



City of Blaine

Charter Commission

May 13, 2025 | 6:00 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

The Charter Commission reviews the City Charter and recommends charter amendments in keeping with the state law. Commissioners are citizen volunteers recommended for appointment by the City Council to the Tenth Judicial District Chief Judge. The Charter Commission meets annually as required by statute, but may convene more often as needed. Those interested in having direct input into City government are encouraged to consider serving on the Commission. Appointments are 4-year terms and Commissioners are no longer limited to two 4-year terms per Minnesota Statute. The Charter Commission must consist of a minimum of seven commissioners and no more than 15 commissioners.

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Oaths of Office**
- 3. Roll Call**
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
 - 4.1.** 2025-164 Approval of Minutes
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk
- 5. Open Forum for Citizen Input**
- 6. Old Business**
 - 6.1.** 2025-169 Review of Proposed Charter Amendment - Council Salaries
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk
 - 6.2.** 2025-175 Review of Proposed Charter Amendment - Council Recall
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk
 - 6.3.** 2025-176 Review of Proposed Charter Amendment - Ward Redetermination
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk
- 7. New Business**
 - 7.1.** 2025-167 Review Draft Activity Letter to Chief Judge Tenth Judicial District

Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

- 7.2.** 2025-168 Discussion of Other Sections of Charter for Possible Review
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

8. Adjournment



City of Blaine

Charter Commission

February 11, 2025 | 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 6:01PM by Chair Lester followed by the Roll Call.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT: Chair Jeffrey Lester, Commissioners Ayman Ali Khan, Ken Anderson, Tom Doran, Alan Goracke, Terri Homan, Abdi Hussein, Arman Tagarro, Nyle Zikmund

ABSENT: Commissioners Jason Halpern, Jason Hartmann, Dick Swanson

ALSO PRESENT: City Clerk Cathy Sorensen

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1. 2025-73 Approval of Minutes
Sponsors:

Moved by Commissioner Zikmund, seconded by Goracke, to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2024, meeting as presented.

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared.

5. New Business

5.1. 2025-75 Potential Topics and Meeting Schedule Discussion
Sponsors:

Discussion was held on potential topics for Commission discussion and upcoming meeting schedule. After discussion, consensus of the Commission was to review the three proposed charter amendments from 2024 for presentation to council in 2025: council salaries, council recall, and ward redetermination. The Commission agreed on the following meeting dates for 2025, which could be changed or canceled if not needed: May 13, August 12, and November 18. City Clerk Sorensen said she would forward the staff reports and minutes from both Commission meetings and Council meetings regarding each proposed amendment prior to the May 13 meeting.

Discussion was held on incompatible offices and conflicts of interest and how that is addressed in Charter. Ms. Sorensen stated the Charter currently includes language on incompatible offices and that conflicts of interest for councilmembers is addressed in the code of ethics, code of conduct, and statute, but would add a review of the code of ethics portion of Charter to the list of upcoming topics.

6. Old Business

- 6.1.** 2025-74 Recap of Proposed Charter Commission Amendments: Council Salaries, Council Recall, Ward Redetermination
Sponsors:

City Clerk Sorensen shared a recap of status of the three proposed charter amendments from 2024.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Anderson, second by Commissioner Doran, to adjourn the meeting at 6:27PM. Motion adopted unanimously.



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-169

Agenda Date	Status
May 13, 2025	
In Control	File Type
Charter Commission	Report

Old Business -

Agenda Item # 6.1

Review of Proposed Charter Amendment - Council Salaries

Executive Summary

Background

City Charter Sec. 2-07. – Salaries states that the monthly salary of each of the councilmembers and mayor shall be established by ordinance. Council had directed the charter commission to annually review surveys of council salaries from comparable/surrounding cities for recommendations on possible adjustments for consideration and any adjustments recommended would be presented to council and, if concurred with, an ordinance amendment would be processed. Pursuant to MN Statute 415.11, no change in salary shall take effect until after the next succeeding municipal election. The last increase to salaries occurred in 2025; prior to that changes last occurred in 2015. The current salary ordinance, adopted February 2024 and effective January 2025, is below:

Sec. 2-31. Salaries of mayor and councilmembers.

Salaries of mayor and councilmembers.

Pursuant to the City Charter, section 2.07, and Minn. Stat. § 415.11, as amended, the salary of the mayor shall be increased to \$1,526.25 per month; and the salary of the councilmembers shall be increased to \$1,121.80 per month, effective January 1, 2025.

The charter commission had presented a charter amendment that outlined a mechanism for regular review and recommendation of future salary changes that would be consistent with any cost of living salary increases afforded to city staff as outlined below:

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 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.
(Ord. No. 85-884, 8-15-1985)

The commission believed this amendment would ensure a more regular review of council salaries and be consistent with other increases and not arbitrary. The proposed amendment was presented to council during the required public hearing process and failed 6-1, as charter amendments require unanimous approval.

