



City of Blaine

Charter Commission

November 14, 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, Jason Halpern, Terri Homan, Ayman Khan, Arman Tagarro

Absent: Commissioners Jason Hartmann, Dick Swanson, Nyle Zikmund

Also Present: City Clerk/Staff Liaison Cathy Sorensen

Quorum present.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1. 2023-565 Minutes of October 10, 2023
Sponsors:

Moved by Commissioner Homan, seconded by Commissioner Goracke, that the minutes of October 10, 2023, be approved as presented.

Motion approved unanimously.

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared.

5. New Business

None.

6. Old Business

6.1. 2023-562 Proposed Charter Amendment - Council Salaries
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

City Clerk/Staff Liaison Cathy Sorensen shared minutes from the council workshop regarding the council salary review/recommendation process and council's general support

of the amendment for regular salary review but requested the charter commission propose a specific salary recommendation instead of a range as proposed.

Commissioner Goracke stated a specific recommendation would place the commission in a position of power and felt that should be up to council as they were elected by the people and the commission was providing more of a guardrail. He said he felt the recommended range of an amount up to a limit was responsible and allowed the elected officials something to accept or change, adding the charter commission was not an elected body but appointed. He said he felt good about the commission's work and that it was not appropriate to recommend an actual amount.

Chair Lester said he believed the decision should be made by council and that the recommendation was based on data analysis. He said he would support making a specific dollar recommendation if necessary of \$18,315.03 for mayor and \$13,461.54 for council but firmly believed it was ultimately for council to decide.

Commissioner Homan stated the commission made their decision based on data but did not have access to other information the council has such as budget impacts and supported the up to amount range recommendation.

The commission discussed recommending a not to exceed amount instead of an up to amount as a way to address council's concerns.

Commissioner Halpern supported making a specific salary recommendation for 2025 and using data based on COLA going forward.

Commissioner Arman suggested removing consideration of Bloomington and Hopkins from the data set and recommending salaries of \$17,000 and \$12,000 respectively.

Commissioner Anderson said he wanted the recommendation to be analytical and apolitical.

Moved by Commissioner Goracke, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to remove reference of an "up to" amount and recommend a salary increase of \$18,315.03 for mayor and \$13,461.54 for council effective 2025 but to reiterate their original recommendation going forward that specific salary decisions should be made by city council and not the charter commission.

Motion approved unanimously.

6.2. 2023-563 Proposed Charter Amendment - Redetermination of Ward Boundaries
 Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

Ms. Sorensen shared minutes from the council workshop regarding discussion of possible redetermination of ward boundaries and the council's recommendation to reconsider the topic in 2027 as part of the next comprehensive plan update.

Commissioner Goracke said it could be too late if we wait until 2027 as the proposed amendment provided structure possibilities and was proactive instead of reactive and

having the mechanism available could benefit the people of Blaine.

Commissioner Halpern noted with current term limits for Planning Commission there could be whole new commission in place by 2027.

Commissioner Anderson asked for reasons why the comprehensive plan was an important benchmark for ward redetermination and felt this was more election orientated and could be used as a reason to postpone consideration. He noted it was expensive to conduct a campaign and a smaller boundary/area may be more affordable and garner more interest for filing for election and create more opportunities.

Commissioner Halpern noted there is no guarantee of major changes in the comprehensive plan, noting residential will most likely still be residential.

Chair Lester suggested some councilmembers may have been caught off guard and suggested a joint workshop be scheduled instead to better explain the commission's reasons for their recommendation.

Commissioner Goracke agreed a joint workshop would provide a better avenue for discussion and questions on reasons for the recommendation.

Moved by Commissioner Goracke, seconded by Commissioner Halpern, to recommend a joint workshop be scheduled for first quarter 2024 to further discuss a possible charter amendment regarding redetermination of ward boundaries.

Motion approved unanimously.

6.3. 2023-564 Proposed Charter Amendment - Council Recall
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

Ms. Sorensen shared minutes from the council workshop regarding their recommendation to the commission to remove reference to nonfeasance and decrease the threshold for petitions to 20% of registered voters.

Moved by Commissioner Goracke, seconded by Commissioner Homan, to remove the term "nonfeasance" and reduce the threshold from 25% to 20% as recommended by city council.

Motion approved unanimously.

7. Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner Goracke, seconded by Commissioner Tagarro, to adjourn. Motion approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.