

# **Minneapolis Charter Commission**

## **Plain Language Charter**

*Submitted to the Minneapolis City Council  
May 2013*

*Two ballot questions for the November, 2013 general election ballot  
approved by the Charter Commission on May 1, 2013*

**MINNEAPOLIS CHARTER COMMISSION**  
**PLAIN-LANGUAGE CHARTER REVISION**

**REPORT**

To the City Council:

The Charter Commission respectfully submits the accompanying plain-language revision, and hereby proposes two amendments for submission to the voters at the regular election in November 2013.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Two amendments are necessary because the liquor-licensing provisions are the subject of a statute that requires a different vote for amendment than other charter provisions. *See* Minn. Stat. § 410.121. Those provisions will therefore be proposed as a separate amendment. A proposed summary for each amendment appears below in the conclusion at p. 22–23.

## **Introduction: The Plain-Language Movement**

For decades, many leading scholars and public servants have recognized that, in a transparent and effective democracy, the government's fundamental documents must be accessible to the voters — accessible both in the form of ready availability, and in the form of meaningful, readable text that does not take a law degree to understand. Out of that recognition, the plain-language movement was born. Four decades ago, it caught up to the then-117-year-old Minnesota Constitution, as described by Judge Jack Davies, who spearheaded a thorough plain-language revision:

In the early 1970s, to protect my admired constitution from those who thought a few obsolete and awkward provisions indicated substantive defects, I undertook a stylistic rewrite of the document. I then won overwhelming approval of my draft from a Constitutional Study Commission, from both houses of the Legislature, and then, in 1974, from Minnesota voters.

So now the Minnesota Constitution is not only substantively sound, but is free of embarrassing trivia such as describing our northern border as “the British Possessions” rather than “Canada.” And we took out 4,000 words that had served their purpose and become meaningless.

So now the state Constitution is not just substantively sound; it is also up to date and grammatically sound. It is a great document in all respects.<sup>2</sup>

More recently, the Supreme Court of the United States undertook a restyling project that revised the federal rules of civil procedure, criminal procedure, evidence, and appellate procedure, all decades old (and all heavily litigated over the years). And in 2010, Congress enacted the Plain Writing Act, which mandated plain language “[t]o enhance citizen access to Government information and services by establishing that Government documents issued to the public must be written clearly.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Jack Davies, “Let’s Keep It a Clean Constitution,” *StarTribune*, Oct. 3, 2012.

<sup>3</sup>Plain Writing Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-274, 124 Stat. 2861 (2010).

### **The Revision's Purpose and Scope: Why Revise the Charter?**

Eleven years ago, the Charter Commission began an extensive revision of the City Charter, which has not undergone a thorough review since its adoption. The accompanying revision results from over a decade of work; fourteen major drafts (and uncounted intermediate drafts); five public hearings; and input from numerous boards, citizens, and other interested persons and groups.<sup>4</sup>

This revision's purpose is *not* restructuring the City government or otherwise effecting any substantive change. Its purpose is only modernizing, simplifying, and uncluttering the Charter, and redrafting its provisions for clarity, brevity, and consistency, in plain modern language. When Minneapolis first adopted a home-rule charter in 1920, the first charter commission did not draft a charter from scratch: instead, it simply compiled the special laws then in force affecting the City, and collated them into a loosely organized document that became the first charter. That charter has since undergone about a hundred amendments, often by the City Council, sometimes by referendum, and has now become a highly impractical document:

- more than 70,000 words long;
- confusingly organized;
- full of redundant or conflicting provisions, or provisions long since overridden by statute;
- cluttered with detail better suited to ordinances; and
- written in a legalistic style that is more than a century out of date, and practically unintelligible to a nonlawyer (and exceptionally difficult even for lawyers).

Three examples illustrate these problems and need for revision: the word *doth*, the provisions governing the appointments process, and the provision about the Library Board.

#### **Archaic legalism: *doth***

The Charter's style was already outdated when it was first adopted. Perhaps the most glaring example is the word *doth*.

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<sup>4</sup>For the process, please see below at pp. 15–19.