Strategic Plan Relationship

Board/Commission Review

Financial Impact

Public Outreach/Input

Staff Recommendation

Attachment List

- 1. February 5, 2024 Council Minutes

Northwest Area Street Reconstruction Improvement Project, Improvement
Project No. 24-05

Sponsors: Daniel Schluender, Director of Engineering

Mr. Schluender stated on August 7, 2023 Council initiated the 2024 Northwest Area Street Reconstructions, Improvement Project No. 24-05 with Resolution No. 23-124. At the August 7, 2023 Council meeting WSB, which is one of the engineering firms in the pre-approved consultant pool approved by Council on August 2, 2021, was awarded a contract to prepare preliminary design and a feasibility report. At that time it was stated that after completion of the feasibility report and upon ordering the improvements, a contract for final design and construction services would be negotiated with WSB. The Engineering Department recently requested and received a proposal for final design and construction services including construction materials testing for the 2024 Northwest Area Street Reconstructions project from WSB in the amount of \$273,925.00. Staff has reviewed the proposal and determined that the fees are justified and reasonable. City council is also asked to approve a 10% contingency to bring the total project budget to \$301,317.50. This project will be funded through proposed project assessments, Pavement Management Program funds, Storm Drainage funds, and Public Utility funds.

Moved by Councilmember Fleming, seconded by Councilmember Massoglia, to Authorize the Mayor and City Manager to Enter into a Contract with WSB for Professional Design and Construction Services for the 2024 Northwest Area Street Reconstruction Improvement Project, Improvement Project No. 24-05.

Motion adopted unanimously.

- 11.3. RES 24-30** Resolution Accepting a Bid from Corval Constructors, Inc. in the Amount of \$675,500.00 for the Water Treatment Plant 1 Filter & Piping Upgrades, Improvement Project No. 23-21.

Sponsors: Nick Fleischhacker, Public Works Director

Public Works Director Fleischhacker stated council is requested to approve a contract with Corval Constructors, Inc for the construction of the Water Treatment Plant No. 1 Filter & Piping Upgrades, Improvement Project No. 23-21 in the amount of \$675,500.00.

Moved by Councilmember Robertson, seconded by Councilmember Massoglia, to adopt a Resolution Accepting a Bid from Corval Constructors, Inc. in the Amount of \$675,500.00 for the Water Treatment Plant 1 Filter & Piping Upgrades, Improvement Project No. 23-21.

Motion adopted unanimously.

- 11.4. ORD 24-2540** Amend City Charter Chapter 5. Initiative and Referendum and Recall
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

City Clerk Sorensen stated in 2022 the council directed the charter commission to consider a

charter amendment that would provide for a recall process for an elected mayor or councilmember. It should be noted that Minnesota's constitution and statute provide for recall of elected state officials but not city officials therefore any recall process would require a charter amendment. The topic was discussed at the 2022 and 2023 commission meetings where commissioners discussed reasons where a recall would be allowed, size of the recall committee, and an appropriate threshold required of registered voters on a petition that would trigger a recall election. They reviewed several cities' examples and the proposed ordinance being presented is based on the City of Richfield's charter with input from city council regarding restricting reasons for recall to serious cases of malfeasance during the term of office in the performance of the duties of the office. It was noted the first reading and public hearing were held on January 17 with no comments received. It was noted this motion requires unanimous approval (7-0) from the city council in order to be adopted.

Moved by Councilmember Newland, seconded by Councilmember Larson, to adopt Ordinance No. 24-2540, Amending City Charter Chapter 5. Initiative and Referendum and Recall.

Councilmember Saroya asked what changes were made to this portion of charter from the original language. Ms. Sorensen explained the draft before the council was based on the City of Richfield's charter. She reported after looking at several different cities, the Charter Commission recommended the draft language move forward but lowering the threshold for required number of voters on a recall petition as well as lowering the number of petition committee members. She indicated the reasons for a recall were changed from serious cases of malfeasance and nonfeasance in the performance of duties to only malfeasance.

Councilmember Saroya expressed concerns with the fact a city councilmember could not be recalled if they commit a gross misdemeanor crime in their personal capacity. Ms. Sorensen indicated a councilmember could only be recalled if the crime was in relation to their duties of office. She reported this would be determined on a case by case basis by the city clerk and city attorney.

She explained she would be voting against this charter amendment. She stated she wanted residents to have the right to go through the recall process, even if the crime occurs in an elected official's personal capacity.

Mayor Sanders requested staff bring this item back to the Charter Commission for further consideration.

Councilmember Massoglia stated the reason nonfeasance was eliminated was to avoid political theater. He explained the city council wanted recall process put in place and this charter amendment would create that process. He encouraged the Charter Commission to limit the scope for this process and supported recalls being limited to serious malfeasance.

