



**Agenda – Thursday, June 27, 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			
Councilmember Tom Scherlen		Councilmember Les Simpson	
Name	Nominated by	Name	Nominated by
<b>Chair Freda Powell</b>	Simpson	<b>Vice Chair Gary Pitner</b>	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. **Confirm Committee consensus decisions:**
  - a. **Number of councilmembers** (Article V, Sections 1 through 6) – seven (one mayor, six councilmembers)
  - b. **Terms of office** (Article V, Sections 1 through 6) – four-year staggered
  - c. **Council composition** (Article V, Sections 1 through 6) – Hybrid #1 – Mayor elected at-large citywide; three Councilmembers – Places 1, 3, and 5 - elected at-large, citywide; and three Councilmembers – Places 2, 4, and 6 – are required to live in a specific geographic area and elected with citywide voting on all seats.
  - d. **Creation of Council geographic areas for Places 2, 4, and 6** (Article V, Sections 1 through 6) – The proposed Charter change will create new Council geographic areas effective for the May 2025 election based upon the 2020 Federal census. To initiate and plan for potential implementation of the revised City Charter provisions, the Committee recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager to contract with a qualified legal firm to finalize the creation of a map of the proposed Council geographic boundaries by August 19, 2024. Assuming the proposed Charter change is adopted by the voters in November 2024, the first Mayor and City Council elections under the new system would take place in May 2025.
  - e. **Establishing a Districting Commission** (New Section: Article II, Section 25) - Thereafter, following every ten-year Federal Decennial Census per state and federal law, beginning in 2031, the City Council will appoint a Districting Commission to establish revised boundaries of each City Council geographic area, which the City Council shall review and enact in sufficient time to take effect for any city election in 2032 and the next regularly scheduled city election in 2033 and beyond.
  - f. **Terms of Office and Election Cycle** (Article V, Sections 1 through 6) – Maintain current election schedule of May elections in odd-numbered years with four-year staggered terms (2025, 2027, 2029, 2031, 2033, etc.). All terms for Mayor and six Councilmembers elected in 2025 should specify which seats serve until 2027 and which serve until 2029 as the Mayor and City Council transition to four-year staggered terms. The terms of office for each seat should be specified in the proposed Charter amendment so there is a clear understanding of which seats will be elected in specific years.
    - i. The proposal specifies that the Mayor and Councilmembers Places 1, 2, and 3, will be elected in May 2025 serving until May 2029 or until their replacement is elected. The Mayor and Councilmembers Place 1 and 3 shall be elected on an at-large citywide basis, meaning the Mayor and Councilmembers Places 1 and 3 may live in any area of the city. Councilmember Place 2 shall be elected with a residency requirement that they reside in the

- geographic area defined as Place 2. After the May 2029 election, the election date for the Mayor and Council Places 1, 2, and 3 will occur every 4 years beginning in May 2033.
- ii. Councilmembers 4, 5, and 6 will stand for election in May 2025 with terms expiring in May 2027 or until their replacement is elected. Thereafter, beginning in 2027, Councilmembers in Places 4, 5, and 6 shall serve a four-year term, until May 2031 or until their replacement is elected. Councilmembers 4 and 6 shall be elected with a residency requirement that they reside in the areas described as Places 4 and 6; and Councilmember Place 5 shall be elected on an at-large citywide basis, meaning the Councilmember may live in any area of the city.
  - g. **Mayor or Council vacancy** (Article V, Sections 1 through 6) – With the authorization of four-year terms of office, the recommended charter amendment will comply with state law regarding the filling of vacancies in these elective offices for terms greater than two years.
  - h. **Recall** (Article I, Section 24) - Recommend amended recall procedures. New procedures would reduce and simplify the requirements needed to qualify the recall of an elected official for the ballot. The revised procedure would require the proponents of a recall petition to gather **the signatures from registered voters equal to a minimum of 30% of the number of votes cast in the election at which the elected the official(s) under recall were elected and extend the signature gathering period from thirty days (30-days) to sixty calendar days (60-days)**. The current charter requires securing signatures of 30% of the registered voters with one-fifth (20%) certifying that they voted for the recalled official in the last election within a thirty-day (30-day) signature gathering period.
  - i. **Resign to Run Provision** (Article V, Sections 1 through 6) - The Committee recommends that the City Charter be amended to establish a clear policy and procedure regarding Councilmembers who may want to seek another county or state office – the so called “Resign to Run” provision. Cities may adopt Charter provisions, consistent with the Texas Constitution and state law, to require an elected official, with more than one year and 30 days remaining in their term of office, to immediately resign from their current office if they announce their candidacy for another county or state office and the official files official nomination for candidacy papers for such office. Upon the official’s resignation from office, the City Council shall call a special election within 120 days of the vacancy to fill the office.
  - j. **City Manager Authority** (Article V, Section 21) - Recommend a revision of Article V, Section 21, pertaining to the City Council’s role in the appointment of certain city officials. Currently, the Charter reserves the right of the Council to “advise and consent” to the recommended hiring of personnel appointed under the City Manager’s authority. The proposed change would provide that the City Manager must consult with the City Council before employment offers are extended to hire any unclassified employee in an executive position such as assistant or deputy city manager or head of any department.
  - k. **Term Limits** (Article V, Sections 1 through 6) - The Committee recommends that the City Charter be modified to include a provision to limit the Mayor and each Councilmember to serve no more than eight (8) consecutive years as Mayor and/or Councilmember. A person who has served a total of eight (8) consecutive years as Mayor or Councilmember may again seek election as the Mayor and/or Councilmember after a two-year (2-year) absence period from serving as an elected official for the City of Amarillo.
  - l. **No Change to Council Appointing Authority** - The Committee does not recommend a Charter change which would designate the Mayor and City Council as the appointing authority of the City Attorney. The Committee recommends maintaining the Charter provisions which designate the City Manager as the appointing authority for the City Attorney and all other city employees.
  - m. **Recommend Regular Charter Review** – The Committee recommends that the City Council consider a Charter amendment or adopt a policy which codifies a regular scheduled City Charter review cycle. For example, the City Charter review cycle could be scheduled every four years, even numbered years. As an alternative to a charter amendment, the committee recommends that a policy should be codified, as a part of the Governance and Ends policy, which will make reviewing the Charter a normal Council process.
5. **Discuss redistricting criteria to support the development of an official geographic area map.**

- a. The map will be prepared by an outside consulting firm that specializes in these matters using this criteria and the Committee's previous agreement on proposed map D prepared by City staff.
6. **Discuss recommendation to add Charter Review as a Charter amendment or to the Governance and Ends Policy.**
7. **Discuss potential specific ballot language for Committee recommendations to the City Council.**
8. **Prioritize Charter update recommendations for City Council consideration.**
  - a. Dot voting exercise
9. **Committee Bike Rack Items:**
  - a. Update Charter to remove/replace archaic language and provisions.
  - b. 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 – City Council meeting, date and time to be determined.

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**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](mailto:stephanie.coggins@amarillo.gov)