Half a millennium ago, when printed books were becoming widely available and the English language was settling into a somewhat standardized form, various dialects competed for dominance:

Thanks to the proliferation of English dialects during the period of Norman rule, by the fifteenth century people in one part of England often could not understand people in another part. William Caxton, the first person to print a book in English, noted the sort of misunderstandings that were common in his day in the preface to *Eneydos* in 1490 in which he related the story of a group of London sailors heading down the River “Tamyse” for Holland who found themselves becalmed in Kent. Seeking food, one of them approached a farmer’s wife and “axed for mete and specyally he axyd after eggys” but was met with blank looks by the wife who answered that she “coude speke no frenshe.” The sailors had traveled barely fifty miles and yet their language was scarcely recognizable to another speaker of English. In Kent, eggs were *eyren* and would remain so for at least another fifty years.

A century later the poet George Puttenham noted that the English of London stretched not much more than sixty miles from the city. But its influence was growing all the time. The size and importance of London guaranteed that its dialect would eventually triumph, though other factors helped — such as the fact that the East Midlands dialect (its formal name) had fewer grammatical extremes than other dialects and that the East Midlands area was the seat of the two main universities, Oxford and Cambridge, whose graduates naturally tended to act as linguistic missionaries.

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Although East Midlands was the preeminent dialect, not all East Midlands forms triumphed. The practice in London of placing *-n* or *-en* on the end of present indicative verbs was gradually driven out by the southern practice of using *-th*, so that *loven* became *loveth*, for instance, and this in turn was eventually driven out by the northern *-s* or *-es* ending, as in the modern form *loves*. Why this northern provincialism should gradually have taken command of a basic verb form is an enduring mystery. It may simply be that the *-s* form made for smoother spoken English. In any case, by Shakespeare’s time it was much more common in speech than in writing, though Shakespeare himself freely used both forms, sometimes employing *goes*, sometimes *goeth*.<sup>5</sup>

That transition is evident in the inflection of the common verb *do*:

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<sup>5</sup>Bill Bryson, *The Mother Tongue: English & How It Got That Way* (New York: Avon Books, 1990), pp. 59–61.

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
<b>First person</b>	do	do
<b>Second person</b>	doest	do
<b>Third person</b>	doth	do

Eventually, the second-person singular lost its unique inflection, and became simply *do*; and for the third-person singular, the northern form *does* supplanted the East Midlands form *doth*. The East Midlands form survives in numerous literary and poetic references but, by the 17th century, it had disappeared from general use.<sup>6</sup>

So when the Minnesota Legislature in the latter 19th century enacted the statutes that would eventually find their way into Minneapolis's first charter, *doth* was already two to three centuries out of date. And when Minneapolis voters adopted their first home-rule charter in 1920, *doth* was yet another half-century out of date. But it appeared in the Charter not once, not twice, but four times. More to the point, it's still there.

All four appearances involve the form for an assessment roll, so what probably happened is that some Minnesota legislator, in the early years of statehood (or perhaps as early as the territorial days), copied a form prepared by a lawyer from the older states on the Eastern seaboard, who had copied a form prepared by another lawyer . . . and so forth, back to some common-law scrivener in Shakespearean England, whose words found their way into the charter of a modern American metropolis in the year 2013. But half a millennium of archaic language is long enough.

### **Redundant and conflicting provisions: Appointments**

Next, the Charter is full of redundant or conflicting provisions. For example, if a citizen wanted to know the process for appointing a municipal officer — a department head, say — then he or she could look in the Charter, right? Well, not really. If our citizen looked up the appointments process, the first relevant provision that she would run across appears in chapter 2:

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<sup>6</sup>“The orig. northern form *does* superseded *doth*, *doeth*, in 16–17th c. in general use; the latter being now liturgical and poetic.” *Oxford English Dictionary*, p. 562.

Except as in this Charter otherwise specifically provided, all other officers provided for in this Charter or deemed necessary for the proper management of the affairs of the City, shall be appointed by the City Council. The appointment of such officers shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of all members of the City Council.<sup>7</sup>

So the City Council appoints the officers, right? Well, not so fast — the next relevant provision appears 20 sections and 3,434 words later, in chapter 3:

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Charter or special law to the contrary, the executive committee shall have the exclusive power to appoint and remove during their terms of office the Police Chief, Fire Chief, City Engineer, Commissioner of Health, City Attorney, City Assessor, City Coordinator, Civil Service Commissioner, and any officer in a department or agency who, by statute, Charter or ordinance, is appointed by the Mayor or City Council or by any public board the majority of whose members are members of the City Council.<sup>8</sup>

So the appointing power resides not in the City Council, but in the Executive Committee, right? Well, maybe. The next relevant provision also appears in chapter 3, the same chapter as the last provision (but with 18 sections and 2,507 words between them), and says that “the City Council shall have power at any time . . . to appoint such other officers as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this Chapter, and to prescribe their duties, unless herein otherwise provided for.”<sup>9</sup> So who appoints these “other officers” — the City Council? or the Executive Committee? It’s a little unclear, since both provisions in chapter 3 cover the same topic, but cover it inconsistently. Theoretically, the most recently adopted provision prevails over any earlier provision, but the reader can’t tell from the Charter which provision is more recent.