Councilmember Saroya explained she would like councilmembers who commit a gross misdemeanor such as fraud to be included in reasons for a recall petition.

Motion failed 6-1 (Councilmember Saroya opposed).

11.5. ORD 24-2539 Amend City Charter Sec. 2.07 Salaries

Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

Ms. Sorensen stated the council requested the charter commission annually review council salary data and make recommendations for possible increases. After reviewing salary data and the council's current salary which was last increased in 2015, the charter commission recommended a charter amendment that would provide regular review of salary data and recommendations based on annual cost of living increases provided to city staff. The proposed amendment only amends the process in which to review council salaries. Actual adjustments of the salaries are determined via an ordinance that requires approval by a majority of the city council. The proposed amendment also removes reference to reimbursement for reasonable expenses as the commission felt this was out of scope of salary language and is already addressed in council policy. It was noted the first reading and public hearing were held on January 17 with no comments received. Staff explained this motion requires unanimous approval (7-0) from the city council in order to be adopted.

Moved by Councilmember Newland, seconded by Councilmember Massoglia, to adopt Ordinance No. 24-2539, Amending City Charter Sec. 2.07 Salaries.

Councilmember Saroya shared concerns about not wanting to increase salaries as officials are elected to serve. She did not feel comfortable raising salaries when there was no mechanism in place to determine how many hours councilmembers put in.

Councilmember Robertson explained the council was paid \$10,000 per year and noted many of the councilmembers have full time jobs. She reported this was her sixth year on the council. She understood this was a difficult topic to discuss and she understood she was a public servant. She asked staff when was the last time the council received a pay increase. Ms. Sorensen stated the council's last pay increase occurred in 2015. She clarified that the ordinance before the council would allow for an automatic review by the Charter Commission of the council's wages in June of every year and a recommendation would be made by the Charter Commission to the city council. She expressed frustration with the fact this item had been reviewed by council three different times at worksession and believed there was consensus and now it would not be moving forward.

Councilmember Fleming urged the council to support having a mechanism in place that would allow the Charter Commission to review the Council's salary each year. She believed it would be a disservice to not have this mechanism in place going forward. She noted the Council did not have to say yes to each pay raise, but at least there would be a consideration on a yearly basis.

Councilmember Saroya indicated she shared her concerns at the worksession meeting noting this was not supposed to be a full time job. She recommended this topic be revisited, stating she was putting in nearly 40 hours per week in this position. She was of the opinion this position was being done for public service and not compensation. She supported having a mechanism in place, but believed this was not the right one.

Motion failed 6-1 (Councilmember Saroya opposed).

11.6. ORD 24-2541 Amend Sec. 2-31. - Salaries of Mayor and Councilmembers

Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

Ms. Sorensen stated the council requested the charter commission annually review council salary data and make recommendations for possible increases. After reviewing salary data and the council's current salary which was last increased in 2015, the charter commission is recommending the following salary increases for both mayor and councilmembers based on cost of living increases over the past 10 years provided city staff and comparisons to other cities of similar size:

Mayor

- \$18,315.03/yr - currently \$14,313.60/yr
- \$1,526.25/mo - currently \$1,192.80/mo

Councilmembers

- \$13,461.54/yr - currently \$10,500/yr
- \$1,121.80/mo - currently \$875.00

Moved by Councilmember Newland, seconded by Councilmember Larson, to adopt Ordinance No. 24-2541, Amending Section 2-31. - Salaries of Mayor and Councilmembers.

Councilmember Larson stated she believed the proposed pay increases were extremely fair. She understood this pay was not for a full time position, but also noted that costs were on the rise.

Councilmember Saroya indicated she did not feel right raising salaries of city councilmembers.

Councilmember Fleming questioned if this item could be brought back to the Charter Commission for further action. City Attorney Sandstrom advised this was an ordinance amendment and does not require a unanimous vote. He explained per State Statute, any changes of salaries can only go into effect after an election, which meant these changes would go into effect January of 2025.

Motion carried 6-1 (Councilmember Saroya opposed).

12. Other Business

None.

13. Adjournment



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-175

Agenda Date	Status
May 13, 2025	
In Control	File Type
Charter Commission	Workshop Item

Old Business -

Agenda Item # 6.2

Review of Proposed Charter Amendment - Council Recall

Executive Summary

Background

In 2022 the council directed the charter commission to consider amendments that would provide for a recall process for an elected councilmember. It should be noted that the State's constitution and statute provide for recall of elected state officials but not city officials. The topic was discussed at the 2022 and 2023 commission meetings where commissioners shared input cautioning that reasons for recall did not include those good cause such as health and was against language providing for a recall strictly for political reasons but should address members not being available, dereliction of duty, or criminally based, such as gross misdemeanor or higher. Discussion was held that while charter language sets the parameters for recall ultimately the action was up to the residents to decide and suggested setting the threshold for recall high such as 20% of registered voters. Discussion was held that the recall committee should be larger than five registered voters as well as possibly allowing for a temporary recall. Discussion was also held regarding the potential for lawsuits if the petitions were unfounded and if the councilmember as subject of the recall could appeal the validity of the petition.

