



Agenda – Thursday, June 20, 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			
Name		Nominated by	
Councilmember Tom Scherlen		Councilmember Les Simpson	
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 decisions:
 - a. Number of councilmembers – seven (one mayor, six councilmembers)
 - b. Terms of office – four-year staggered
 - c. Council composition – Hybrid #1 – Mayor elected at-large citywide; two or three Councilmembers elected at-large, citywide; and three or four Councilmembers required to live in a specific geographic area with citywide voting on all seats. Review possible Council residency areas in compliance with Voting Rights Act and other laws.
 - d. Election Cycle – Maintain current election schedule of May elections in odd-numbered years with four-year staggered terms (2025, 2027, 2029). All terms for Mayor and six Councilmembers elected in 2025 should specify which seats serve until 2027 and those serving until 2029 as Council transitions 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.
 - e. Consideration of revising recall procedures was deferred to a later date. The suggested deferred change would change the signature requirement to qualify a recall from 30% of registered voters with one-fifth certifying they voted for the recalled official to 30% of voters participating in last election.
5. Review and discuss establishing specific City Council geographic areas:
 - a. Review and discuss recommended principles in determining geographic areas.
 - b. Review and discuss sample map(s) with geographic areas illustrated.
 - c. Discuss and determine the number of Council seats with residency requirements and the number of at-large members:
 - i. Mayor, three at-large Councilmembers, and three Councilmembers living within designated areas; or
 - ii. Mayor, two at-large Councilmembers, and four Councilmembers living within designated areas.
 - d. Review and discuss establishing a Council redistricting commission process.
6. Discuss and determine if a change to the City Charter for the City Council to have appointing authority for the City Attorney, and/or other City officials, in addition to appointing the City Manager.
 - 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, provide that 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
Ultimately, the City Council represents the city, which is the client – therefore, it makes sense for the city attorney to report to those who speak for the client.	A city attorney who reports to the city manager might have more job security than a city attorney who reports to the Council, especially a council majority that can be replaced every two to four years.
Some cities use the city attorney as an outside neutral source to investigate complaints like discrimination or harassment from a city manager.	Having the City Council as the appointing authority may introduce more politics in the offices of the City Attorney, etc.
Establishing 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.	It may be better to have the city attorney report to the city manager, who may have more institutional knowledge than other officials.
	Council appointment of some key officials may increase the potential for conflict among the City’s professional leadership due to differing objectives.

7. Discuss and determine establishing a regular Charter Review schedule (moved from Bike Rack item to active discussion):
 - a. The current Charter contains no specific Charter review process and timetable. Charters in some cities establish a regular Charter review cycle and procedure.
 - b. The Council still has latitude to create “off-cycle” Charter review as needed as urgent issues arise.

Advantages	Disadvantages
A defined Charter review cycle (example every 5, 10 or x years) eliminates political pressure to review and revise Charter on an ad hoc basis.	May create a commission without specific issues to consider.

8. Discuss and determine whether Charter should be amended to establish term limits for Mayor and Councilmembers.
 - a. Review provisions and rationale of other cities who have adopted term limits and/or provisions allowing persons to run and serve again after reaching term limits after a specified waiting period.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Establishing term limits may encourage a more diverse candidate pool by limiting the “power of incumbency.”	Term limits may prevent an effective Mayor or Councilmember from serving even as community members may prefer keeping that person in office.
Term limits may allow some persons to run for Mayor or City Council after a mandatory absence period (example: person may serve x terms as Mayor and/or Councilmember and then may run and serve again after two-year waiting period).	Term limits may permanently restrict qualified residents from serving after reaching the mandatory number of terms, resulting in loss of skills and institutional knowledge on the City Council.

9. Discuss and determine if and how other issues raised in prior meetings should be considered for inclusion in proposal:
 - a. Clarify and/or remove the requirement that the Mayor or a Councilmember must immediately resign from office if they choose to seek another elected position during their current term.

Current Amarillo Charter Language

Article VI - Section 9. - Prohibitions

No person in the classified service of the City or seeking admission thereto shall be appointed, promoted, reduced, removed, or in any way favored or

discriminated against because of political or religious opinions or affiliations. No person shall willfully or corruptly make any false statement, certificate, mark, rating, or report in regard to any test, certification, or appointment held or made under the Civil Service provisions of this Article or in any manner commit or attempt to commit any fraud preventing the impartial execution of such Civil Service provisions or of the rules and regulations made thereunder. **No officer or employee in the classified service of the City shall continue in such position after becoming a candidate for nomination or election to any public office.** No person seeking appointment to or promotion in the classified service of the City shall either directly or indirectly give, render, or pay any money, service, or other valuable thing to any person for or on account of or in connection with his test, appointment, proposed appointment, promotion, or proposed promotion.

- b. Possible Charter change and/or change to the Governance and Ends policy defining the Mayor and Council or City Manager's authority to implement certain organizational changes with the Council's "advice and consent" or "consultation" provisions.

Current Amarillo Charter Language

Article V. Section 21. Powers and Duties of the City Manager

(b) **Appoint all appointive officers or employees of the City with the advice and consent of the Council** (such appointments to be made upon merit and fitness alone), and remove all officers and employees appointed by the Manager.

- 10. Discuss potential specific ballot language for Committee recommendations to the City Council.
- 11. Committee Bike Rack Items - Future agenda topics:
 - 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.
- 12. Comments from the Committee.
- 13. Review and wrap up.
- 14. Adjournment – Next meeting June 27, 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