To further complicate the matter, another relevant provision appears in yet another chapter, 25 sections and 7,082 (!) words later:

Whenever the Mayor exercises the power of appointment or designation of persons to be members or occupants of any board, commission, department or office, and the City Council approval of such appointment or designation is required, the appointment or designation will be deemed approved if the City Council has not disapproved such an appointment or designation within a period of sixty days from and after

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<sup>7</sup>Charter, ch. 2, § 2 (Council to appoint City officers).

<sup>8</sup>Charter, ch. 3, § 4 (Executive Committee).

<sup>9</sup>Charter, ch. 3, § 23 (City Council—may appoint additional officers).

the submission of the appointment or designation by the Mayor to the City Council.<sup>10</sup>

This provision isn't actually inconsistent with the earlier provisions, but it is necessary for a full view of the appointments process — and it doesn't appear anywhere near the places that a casual reader would go looking for provisions about appointments.

Ideally, the Charter should transparently inform a citizen about how municipal government works. The provisions governing appointments are redundant and conflicting, and practically unintelligible without a lawyer's advice or additional study and research.

### **Obsolete or superseded provisions: The Library Board**

Worse than redundant and conflicting provisions, though, are the provisions that simply do not reflect modern reality. For example, if a citizen wanted to know who serves on the Library Board, he or she could look in the Charter and learn that

Said Library Board shall consist of the Mayor of the City of Minneapolis, the President of the Board of Education of the City of Minneapolis, the President of the University of the State of Minnesota, who shall respectively be ex officio members thereof, and six (6) other members, who shall be elected from time to time as herein provided, by the legal voters of the City of Minneapolis, and who shall be resident and qualified electors of said city. At the city election to be held on the second Monday in June, 1921, there shall be elected two Library Directors [Trustees] for the term of six (6) years and thereafter there shall be elected every second year, two (2) Library Directors [Trustees] for the term of six (6) years; the term of said directors [trustees] to begin on the first Monday in July of the year of their election.<sup>11</sup>

That provision is right there in the Charter, readily discoverable in the chapter about the Library Board, and no other provision in that chapter or elsewhere in the Charter conflicts with it. Our citizen thus discovers that the Library Board consists of the Mayor, an officer whose title look like the school-board president, the University of Minnesota president, and six members elected for six-year terms that start in July.

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<sup>10</sup>Charter, ch. 4, § 22 (untitled).

<sup>11</sup>Charter, ch. 17, § 2 (composition of Board — elections).

Of course, there is no longer a Library Board — the Minneapolis Public Library was merged into the Hennepin County Library in January 2008 as a result of legislation approved in May 2007.<sup>12</sup> But even before the merger, neither the Mayor, nor the school-board president, nor the University of Minnesota president really served on the Library Board — and none of them had so served for 42 years. And the members — when there were members — served terms of four years, not six. And those terms started in January, not in July.

What the Charter didn't mention was that, in 1965, a special law reconstituted the Board in substantially its pre-merger form — one trustee appointed by the Mayor, one trustee elected by the City Council, and six trustees elected by the voters.<sup>13</sup> Or that, in 1986, a special law changed the terms from six years to four.<sup>14</sup> (Or that, in 1973, a special law abolished the Board of Education and established an independent school district for Minneapolis.<sup>15</sup>) Or that the Library Board dissolved in 2008. Despite such major changes over 43 years, the Charter still reflects an outdated reality, a reality that hasn't been real since the early 1960s. The Charter is full of such obsolete and superseded provisions.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Revision**

The revision addresses these problems by reorganizing and rewriting the entire charter, from start to finish, while preserving intact its substance.

### **Uncluttering**

Minneapolis's charter is 70,905 words long; printed, it runs 192 single-spaced pages. (By way of contrast, the U.S. Constitution of 1787 runs 4,543

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<sup>12</sup>2007 Minn. Laws ch. 121.