The commission reviewed examples from several cities and presented the attached to council during the required public hearing process; the amendment failed 6-1, as charter amendments must be adopted unanimously. The final draft is included here again for any potential changes and possible scheduling for formal consideration by council again. It should be noted that MN Statute 412.02 subd(b) allows cities to declare a vacancy of office if unable/unwilling to serve for a period of 90 days (see attached). Many cities, including Blaine, includes additional language in either charter or city code so any potential recall process ultimately would not have to reference inability or refusal to serve.

Strategic Plan Relationship

Board/Commission Review

Financial Impact

Public Outreach/Input

Staff Recommendation

Staff suggests the commission review the proposed amendment and provide staff direction on next steps.

Attachment List

1. CHAPTER 5. INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM AND RECALL - DRAFT
2. February 5, 2024 Council Minutes

CHAPTER 5. INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM AND RECALL

Sec. 5.13. Reserved.

Section 5.14. The Recall.

No less than twenty-five (25) registered voters eligible to vote on candidates for that office may form themselves into a committee for the purpose of bringing about the recall of any member of council, which is comprised of a mayor and six (6) councilmembers, as outlined in Sec. 2.03. - Elective Offices, or as amended from time to time. If the committee seeks the recall of a ward councilmember, the registered voters constituting the committee must be from that councilmember's ward. The committee must certify to the city clerk the name of the councilmember whose removal is sought, a statement of the grounds for removal in not more than two hundred and fifty (250) words, and the committee's intention to bring about their recall. A copy of this certificate must be attached to each signature paper and no signature paper may be put into circulation previous to such certification.

The Minnesota Constitution and state court decisions restrict the recall of elected city officials to cases of serious malfeasance during the term of office the performance of the duties of the office. The grounds for recall, as set forth in the recall petition, must be predicated on one (1) or more charges of serious malfeasance during the term of office in the performance of the duties of the office. For this purpose the word "malfeasance" means the performance of an act by a councilmember in their official capacity that is wholly illegal and wrongful.

Section 5.15. Recall Petitions.

The petition for the recall of any councilmember must consist of a certificate identical to that filed with the city clerk together with all the signature papers and affidavits thereto attached. All the signatures need not be on one (1) signature paper, but the circulator of every signature paper must make an affidavit that each signature appended to the paper is the genuine signature of the person whose name it purports to be. Every circulator of a signature paper must be a registered voter eligible to vote on candidates for that office. Each signature paper must be in substantially the following form:

RECALL PETITION

Proposing the recall of _____ from the office as _____ which recall is sought for the reasons set forth in the attached certificate.

Committee

This movement is sponsored by the following committee of registered voters eligible to vote on candidates for that office.

	<u>Legal Signature</u>	<u>Name</u> (print legibly)	<u>Address</u> (print legibly)
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
[listing all members of the committee]			

Instructions to Petition Signers

You are being asked to sign a petition. You must be a resident of, and a registered voter in, the City of Blaine and corresponding ward if the subject of the recall petition is not at large. Every person signing this petition must do so in the presence of the person circulating the petition. It is a criminal offense to sign a name other than your own to the petition or to accept compensation for signing your name to the petition. Pursuant to Section 5.16 of Blaine City Charter, twenty (20) percent of the total number of registered voters eligible to vote on candidates for that office at the last preceding regular municipal election is required to be deemed a sufficient petition, which is [X] signatures.

The undersigned registered voters, all being eligible to vote on candidates for that office, understanding the nature of the charges against the councilmember herein sought to be recalled, desire the holding of a recall election for that purpose.

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Legal Signature</u>	<u>Name</u> (print legibly)	<u>Address</u> (print legibly)
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____

The affidavit of the circulator must be attached at the end of the list of signatures.

Section 5.16. Filing of Petition.

Within thirty (30) days after the filing of the original certificate, the committee must file the completed petition in the office of the city clerk. The city clerk must examine the petition within the next ten (10) working days and if the city clerk and/or city attorney finds it irregular in any way, or finds that the number of signers is less than twenty (20) percent of the total number of registered voters eligible to vote on candidates for that office at the last preceding regular municipal election, the city clerk must so notify one (1) or more members of the committee. The committee shall then be given ten (10) days in which to file additional signature papers and to correct the petition in all other respects, but the committee may not change the statement of the grounds upon which the recall is sought. If

at the end of that time the city clerk and/or city attorney finds the petition still insufficient or irregular, the city clerk must notify all the members of the committee to that effect and file the petition in the city clerk's office. No further action shall be taken thereon.

