



City of Blaine

Charter Commission

October 10, 2023 | 6:00 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chair Jeffrey Lester, Commissioners Ken Anderson, Alan Goracke, Arman Tagarro, Nyle Zikmund

Absent: Commissioners Ayman Khan, Jason Hartmann, Dick Swanson, Jason Halpern, Terri Homan

Also Present: City Clerk/Staff Liaison Cathy Sorensen

Quorum present.

The commission welcomed new Commissioner Nyle Zikmund.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1. 2023-477 Minutes
Sponsors:

The commission requested corrections to page 2, paragraph 1, regarding clarifying the 1% salary increase per year and page 3, paragraph 2, deletion of repeated words "should be changed" included in error.

Moved by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Tagarro, that the minutes of September 12, 2023, be approved as corrected.

Motion approved unanimously.

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared.

5. New Business

None.

6. Old Business

City Clerk/Staff Liaison Cathy Sorensen shared that as staff prepared memos for presentation to council that the city manager had suggested the commission consider removing language from Sec. 2.07 regarding reimbursement for reasonable expenses for council when traveling outside the city as the language may be confusing if remained. Discussion was held on the fact that this language was in fact outside the scope of salaries and was already addressed in the council travel policy allowed by statute and agreed the language should be removed.

Moved by Commissioner Goracke, seconded by Commissioner Zikmund, to recommend the following amendment to Sec. 2.07 Salaries of the city charter as follows:

Sec. 2.07. Salaries.

The monthly salary of each of the councilmembers and the mayor shall be established by ordinance. Review of salaries shall be conducted in June of every odd numbered year and recommendations for adjustments, if any, be based on the annual cost of living adjustments consistent with adjustments provided to staff. ~~The mayor and councilmembers, in addition to the above salaries, shall be paid a reasonable sum for each day and their reasonable expenses incurred while traveling outside the city on the city's business.~~

6.1. 2023-429 Proposed Charter Amendment - Councilmember Recall

Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

Clerk Sorensen stated council has directed the commission to consider charter language that would provide for a recall process for an elected councilmember. She shared proposed amendments based on discussion on input from the commission at last month's meeting and said this topic along with council salary language and ward redetermination would be included on the council's workshop agenda on October 16, 2023, for review and feedback. She shared preliminary council input regarding the need better define reasons for a recall as the language currently was vague. Ms. Sorensen shared the Minnesota Constitution and case law restricted reasons for recall to serious malfeasance and nonfeasance and how she amended language to reference that and include city attorney review in addition to city clerk to provide additional review in establishing sufficiency of the petition itself.

Commissioner Zikmund commented on the proposed threshold of 25% of registered voter signatures to file a petition and that this level may be too high to realistically achieve. The commission discussed alternatives and concluded that feedback from the council would be helpful as they have campaigned and understand the time and work required to door knock to meet, educate, and obtain signatures. They stressed the importance of creating the recall tool with a high enough threshold to be a strong representation of the voters to file balanced against the reality of being able to obtain that high of a level of signatures as well as the requirement for staff time to verify the signatures needed to declare the petition significant.

7. Adjournment

The next meeting, if any, will be scheduled following input and direction by council at the October 16 workshop.

Moved by Commissioner Tagarro, seconded by Commissioner Zikmund, to adjourn. Motion approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:46 PM.