<sup>13</sup>See 1965 Minn. Laws, ch. 818.

<sup>14</sup>See 1986 Minn. Laws, ch. 433.

<sup>15</sup>1973 Minn. Laws, ch. 223, § 2.

<sup>16</sup>The Library Board's merger leaves the Charter with some anomalies. For example, before the merger, the Library Board was represented on the then-seven-member Board of Estimate & Taxation; without the Library Board's representative, the Board of Estimate & Taxation is left with only six members, even though various provisions clearly contemplate a seven-member board (such as the provisions that require a five-sevenths vote). The revision has not addressed these anomalies directly, but Charter Commission welcomes guidance from the City Council on that topic.

words.) The revision is 13,862 words long — less than one-fifth the current Charter’s length. The revision generally follows the style of the League of Minnesota Cities’ model charter, a model of brevity at barely 13 pages, whose philosophy is that “the model charter is based on the modern drafting principles that a charter should deal only with fundamentals, leaving to the council by ordinance the authority to provide more detailed regulations as they are needed. It is, therefore, much briefer than many older charters.”<sup>17</sup>

**“Substantive” vs. “nonsubstantive” change.** The revision’s stated purpose “is *not* restructuring the City government or otherwise effecting any substantive change” but rather “modernizing, simplifying, and uncluttering the Charter, and redrafting its provisions for clarity, brevity, and consistency, in plain modern language.”<sup>18</sup> The Charter is “cluttered with detail better suited to ordinances,”<sup>19</sup> and the revision “demotes” many such provisions from charter to ordinance, without changing the underlying rule.

But at least arguably, such a demotion from charter to ordinance is itself a substantive change — not because the change affects the underlying rule (which it doesn’t), but because the underlying rule is then subject to change by a different and less burdensome process. To amend the charter requires a unanimous vote by the City Council — 13 votes, if the Council’s membership is at full complement — or a referendum; to amend an ordinance requires only a majority of the Council’s membership — seven votes. A right protected only by ordinance is less protected than a right enshrined in the Charter.

Drawing the line between the “fundamentals” that belong in the charter, and the “regulations” that belong in ordinance, is somewhat arbitrary. At one extreme is the current Charter, at 192 pages. At the opposite extreme is the League of Cities’ model charter, at barely 13 pages. For Minneapolis, the happy medium probably lies somewhere between those extremes, and toward the shorter side: the revision runs 63 pages. The Commission could have drafted a much shorter revision, say a 20-page version,<sup>20</sup> that would have dramatically uncluttered the

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<sup>17</sup>League of Minnesota Cities, *A Model Charter for Minnesota Cities* (1977), Supp., p. 1. [The model charter accompanies this report as appendix H.]

<sup>18</sup>See above p. 2.

<sup>19</sup>See above p. 2.

<sup>20</sup>See, for example, Floyd B. Olson, *Report on Government Restructuring for the City of Minneapolis* (draft Dec. 16, 1996), app. B, pp. 45–64. [That report accompanies this report as appendix H.]

charter but left much more detail to ordinance. Or the Commission could have edited with a much lighter touch, and produced an 80-page or a 100-page revision, keeping much more detail in the charter itself.

The Commission took the approach that a provision was “fundamental” if it affected—

- a citizen’s rights, or
- the relationship among governmental officers or bodies, particularly including (but not limited to) the independence of municipal boards.

Using that approach, the Commission’s second draft in July 2003 — the first version that circulated outside the Commission — ran 40 pages.

Some participants in the charter-revision process took a broader view than the Commission about which provisions were “fundamental.” The Commission consistently accepted those views. Over the next dozen drafts, the Commission “demoted” practically nothing from the draft revision, but did add 19 pages back into the revision that had been slated for reclassification as ordinances. *The draft revision contains every provision that any board, citizen, or other interested person or group considered important enough that it belonged in the charter rather than in ordinance.*

### **Topical organization**

On a less philosophical note, the revision reorganizes the charter in nine articles, in a logical order, and groups related provisions together:

<b>Art.</b>	
I	General Provisions
II	Boundaries
III	Elections
IV	City Council
V	Board of Estimate & Taxation
VI	Park & Recreation Board
VII	Administration
VII	Officers and Other Employees
IX	Finance

The revision also adds a corresponding table of contents that lets the reader find a particular provision without searching line by line through the whole document.