Section 5.17. Recall Election.

If the petition or amended petition is found sufficient, the city clerk must transmit it to the council without delay, and must also officially notify the person sought to be recalled of the sufficiency of the petition and of the pending action. If the councilmember sought to be recalled does not resign within ten (10) days after having been given such notice, the council shall, at its next meeting occurring more than ten (10) days after the receipt by the council of the recall petition, by resolution, provide for the holding of a special recall election as allowed by statute and election law, as amended from time to time. If the special recall election involves one (1) or more ward councilmembers, the recall election must be conducted only within the wards of the affected councilmembers. If it involves a councilmember who is elected at large, the election must be a citywide election.

Section 5.18. Procedure at Recall Election.

The city clerk must include with the published notice of the election the statement of the grounds for recall and also, in not more than five hundred (500) words, the response of the councilmember concerned in justification of their course in office. The election must be conducted in accordance with statute and election law, as amended from time to time.

Section 5.19. Form of Recall Ballot.

The form of the ballot at such election shall be: "Shall _____ be recalled and thereby removed from office?" The name of the councilmember whose recall is sought and their office shall be inserted in the blank. The voters shall be permitted to vote separately "yes" or "no" upon this question. If a majority of those voting on the question of recall vote in favor of recall, the official shall be thereby removed from office, effective as allowed by statute and election law, as amended from time to time.

Section 5.20. Procedure to Fill Vacancy.

In the event that a councilmember is recalled by the voters or resigns after a petition has been filed for their recall, the vacancy must be filled pursuant to Sec. 20.5 – Vacancies in the council.

Section 5.21. Term.

The term of the candidate selected by the voters at the special election to fill the unexpired term shall start as soon as the certified results have been canvassed by the council and filed with the city clerk and the person has been duly qualified for office.

Section 5.22. Offenses; penalty.

It is unlawful for a person to:

- a. Sign a name other than that person's own name to an initiative, referendum, or recall petition;
- b. Circulate an initiative, referendum, or recall petition without required attachments;
- c. Circulate an initiative, referendum, or recall petition when unqualified to do so;
- d. Sign an initiative, referendum, or recall petition when that person knows they are not qualified to do so;
- e. Make a false affidavit in connection with an initiative, referendum, or recall petition;
- f. Pay or offer to pay a person, or receive payment or agree to receive payment, for signing an initiative, referendum, or recall petition;
- g. Pay or offer to pay a person, or receive payment or agree to receive payment, on a basis related to the number of signatures obtained for circulating an initiative, referendum, or recall petition. This subsection does not prohibit the payment of salary and expenses for circulation of the petition on a basis not related to the number of signatures obtained, as long as the circulators fully disclose all contributions received to the city clerk upon submission of the petitions.

A violation of this section is a misdemeanor punishable in accordance with state law.

Sec. 2.05. Vacancies in the council.

A vacancy in the council shall exist in case of:

- (1) The failure of any person elected thereto to qualify on or before the date of the second regular meeting of the new council; or
- (2) The death, resignation, removal from office, removal from the city, continuous absence of any councilmember from the city for more than three (3) months; or
- (3) The failure of any councilmember without good cause to perform any of the duties of membership in the council for a period of two (2) months; or
- (4) The conviction of any such person of a crime for which a sentence of imprisonment for more than one year may be imposed, whether before or after such person's qualification.

If a vacancy on the council is for a period of more than twelve (12) months, the council shall by resolution declare the vacancy to exist and shall by resolution call for a special election as provided in this section.

If a vacancy on the council is for a period of less than twelve (12) months, the council shall by resolution declare that the vacancy exists. Within the next forty-five (45) days, the council shall by resolution appoint an eligible person to the existing vacancy. The appointee shall serve until January 1 following the next regular municipal election, or until their successor is elected and qualified. ~~At the next regular municipal election, the office will be filled for the unexpired term.~~

The council may by resolution waive its right to appoint to fill a vacancy and may call a special election to be held as soon as legally permissible. If a vacancy on the council is not filled by appointment within the forty-five (45) days following the declaration of the vacancy, the council shall call a special election as provided in this section.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, any vacancy resulting from a recall election or from a resignation following the filing of a recall petition shall be filled in the manner provided above.

