

2026 Charter Review Commission

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order. Roll call was conducted.

Present: **City Manager** – Bobbie Beshara, **Law Director** – Matt Simpson, **Committee Members** – Charles Copley, Philip Decker, Tina McMillen, Francey Morris, Daffine Roberts, Ron Tisher, Leah Weirck, Dave Williams, **Alternate Committee Members** - Rob Gable. Absent – Ken Park.

A quorum was present.

2. Approval of Meeting Procedures

A proposal outlining meeting procedures was presented, including:

- Handling of **absent members and alternates**
- Use of **alternates as temporary replacements**
- Process for **permanent replacement if a member withdraws**
- Structure for **charter review discussions and revisions**
- Requirement that **final approval be done via roll call vote at the end**

Motion by Copley: Approve proposed procedures

Vote:

- All in favor: Aye
- Opposed: None

Result: Motion carried.

3. Advancement of Alternate Member

Due to a vacancy, an alternate was considered for advancement.

Motion by Copley: Advance Gable to a voting position

Vote:

- All in favor: Aye
- Opposed: None

Result: Motion carried

4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Discussion noted an inconsistency in prior minutes regarding chair nominations.

Amendment: Correct nomination record

Motion by Copley: Approve minutes as amended

Vote:

- All in favor: Aye
- Opposed: None

Result: Motion carried

5. Old Business

- None

6. Citizen Comments

- No public comments were made

7. New Business

Article I: Name and Boundaries

Key Discussion Points:

- Charter still references “Village” instead of “City”
- Ohio law automatically determines city/village status based on population (5,000 threshold)
- Options discussed:
 - Replace “Village” with “City”
 - Remove designation entirely
 - Consolidate wording changes into one ballot issue

Concerns:

- Multiple references throughout charter
- Legal implications require review
- Desire to simplify “housekeeping” updates

Motion by Copley: Table Article I for further legal clarification

Vote:

- All in favor: Aye

Result: Article I tabled

Article II: Form of Government

Section 2.01 – Form of Government

Discussion:

- Strong support for **City Manager form of government**
- Benefits cited:
 - Professional administration
 - Reduced political influence
 - Continuity and expertise
- Concerns about alternative (Mayor-led system):
 - Lack of qualifications required
 - Potential instability
- Noted: Form of government can be changed by voters at any time

Motion by Copley: Make no changes to form of government

Vote:

- All in favor: Aye

Result: Motion carried

Section 2.02: Powers

Discussion:

- Minor wording concern regarding “judicial powers” due to removal of mayor’s court
- Suggestion to revise language for clarity

Motion by Copley: Make no changes

Vote:

- All in favor: Aye

Result: Motion carried

Article III – Council

Section 3.01 – Number and Terms

Proposal 1: Adjust Council Terms

- Change term start date to **January 1**
- Align with common practice across Ohio
- Avoid newly elected members voting on prior-year budget

Motion by Copley: Adjust council terms to January 1 start
Vote:

- All in favor: Aye

Result: Motion carried

Proposal 2: Elected Council President (7th Member)

Discussion:

- Would create a **7-member council**
- Potential benefits:
 - Avoid tie votes
 - Increase participation
- Concerns:
 - Additional cost
 - Limited candidate pool
 - Redundancy with mayor role

Motion by Copley: Create elected Council President (7th member)
Vote:

- Majority opposed

Result: Motion failed

Proposal 3: Term Limits

Discussion:

- Proposed limit: **2 consecutive terms**
- Arguments for:
 - Encourage new participation
- Arguments against:
 - Elections already provide accountability
 - Loss of experience and continuity
 - Small candidate pool concerns

Motion by Copley: Implement term limits
Vote: Majority opposed

Result: Motion failed

Proposal 4: Add 7th Council Member (General)

Discussion:

- Separate from elected president concept

- Concerns:
 - Budget impact
 - Public perception of spending

Motion by Copley: Increase council size to 7
Vote:

- Mixed; majority opposed

Result: Motion failed

Proposal 5: Ward-Based Representation

Discussion:

- Idea to create:
 - 4 ward-based seats
 - 2 at-large seats
- Benefits:
 - Improved representation
- Concerns:
 - Insufficient candidates
 - Population size limitations
 - High rental turnover

Result: No motion made

Section 3.02 – Vacancy

Discussion:

- Concern about prolonged absences by council members
- Existing Ohio law noted:
 - Seat vacated after **10 consecutive absences**
 - Salary deductions for absences
- Desire to clarify or strengthen attendance expectations

Motion by Copley: Draft language addressing attendance requirements and vacancy triggers.

Vote: All in favor: Aye

Result: Motion carried

Section 3.03 – Powers

Discussion:

- Clarification between:
 - Council authority (boards, commissions)
 - City Manager authority (advisory groups)
- Questions raised about:
 - Special meeting procedures
 - Agenda-setting process
 - Public notice requirements

Result: No changes proposed

Section 3.04 – Council Relations with Municipal Manager

- Clarifying communication boundaries.
 - Council members cannot directly direct employees.
 - All direction must go through the Municipal Manager.
 - Concerns raised about “backdoor” communication bypassing structure.

Result: General agreement to clarify wording for readability and intent.

Section 3.05 – Clerk Responsibilities

- **Discussion:**
 - Requirement to record ordinances “in a book” seen as outdated.
 - Suggestion to include **digital/multimedia records**.
- **Decision:**

Motion by Copley: passed to add “and/or multimedia” to record-keeping language.