**Numbering.** The revision generally follows the style of the League of Minnesota Cities’ model charter (which is similar to the Minnesota Statutes):

**Numbering System.** Under the decimal numbering system used in this charter, each section in a particular chapter has the number of the chapter followed by a decimal system and the section number . . . . This has the advantage not only of indicating to what chapter a section belongs but of allowing amendments to be placed more easily in their logical position in the charter . . . . To facilitate easy reference, it is best to avoid the older practice of starting each chapter with section 1.<sup>21</sup>

## Plain language

Finally, the revision rewrites the entire charter in language that is not only modern, but plain. The Commission adopted *Legal Writing in Plain English* by Bryan A. Garner as its style guide. The Garner guide offers 50 practices for plain-English drafting, including these suggested practices:

- § 31. Draft for an ordinary reader, not for a mythical judge who might someday review the document.
- § 32. Organize provisions in order of descending importance.
- § 33. Minimize definitions. If you have more than just a few, put them in a schedule at the end — not at the beginning.
- § 34. Break down enumerations into parallel provisions. Put every list of subparts at the end of the sentence — never at the beginning or in the middle.
- § 35. Delete every shall.
- § 36. Don't use provisos.
- § 37. Replace and/or wherever it appears.
- § 38. Prefer the singular over the plural.
- § 39. Prefer numerals, not words, to denote amounts. Avoid word-numeral doublets.
- § 40. If you don't understand a form provision — or don't understand why it should be included in your document — try diligently to gain that understanding. If you still can't understand it, cut it.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>League of Minnesota Cities, *A Model Charter for Minnesota Cities* (1977), Supp., p. 1. [The model charter accompanies this report as appendix G.]

<sup>22</sup>Bryan A. Garner, *Legal Writing in Plain English* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. x (contents).

Perhaps the most surprising stylistic innovation in the revision is the absence of the verb *shall*, following the style guide's exhortation to "delete every shall":<sup>23</sup>

*Shall* isn't plain English. Chances are it's not a part of your everyday vocabulary, except in lighthearted questions that begin, "Shall we . . . ?"

But legal drafters use *shall* incessantly. They learn it by osmosis in law school, and the lesson is fortified in law practice. Ask a drafter what *shall* means, and you'll hear that it's a mandatory word — opposed to the permissive *may*. Although this isn't a lie, it's a gross inaccuracy. And it's not a lie only because the vast majority of drafters don't know how shift the word is.<sup>24</sup>

A leading legal-usage guide (by the same author) explains the problem with *shall* in more detail:

***Shall.*** This word runs afoul of several basic principles of good drafting. The first is that a word used repeatedly in a given context is presumed to bear the same meaning throughout. (*Shall* commonly shifts its meaning even in midsentence.) The second principle is strongly allied with the first: when a word takes on too many senses and cannot be confined to one sense in a given document, it becomes useless to the drafter. (*Shall* has as many as eight senses in drafted documents.) The third principle has been recognized in the literature on legal drafting since the mid-19th century: good drafting generally ought to be in the present tense, not the future. (*Shall* is commonly used as a future-tense modal verb.) In fact, the selfsame quality in *shall* — the fact that it is a CHAMELEON-HUED WORD — causes it to violate each of those principles.

How can *shall* be so slippery, one may ask, when every lawyer knows that it denotes a mandatory action? Well, perhaps every lawyer has heard that it's mandatory, but very few consistently use it in that way. And, as a result, courts in virtually every English-speaking jurisdiction have held — by necessity — that *shall* means *may* in some contexts, and vice-versa. These holding have been necessary primarily to give effect to slipshod drafting.<sup>25</sup>

An elegant solution is available by following an approach that assigns distinct and consistent meanings to "words of authority." Several such approaches have

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<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, § 35.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>25</sup>Bryan A. Garner, *A Dictionary of Modern Legal Usage*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 939, *s.v.* "words of authority."

emerged in modern legal drafting, and the Commission has adopted one in particular, the “ABC Rule”:

Another solution is the “ABC rule,” so called because, in the late 1980s, it was most strongly advocated by certain Australian, British, and Canadian drafters. The ABC rule holds that legal drafters cannot be trusted to use the words *shall* under any circumstances. Under this view, lawyers are not educable on the subject of *shall*, so the only solution is complete abstinence. As a result, the drafter must always choose a more appropriate word: *must*, *may*, *will*, *is entitled to*, or some other expression.

