointing authority for certain city officials eliminates potential conflicts regarding whose authority should be followed.	Council appointment of some key officials may increase the potential for conflict among the City’s professional leadership due to differing objectives.

- 9. Committee Bike Rack Items - Future agenda topics:
 - a. Update Charter to remove/replace archaic language and provisions
 - b. Establish regular Charter review cycle
 - c. Change/update Charter to be consistent with state law, particularly regarding annexation, purchasing, etc.
- 10. Comments from the Committee
- 11. Review and wrap up
- 12. Adjournment – Next meeting June 20, 2024, 5:30 p.m.

Amarillo Citizen’s Charter Review Committee

Committee information including agendas, presentations, workshop materials, and meeting recordings can be found on the City’s website <https://www.amarillo.gov/city-hall/city-initiatives/2024-charter-review>. For questions or to submit comments, contact City Secretary Stephanie Coggins, stephanie.coggins@amarillo.gov