



Amarillo Charter Review

June 20 Citizen's Committee Meeting

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Call to Order

City Council Representatives and Committee Members

Councilmember Scherlen	Councilmember Simpson
Chair Freda Powell	Vice Chair Gary Pitner
Kim Benson	Rodney Hill
Audrey Castillo	Toby Hudson
Dean Crump	Sandra McCartt
Michael Haning	Donna Ward

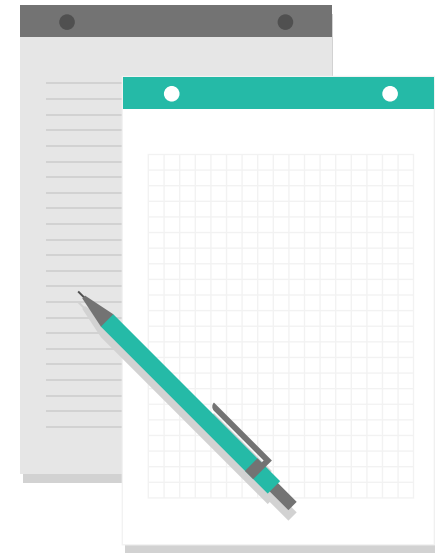
Baker Tilly Team

Dennis Hawkins, project lead	Mary Locey
Al Zelinka	Shauna Clark



Review and Adopt June 20 Agenda

- Public comment
- Discuss and confirm Committee consensus
- Review and discuss establishing specific City Council geographic areas
- Discuss and determine Council appointees
- Discuss and determine establishing regular review of the Charter
- Discuss and determine establishing term limits
- Discuss and determine if and how other issues should be considered
- Discuss potential specific ballot language
- Committee bike rack items
- Committee comments
- Review and wrap up





Public Comment



Discuss and Confirm Committee Consensus

On June 6 and 20, received Committee consensus on:

- **Council composition**
 - Mayor and 2 or 3 Councilmembers at-large,
 - 3 or 4 Councilmembers required to live in a specific geographical area,
 - All seats elected by citywide vote
- **Election calendar**
 - May, odd years (2025, 2027, 2029)
 - Terms (seats) specified before elected
- **Defer recall updates**

Previously confirmed:

- Mayor and six Councilmembers
- Each serve for a four-year staggered term



Review and Discuss – Establishing Geographic Areas

- a) Recommended principles in determining geographic areas
- b) Sample geographic area map(s)
- c) Number of Council seats with residency requirements and at-large:
 - 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) Establishing a Council redistricting commission process

Review and Discuss – Appointing Authority

- 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) Comparison cities:
 - Some designate the City Council as the appointing authority for all key leadership positions – City Manager, City Attorney, City Secretary, etc.
 - Seven cities have the City Council with appoint authority for the City Attorney.
 - Two provide hiring of the City Attorney by the City Manager, subject to City Council confirmation.
 - One city reserves City Attorney hiring authority to the City Manager.

Review and Discuss – Appointing Authority

Comparison Cities	City Manager	City Attorney	City Secretary	Municipal Judge
El Paso	Council	Council	City Manager	
Arlington	Council	Council	City Manager	Council
Plano	Council	Council	City Manager	
Lubbock	Council	Council	Council	Council
Laredo	Council	City Manager, subject to Council confirmation	City Manager, subject to Council confirmation	Elected by city at-large
Amarillo	Council	City Manager	City Manager	
Brownsville	Council	Council	City Manager	
Grand Prairie	Council	City Manager, with advice/consent of Council	City Manager	City Manager, with advice/consent of Council
Killeen	Council	City Manager	City Manager	Council
Mesquite	Council	Council	Council	Council
Waco	Council	Council	Council	Council



Review and Discuss – Appointing Authority

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ultimately, the City Council represents the City – therefore, it makes sense for the City Attorney to report to those who speak for the client.• Some cities use the City Attorney as an outside neutral source to investigate complaints like discrimination or harassment from a City Manager.• 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.• Having the City Council as the appointing authority may introduce more politics in the offices of the City Attorney.• 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.



Review and Discuss – Charter Review

- a) The current City Charter contains no specific Charter review process or timetable.
- b) The Council still has latitude to create “off cycle” Charter review as needed.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A defined Charter review cycle (example every 5, 10 or x years) eliminates political pressure to review and revise the Charter on an ad hoc basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May create a commission without specific issues to consider.



Review and Discuss – Charter Review

Comparison Cities	Y/N ¹	
El Paso	No	
Arlington	No	
Plano	Yes	May appoint review commission of ten citizens
Lubbock	No	
Laredo	No	
Amarillo	No	
Brownsville	No	
Grand Prairie	No	
Killeen	No	
Mesquite	No	
Waco	No	

¹Establishing a regular charter review cycle or committee noted in a cities Charter.

Review and Discuss – Term Limits

a) Provisions and rationale of other cities that 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May encourage a more diverse candidate pool by limiting the “power of incumbency.”• 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 a two-year waiting period).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May prevent an effective Mayor or Councilmember from serving even as community members may prefer keeping that person in office.• 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.



Review and Discuss – Term Limits

Comparison Cities	Term Length	Term Limits	
El Paso	4	9	Mayor and Councilmembers, three elected terms, max nine years
Arlington	3	6	Mayor and Councilmembers, two full consecutive terms
Plano	4	8+	Two consecutive terms, person who served two council terms may run for mayor; one year gap before eligible to run again
Lubbock	Mayor 2 Council 4	N/A	No term limits
Laredo	4	8	Mayor and Councilmembers, two terms
Amarillo	2	N/A	No term limits
Brownsville	4	8	Mayor and Councilmembers, two terms
Grand Prairie	3	N/A	No term limits
Killeen	2	6+	Mayor and Councilmembers, three successive terms, except if running for a different office than currently held
Mesquite	2	8+	Mayor and Councilmembers, four consecutive terms, two-year break in service
Waco	2	6 / N/A	Mayor, three term limit, Councilmembers no term limits



Review and Discuss – Other Considerations

Items noted by Committee members:

- a) Clarify and/or remove the requirement to immediately resign from office if seeking another elected position.

ARTICLE VI - SECTION 9. - PROHIBITIONS

...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.

- 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.

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;

Review and Discuss – Resign from Office

Comparison Cities	Y/N ¹	
El Paso	No	
Arlington	No	
Plano	Yes	Upon announcing elective or appointive office
Lubbock	No	
Laredo	No	
Amarillo	No	
Brownsville	No	
Grand Prairie	No	
Killeen	Yes	Upon immediately filing for a different office
Mesquite	No	
Waco	No	

¹Resignation noted in a cities Charter as it relates to seeking another office.



Review and Discuss – Ballot Language

- Review specific charter provisions which need to be revised as a result of the Committee's recommendations.
- Discuss the structure of potential charter revision language.
- Determine next steps in developing specific ballot provisions required under the current charter and state law.



Committee Bike Rack Items/Future Agenda Topics

- Update Charter to remove/replace archaic language and provisions
- Change/update Charter to be consistent with state law, particularly regarding annexation, purchasing, etc.



Committee Comments



Meeting and Project Schedule

- **Charter Review Committee**

- Every Thursday
- 5:30 p.m.
- In person or via Teams
- Dates:
 - June 27



- **City Council Action**

- **July 9:** Review committee recommendations
- **July 23:** First reading of ordinance
- **August 13:** Second reading of ordinance

- **Ballot Initiative**

- **August 19:** Deadline per Texas Election Code
- **November 5:** Election



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Next meeting, June 27



Thank you