This view had much to be said for it. American lawyers and judges who try to restrict *shall* to the sense “has a duty to” find it difficult to apply the convention consistently. Indeed, few lawyers have the semantic acuity to identify correct and incorrect *shalls* even after a few hours of study. That being so, there can hardly be much hope of the profession’s using *shall* consistently.

Small wonder, then, that the ABC rule has fast been gaining ground in the U.S. For example, the federal government’s Style Subcommittee — part of the Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure — a subcommittee that since 1991 has worked on all amendments to the various sets of federal court rules, adopted this approach, disallowing *shall*, in late 1992. (This came after a year of using *shall* only to impose a duty on the subject of the verb.) As a result, the rules have become sharper because the drafters are invariably forced into thinking more clearly and specifically about meaning.<sup>26</sup>

The ABC Rule assigns distinct and consistent meanings to the revision’s “words of authority”:

must	= is required to
must not	= is required not to; is disallowed from; is not permitted to
may	= has discretion to, is permitted to
may not	= is not permitted to; is disallowed from
is entitled to	= has a right to

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<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 940.

- will = [one of the following:]
- a. (expresses a future contingency)
  - b. (in an adhesion contract, expresses one’s own client’s obligations)
  - c. (where the relationship is a delicate one, expresses both parties’ obligations)<sup>27</sup>

The result is a far more readable document:

	<b>Charter</b>	<b>Revision (Comparison)</b>
<b>Pages</b>	192	63 (33%)
<b>Words</b>	70,905	13,862 (20%)
<b>Words per Sentence</b>	43.7	12.7 (29%)
<b>Passive Sentences</b>	14%	3% (21%)
<b>Reading Ease score<sup>28</sup></b>	31.6	48.6 (154%)
<b>Grade Level score<sup>29</sup></b>	12.0	9.6
<b><i>Doth</i></b>	4	0
<b><i>Shall</i></b>	1,848	0

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<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 942.

<sup>28</sup>The “Reading Ease score” is the Flesch Reading Ease score, which “rates text on a 100-point scale; the higher the score, the easier it is to understand the document. For most standard documents, aim for a score of approximately 60 to 70.”

<sup>29</sup>The “Grade Level score” is the Flesch–Kincaid Grade Level score, which “rates text on a U.S. grade-school level. For example, a score of 8.0 means that an eighth grader can understand the document. For most standard documents, aim for a score of approximately 7.0 to 8.0.”

## The Process

The Charter Commission has considered or begun several revisions in its history,<sup>30</sup> but has never finished one. This revision project began in September 2002, when Commission Chair Kari Dzeidzic accepted Brian Melendez's offer to serve as the project's reporter and manage the process. The Commission originally contemplated a two-year process, wrapping up in Summer 2004.

### Timeline

The Commission's original timeline for revising the Charter illustrates the process:

Estimated Timetable

#### Phase I

#### Preliminary Organization and Communication

- |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |             |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | <b>Organization.</b> Upon adoption of this report, the Commission will appoint the following committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) <b>Article committees.</b> One committee for each article in the proposed revision. Each article committee consists of two or three commissioners, with the senior commissioner as convener.</li><li>(b) <b>Editing committee.</b> The Editing Committee consists of three to five commissioners, with the senior commissioner as convener.</li></ul> | 6 Aug. 2003 |
| 2. | <b>Outside readers.</b> Upon adoption of this report, the Commission will identify outside readers experienced in City government and with the Charter. The Commission Chair will write a letter, in substantially the form that accompanies this report, to each such reader inviting his or her participation in the revision process.                                                                                                                                                                 | 6 Aug. 2003 |

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<sup>30</sup>See, for example, Floyd B. Olson, Report on Government Restructuring for the City of Minneapolis (draft Dec. 16, 1996). [That report accompanies this report as appendix H.]

3. **City Council.** The Commission Chair will write a letter, in substantially the form that accompanies this report, to the City Council president, notifying the Council about the revision process and inviting the Council's and each Council member's input into that process. 13 Aug. 2003
4. **Officers and boards.** The Commission Chair will write a letter, in substantially the form that accompanies this report, to— 13 Aug. 2003
- (a) the Mayor,
  - (b) the City Coordinator,
  - (c) the Board of Estimate & Taxation,
  - (d) the Library Board,
  - (e) the Park & Recreation Board, and
  - (f) the Civil Service Commission,
- notifying each officer, board, and commission about the revision process and asking that he, she, or it assign one member or employee who is knowledgeable about City government and about the Charter as a liaison to the Charter Revision Commission.