Northwest Area Street Reconstruction Improvement Project, Improvement Project No. 24-05

Sponsors: Daniel Schluender, Director of Engineering

Mr. Schluender stated on August 7, 2023 Council initiated the 2024 Northwest Area Street Reconstructions, Improvement Project No. 24-05 with Resolution No. 23-124. At the August 7, 2023 Council meeting WSB, which is one of the engineering firms in the pre-approved consultant pool approved by Council on August 2, 2021, was awarded a contract to prepare preliminary design and a feasibility report. At that time it was stated that after completion of the feasibility report and upon ordering the improvements, a contract for final design and construction services would be negotiated with WSB. The Engineering Department recently requested and received a proposal for final design and construction services including construction materials testing for the 2024 Northwest Area Street Reconstructions project from WSB in the amount of \$273,925.00. Staff has reviewed the proposal and determined that the fees are justified and reasonable. City council is also asked to approve a 10% contingency to bring the total project budget to \$301,317.50. This project will be funded through proposed project assessments, Pavement Management Program funds, Storm Drainage funds, and Public Utility funds.

Moved by Councilmember Fleming, seconded by Councilmember Massoglia, to Authorize the Mayor and City Manager to Enter into a Contract with WSB for Professional Design and Construction Services for the 2024 Northwest Area Street Reconstruction Improvement Project, Improvement Project No. 24-05.

Motion adopted unanimously.

- 11.3. RES 24-30** Resolution Accepting a Bid from Corval Constructors, Inc. in the Amount of \$675,500.00 for the Water Treatment Plant 1 Filter & Piping Upgrades, Improvement Project No. 23-21.

Sponsors: Nick Fleischhacker, Public Works Director

Public Works Director Fleischhacker stated council is requested to approve a contract with Corval Constructors, Inc for the construction of the Water Treatment Plant No. 1 Filter & Piping Upgrades, Improvement Project No. 23-21 in the amount of \$675,500.00.

Moved by Councilmember Robertson, seconded by Councilmember Massoglia, to adopt a Resolution Accepting a Bid from Corval Constructors, Inc. in the Amount of \$675,500.00 for the Water Treatment Plant 1 Filter & Piping Upgrades, Improvement Project No. 23-21.

Motion adopted unanimously.

- 11.4. ORD 24-2540** Amend City Charter Chapter 5. Initiative and Referendum and Recall
Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

City Clerk Sorensen stated in 2022 the council directed the charter commission to consider a

charter amendment that would provide for a recall process for an elected mayor or councilmember. It should be noted that Minnesota's constitution and statute provide for recall of elected state officials but not city officials therefore any recall process would require a charter amendment. The topic was discussed at the 2022 and 2023 commission meetings where commissioners discussed reasons where a recall would be allowed, size of the recall committee, and an appropriate threshold required of registered voters on a petition that would trigger a recall election. They reviewed several cities' examples and the proposed ordinance being presented is based on the City of Richfield's charter with input from city council regarding restricting reasons for recall to serious cases of malfeasance during the term of office in the performance of the duties of the office. It was noted the first reading and public hearing were held on January 17 with no comments received. It was noted this motion requires unanimous approval (7-0) from the city council in order to be adopted.

Moved by Councilmember Newland, seconded by Councilmember Larson, to adopt Ordinance No. 24-2540, Amending City Charter Chapter 5. Initiative and Referendum and Recall.

Councilmember Saroya asked what changes were made to this portion of charter from the original language. Ms. Sorensen explained the draft before the council was based on the City of Richfield's charter. She reported after looking at several different cities, the Charter Commission recommended the draft language move forward but lowering the threshold for required number of voters on a recall petition as well as lowering the number of petition committee members. She indicated the reasons for a recall were changed from serious cases of malfeasance and nonfeasance in the performance of duties to only malfeasance.

Councilmember Saroya expressed concerns with the fact a city councilmember could not be recalled if they commit a gross misdemeanor crime in their personal capacity. Ms. Sorensen indicated a councilmember could only be recalled if the crime was in relation to their duties of office. She reported this would be determined on a case by case basis by the city clerk and city attorney.

She explained she would be voting against this charter amendment. She stated she wanted residents to have the right to go through the recall process, even if the crime occurs in an elected official's personal capacity.

Mayor Sanders requested staff bring this item back to the Charter Commission for further consideration.

Councilmember Massoglia stated the reason nonfeasance was eliminated was to avoid political theater. He explained the city council wanted recall process put in place and this charter amendment would create that process. He encouraged the Charter Commission to limit the scope for this process and supported recalls being limited to serious malfeasance.

Councilmember Saroya explained she would like councilmembers who commit a gross misdemeanor such as fraud to be included in reasons for a recall petition.

Motion failed 6-1 (Councilmember Saroya opposed).