Vote: All in favor: Aye

Result: Motion carried

Section 3.06 – Meetings

- **Discussion:** Organizational meeting timing.
 - Current wording tied to “first Monday in January” is restrictive.
 - Proposal to align with **first regular Council meeting in January**.

Motion by Copley: update language.

Vote: All in favor: Aye

Result: Motion carried

Result: Section partially **tabled** for legal review regarding executive session rules.

Section 3.07 – President of Council

- **Discussion:**
 - Clarification of vacancy scenarios and succession.
 - Terminology updates (e.g., “Councilman” → “Council member”).
- **Outcome:**
 - Minor language cleanup recommended.

Section 3.08 – Quorum & Voting

- **Key Issue:**
 - Potential conflict between:
 - Requirement of **4 Council votes**
 - Mayor’s role as **tie-breaking vote**
- **Discussion:**
 - Mayor is considered a Council member when voting.
 - Concern about clarity and voter understanding.

Decision: Section **tabled** for Law Director review

Article IV -The Mayor

Section 4.01 – Mayor Term

- **Key Points:**
 - Confirmed **4-year term**.
 - Compared with staggered Council terms.
- **Outcome:**
 - No changes made.

Section 4.03 – Legislative Powers of Mayor

- **Key Issues:**
 - Mayor’s role in executive sessions:
 - Currently cannot attend unless invited.
 - Does not preside.
 - Concern raised:
 - Mayor may need to break tie votes without full information.
- **Discussion:**
 - Potential removal of restriction or clarification needed.
- **Decision:**
 - Section **tabled** for further review.

Section 4.04 – Other Powers of Mayor

- **Key Points:**
 - Mayor serves ceremonial, military, and legal service roles.

- Clarification: includes receipt of legal service (lawsuits).
- **Decision:**
 - **Motion by Copley:** to add restriction:
 - Mayor, like Council, must not bypass Municipal Manager authority.
- **Vote:** All in favor: Aye
- **Result:** Motion carried

Section 4.05 – Vacancies

- **Overview:** Succession process improvements.
- **Key Issues:**
 - Current process is **legally valid but overly complex**.
 - Past example showed workaround via resignation/reappointment.
- **Proposed Solution:**
 - Structured succession:
 - President of Council has **10 days** to accept/decline.
 - If declined → Council appoints replacement.

Motion by Copley: to draft new succession language.

Vote: All in favor: Aye

Result: Motion carried

Article V – The Municipal Manager

Review of Section 5.01 – Appointment & Qualifications

Severance / Contract Language

- Discussion centered on wording regarding **removal compensation**.
- Current language states the manager shall receive “**at least one month’s salary**” upon removal (unless due to felony or misconduct).
- Key points:
 - The Municipal Manager position is governed by a **contract**, which already defines compensation and severance.
 - Suggestion: Replace fixed wording with “**compensation pursuant to contract.**”
 - Concern: Current wording may be redundant but not conflicting.

Conclusion:

- No formal change decided; option left open to:
 - Keep current wording, or
 - Clarify language to align strictly with contract terms.

Qualifications of Municipal Manager

- Concern raised about lack of **explicit educational requirements**.
- Suggestion:
 - Require a **bachelor's or master's degree** (or similar credential).
- Counterpoints:
 - Requirements are typically defined in the **job posting**, not the charter.
 - Keeping language flexible allows hiring:
 - Highly qualified individuals without formal degrees.

Conclusion:

- No change made.
- General agreement to **maintain flexibility** in qualifications.
- **Review of Section 5.02 – Powers & Duties**

Financial Reporting Requirement

- Clause reviewed: Monthly financial reports submitted **“in conjunction with the Finance Director.”**
- Concern:
 - Some members had **not observed this occurring regularly**.
- Clarification:
 - Reports are included in **council meeting packets**.
 - Language was previously updated to ensure shared responsibility.

Additional Notes:

- Minor grammatical updates suggested (e.g., “him/her”).

Conclusion:

- Requirement remains unchanged.
- Acknowledged that reporting is being fulfilled via existing processes.

Review of Section 5.03 – Absence or Disability

Designation of Acting City Manager

- Current process:
 - Municipal Manager designates a replacement during absence.
 - Council may override or appoint someone if:
 - They disagree, or
 - No designation is made.

Key Concerns

1. **“Some other person” language**
 - Considered **too broad**.
 - Could allow appointment of:
 - Someone outside city employment.

- Raises concerns about:
 - Qualifications
 - Background checks
 - Accountability
- 2. **Eligibility Questions**
 - Should appointee:
 - Be a city employee?
 - Meet similar qualifications as Municipal Manager?
- 3. **Authority Structure**
 - Acting manager:
 - Has full authority of Municipal Manager role.
 - Council can direct them **in that capacity only**, not in their original departmental role.
- 4. **Disability Scenario**
 - Concern:
 - What if the manager is unable to designate someone?
 - Clarification:
 - Council has authority to appoint in such cases.

Practical Insight

- Historically:
 - Acting managers are typically **department heads**.
 - Selections are based on:
 - Experience
 - Leadership ability
 - Often educational qualifications.

Conclusion:

- No immediate revision made.
- General agreement that:
 - Language may need clarification in the future.
 - Council retains sufficient oversight authority.

Adjournment

Next meeting was set for March 18, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Motion by Copley: To Adjourn

Vote: All in favor: Aye

Result: Motion carried