Phase II  
**Preliminary Feedback**

5. **Preliminary feedback.** Each article committee, the Editing Committee, each outside reader, and each liaison may give preliminary comments and suggestions to the Reporter. The Reporter will forward each such comment or suggestion to the appropriate article committee. Aug.–Sept. 2003
6. **Third draft.** The Reporter will produce a third draft taking into account the preliminary feedback. 22 Sept. 2003

Phase III  
**Formal Consideration by Commission**

7. **Formal consideration.** The Commission will consider and may amend the third draft, article by article, over one or more meetings. 1 Oct. 2003

8. **Editorial review.** As the Commission works through the third draft, the Editing Committee will review the draft and the Commission's amendments for style and consistency. Oct.–Dec. 2003
9. **Fourth draft.** At the Commission's first meeting after completing the third draft, the Editing Committee will report any appropriate correction or editorial amendment. The Commission will then adopt the amended third draft as the fourth draft. 7 Jan. 2004

Phase IV  
**Formal Feedback**

10. **Request for comments from Council members.** The Commission will transmit the fourth draft to each Council member with a request for comments and suggestions within 45 days. 14 Jan. 2004
11. **Request for comments from officers and boards.** The Commission will transmit the fourth draft to—
  - (a) the Mayor,
  - (b) the City Coordinator,
  - (c) the Board of Estimate & Taxation,
  - (d) the Library Board president,
  - (e) the Park & Recreation Board president, and
  - (f) the Civil Service Commission,with a request for comments and suggestions within 45 days. 14 Jan. 2004
12. **Legal review.** The Commission will transmit the fourth draft to the City Attorney with a request for comments and suggestions within 45 days. 14 Jan. 2004
13. **Feedback due.** The Reporter will collate the feedback, organize it in order according to each provision in the revision to which it relates, and report it to the Commission. The Commission will then schedule a public hearing. 2 Mar. 2004
14. **Report and commentary.** The Reporter will submit a draft report and commentary. 16 Mar. 2004

Phase V  
**Public Hearings**

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                 |                |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 15. | <b>Public hearings.</b> The Commission will hold one or more public hearings where it will consider the formal feedback and other public input, and may amend the fourth draft. | Apr.–June 2004 |
| 16. | <b>Fifth draft.</b> At a public hearing, the Commission will adopt the amended fourth draft as the fifth draft.                                                                 | 2 June 2004    |
| 17. | <b>Final editing.</b> The Editing Committee will edit and finalize the fifth draft and the accompanying report and commentary.                                                  | 16 June 2004   |
| 18. | <b>Final hearing.</b> The Commission will hold a final public hearing at which it considers the Editing Committee’s report and adopts the proposed revision in final form.      | 7 July 2004    |

Phase VI  
**Transmittal**

- |     |                                                                                                                                   |              |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 19. | <b>Transmittal.</b> The Commission will transmit the proposed revision to the City Council for its consideration.                 | 14 July 2004 |
| 20. | <b>Council process.</b> The Commission will support the City Council as requested as the Council considers the proposed revision. |              |

The process ended up taking a decade longer than contemplated, mostly so that the Commission could consider input from as broad a universe as possible, hold additional public hearings, and reach an accommodation with as many interested constituencies as possible. Through that process, the Commission has consulted—

- each Council member;
- the Mayor;
- the City Coordinator;
- the Board of Estimate & Taxation;
- the Library Board;
- the Park & Recreation Board;
- the Civil Service Commission;

- the City Attorney;
- each other interested officer, board, or department; and
- the public, via the website and other appropriate means.

The Commission also held five public hearings — two in 2005, two in 2006, and one in 2012.

### **Outside readers**

The Commission also consulted several volunteer “outside readers” — readers experienced in City government and with the Charter. For two years, these readers reviewed and commented on the revision’s multiple drafts:

- Bert Black
- Cameron Gordon
- Jill Kielblock
- John A. Cairns
- Kathleen O’Brien
- Lee Eklund
- Lyall Schwarzkopf
- Sharon Sayles Belton
- Vernon Wetternach
- Walter H. Rockenstein II

The Commission is grateful to these readers for their comments and constructive criticism throughout the process.