11.5. ORD 24-2539 Amend City Charter Sec. 2.07 Salaries

Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

Ms. Sorensen stated the council requested the charter commission annually review council salary data and make recommendations for possible increases. After reviewing salary data and the council's current salary which was last increased in 2015, the charter commission recommended a charter amendment that would provide regular review of salary data and recommendations based on annual cost of living increases provided to city staff. The proposed amendment only amends the process in which to review council salaries. Actual adjustments of the salaries are determined via an ordinance that requires approval by a majority of the city council. The proposed amendment also removes reference to reimbursement for reasonable expenses as the commission felt this was out of scope of salary language and is already addressed in council policy. It was noted the first reading and public hearing were held on January 17 with no comments received. Staff explained this motion requires unanimous approval (7-0) from the city council in order to be adopted.

Moved by Councilmember Newland, seconded by Councilmember Massoglia, to adopt Ordinance No. 24-2539, Amending City Charter Sec. 2.07 Salaries.

Councilmember Saroya shared concerns about not wanting to increase salaries as officials are elected to serve. She did not feel comfortable raising salaries when there was no mechanism in place to determine how many hours councilmembers put in.

Councilmember Robertson explained the council was paid \$10,000 per year and noted many of the councilmembers have full time jobs. She reported this was her sixth year on the council. She understood this was a difficult topic to discuss and she understood she was a public servant. She asked staff when was the last time the council received a pay increase. Ms. Sorensen stated the council's last pay increase occurred in 2015. She clarified that the ordinance before the council would allow for an automatic review by the Charter Commission of the council's wages in June of every year and a recommendation would be made by the Charter Commission to the city council. She expressed frustration with the fact this item had been reviewed by council three different times at worksession and believed there was consensus and now it would not be moving forward.

Councilmember Fleming urged the council to support having a mechanism in place that would allow the Charter Commission to review the Council's salary each year. She believed it would be a disservice to not have this mechanism in place going forward. She noted the Council did not have to say yes to each pay raise, but at least there would be a consideration on a yearly basis.

Councilmember Saroya indicated she shared her concerns at the worksession meeting noting this was not supposed to be a full time job. She recommended this topic be revisited, stating she was putting in nearly 40 hours per week in this position. She was of the opinion this position was being done for public service and not compensation. She supported having a mechanism in place, but believed this was not the right one.

Motion failed 6-1 (Councilmember Saroya opposed).

11.6. ORD 24-2541 Amend Sec. 2-31. - Salaries of Mayor and Councilmembers

Sponsors: Cathy Sorensen, City Clerk

Ms. Sorensen stated the council requested the charter commission annually review council salary data and make recommendations for possible increases. After reviewing salary data and the council's current salary which was last increased in 2015, the charter commission is recommending the following salary increases for both mayor and councilmembers based on cost of living increases over the past 10 years provided city staff and comparisons to other cities of similar size:

Mayor

- \$18,315.03/yr - currently \$14,313.60/yr
- \$1,526.25/mo - currently \$1,192.80/mo

Councilmembers

- \$13,461.54/yr - currently \$10,500/yr
- \$1,121.80/mo - currently \$875.00

Moved by Councilmember Newland, seconded by Councilmember Larson, to adopt Ordinance No. 24-2541, Amending Section 2-31. - Salaries of Mayor and Councilmembers.

Councilmember Larson stated she believed the proposed pay increases were extremely fair. She understood this pay was not for a full time position, but also noted that costs were on the rise.

Councilmember Saroya indicated she did not feel right raising salaries of city councilmembers.

Councilmember Fleming questioned if this item could be brought back to the Charter Commission for further action. City Attorney Sandstrom advised this was an ordinance amendment and does not require a unanimous vote. He explained per State Statute, any changes of salaries can only go into effect after an election, which meant these changes would go into effect January of 2025.

Motion carried 6-1 (Councilmember Saroya opposed).

12. Other Business

None.

13. Adjournment



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-176

Agenda Date	Status
May 13, 2025	
In Control	File Type
Charter Commission	Workshop Item

Old Business -

Agenda Item # 6.3

Review of Proposed Charter Amendment - Ward Redetermination

Executive Summary

Background

As part of the 2022 redistricting process, council was supportive of the charter commission's recommendation to review potential amendments that would allow for the possibility of future ward restructuring as the city reaches full development. The commission's reasons for possible restructuring included five or six smaller wards that could potentially provide more neighborhood-based representation as opposed to the current three-ward structure. Factors used to determine both wards and precincts include:

- 2020 census population
- projected population growth
- registered voters and estimated voters
- wards that are bounded by precinct lines, compact in area, and composed of contiguous territory
- wards that are as equal in population as practicable within the required 5% population threshold
- polling place management

Staff presented the following additional language to charter that, upon review and consensus by council, would direct the charter commission to review both ward boundaries and number of council election wards for potential changes:

Sec. 26-2. Redetermination of Ward Boundaries.

Pursuant to City Charter [Sec. 2.03\(a\). - Wards](#), the City Council shall re-determine appropriate ward boundaries in years between the taking of a Federal decennial census whenever the Council finds that a deviation of more than five percent exists in the populations of the largest and smallest wards. For the purposes of this section, the Council, in making its findings as to population, shall take into consideration changes in numbers of households since the last decennial census and household size

in areas where changes have occurred as determined by the school district and as outlined in the Metropolitan Council's annual preliminary population and household estimates released in April of each year pursuant to MN Statute 473.24. If after review of the findings the Council determines changes to the number of council election wards should be changed in addition to ward boundaries, the Council shall direct the Charter Commission to review the findings for recommendation to the Council for any appropriate Charter amendments.

The intent was that should the commission determine an increase in the number of wards was appropriate, a recommendation would be made to the council for consideration of any required charter amendments. The commission discussed this potential amendment with council at workshop in 2023 but there was no consensus at the time to continue moving this language forward, outside of continuing discussions as part of the upcoming comprehensive plan update. Should the commission wish to pursue the topic again, staff would suggest scheduling a joint workshop with council to further review.

Strategic Plan Relationship

Board/Commission Review

Financial Impact

Public Outreach/Input

Staff Recommendation

Staff suggests the commission review and discuss the proposed language and provide staff direction on next steps.

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-167

Agenda Date

May 13, 2025

Status

In Control

Charter Commission

File Type

Motion

New Business -

Agenda Item # 7.1

Review Draft Activity Letter to Chief Judge Tenth Judicial District

Executive Summary

Background

The Commission is asked to review and approve by motion the draft activity letter required by statute to Chief Judge Elizabeth Strand.

Strategic Plan Relationship

Board/Commission Review

Financial Impact

Public Outreach/Input

Staff Recommendation

Statute requires charter commissions file an annual report of its activities with the chief judge. Attached is a draft of the letter for Commission review and input.

Attachment List

1. Activities April 2024 - April 2025 Honorable Elizabeth Strand



City of Blaine

10801 Toxaway Square Drive NE

Blaine, MN 55449-8100

City Hall 763-784-6700 | BlaineMN.gov

May 14, 2025

The Honorable Elizabeth H. Strand
Wright County District Court
Wright County Justice Center
3700 Braddock Avenue, Room 1100
Buffalo, MN 55313

SUBJECT: City of Blaine Charter Commission Activities – April 2024-April 2025

Chief Judge Strand:

Thank you for your service to the Tenth Judicial District. The Blaine Charter Commission activities for 2024 through 2025 are outlined below:

- Reappointment of Commissioners Halpern, Homan, Lester, Swanson, and Tagarro and appointment of Commissioners Doran, Howard, Hussein, Ludewig, and Ramsammy
- Requested council consideration of potential charter language amendments to allow future commissions and councils the ability to amend ward structure – *consensus was to continue discussions as part of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update*
- Formally presented a charter amendment to create a councilmember recall process – *amendment failed in February 2024 and the commission is currently reviewing for potential resubmission in 2025*
- Formally presented a charter amendment to create regular review and measurables for potential mayor/councilmember salary increases - *amendment failed in February 2024 and the commission is currently reviewing for potential resubmission in 2025*
- Currently reviewing other sections of charter for possible review and amendments, including clarifying Sec. 6.05 – Purchases and Contracts.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Blaine Charter Commission,

Catherine M. Sorensen, CMC, City Clerk

cc: Blaine City Council
City Manager Michelle Wolfe
City Attorney Tom Loonan



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-168

Agenda Date	Status
May 13, 2025	
In Control	File Type
Charter Commission	Report

New Business -

Agenda Item # 7.2

Discussion of Other Sections of Charter for Possible Review

Executive Summary

Background

Staff is suggesting the commission consider amending Sec. 6.05 - Purchases and Contracts to clarify which contracts require mayor signature. Current and possible amended language is below:

Sec. 6.05. Purchases and contracts.

The city manager shall be the chief purchasing agent of the city. Contracts for the sale or the purchase of supplies, materials, equipment or the rental thereof, or the construction, alteration, repair or maintenance of real or personal property shall be made in accordance with the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law, Minn. Stat. § 471.345, as amended. If the amount of the contract is estimated to be fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) or less, the contract may be made by the city manager. All other purchases and all other contracts shall be submitted to the council for approval. All contracts, bonds and instruments of any kind submitted to the council for approval to which the city is a party shall be signed by the mayor and the city manager on behalf of the city and shall be executed in the name of the city.

(Ord. No. 356, 6-6-1974; Ord. No. 676, 2-21-1980; Ord. No. 84-818, 3-15-1984; Ord. No. 99-1800, 8-19-1999; Ord. No. 15-2313, 6-4-2015; Ord. No. 19-2427, 6-17-2019)

Strategic Plan Relationship

Board/Commission Review

Financial Impact

Public Outreach/Input

Staff Recommendation

The Commission is asked to review and discuss the proposed clarifying amendment.

Attachment List

None