### **Future amendments?**

While the revision’s stated purpose “is *not* restructuring the City government or otherwise effecting any substantive change,”<sup>31</sup> the revision will hopefully turn the charter into a more accommodating document for anyone who is contemplating restructuring or other substantive change — especially since the revision groups related provisions together, and an amendment will thus involve

---

<sup>31</sup>See above p. 2.

only a single provision or a few adjacent provisions, rather than a crazy quilt of provisions scattered willy-nilly across the document.

But with respect to restructuring or other substantive change, the Commission for the time being takes no view, and leaves those questions for another day. The revision's only purpose is "modernizing, simplifying, and uncluttering the Charter, and redrafting its provisions for clarity, brevity, and consistency, in plain modern language."

### **Acknowledgments**

Many hands contributed to this revision — not only commissioners, but elected officers, boards, departments, citizens, and other interested persons and groups. But a few individuals went above and beyond the call of duty in supporting the project. The Charter Commission gratefully acknowledges their contributions:

- **Jack A. Qvale**, executive secretary of the Board of Estimate & Taxation, who advised the Commission about the City's taxing and budgeting processes, and translated the Charter's various taxing powers into consistent, modern terms.
- **Brian Rice**, attorney for the Park & Recreation Board, who helped the Commission navigate (and sometimes untangle) the myriad special laws and the rich history that underlie the Park Board and other independent boards. While zealously representing his client, and aggressively reviewing the Commission's work, Mr. Rice's contributions steadily improved the revision from draft to draft.
- **Deborah J. Banish**, Operations Support Services Manager for the Minneapolis Public Library, who monitored the project for the Library Board.
- **James Michels**, attorney for the Board of Business Agents, who helped the Commission navigate the Charter's provisions relating to civil service.
- The Commission's staff, including **Jan E. Belsaas**, **Jan D. Hrnrcir**, **Julie M. Bartell**, and **Peggy Y. Menshek**.
- The Commission's legal counsel — **Joseph M. LaBat**, **Burt T. Osborne**, **Mary Al Balber**, and **Lisa Needham** — and the City Attorney's office (especially former City Attorney **Jay Heffern** for his early and enthusiastic support).

- The commissioners whose service ended while the plain-language project was underway: **Jim Bernstein, Joseph M. Bester, Tyrone Bujold, Karen Collier, Karen Dziedzic, Donald Fraser, Thomas Jancik, John Klassen, Barry Lazarus, Richard H. Leitschuh, Marshall Lichty, Mark A. Masica, Kristy Remme, Pete Rhodes, Ian Stade, Aaron Street, Gary Thaden, James Theurer, and Sue Ponsford.**

## Conclusion

The Commission proposes two amendments<sup>32</sup> for submission to the voters at the regular election in November 2013, and accordingly proposes the following summaries:

### I

#### PLAIN-LANGUAGE CHARTER REVISION

Shall the Minneapolis City Charter be amended in the form of a revision whose purposes are (1) modernizing, simplifying, and uncluttering the Charter; (2) redrafting its provisions for clarity, brevity, and consistency, in plain modern language; (3) reorganizing the charter into nine articles, with each article covering a single subject, and grouping related provisions together; (4) removing from the Charter detailed provisions better suited to ordinance; and (5) retaining a provision in the charter if it affects a citizen's rights, or the relationship among governmental officers or bodies, particularly including (but not limited to) the independence of municipal boards?

### II

#### PLAIN-LANGUAGE CHARTER REVISION: LIQUOR-LICENSING PROVISIONS

The Minneapolis Charter Commission has proposed, in a companion amendment, that the Minneapolis City Charter be amended in the form of a thorough revision. This additional amendment is necessary because the liquor-licensing provisions are the subject of a statute that requires a different vote for amendment than other charter provisions. Shall the Charter be amended by reorganizing and rewriting the liquor-licensing provisions in plain modern language?

---

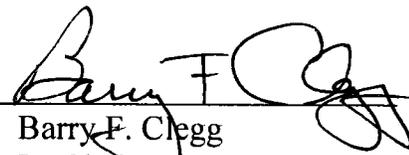
<sup>32</sup>Two amendments are necessary because the liquor-licensing provisions are the subject of a statute that requires a different vote for amendment than other charter provisions. *See* Minn. Stat. § 410.121.

Respectfully submitted,

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ANDREA RUBENSTEIN,  
BRIAN MELENDEZ, *reporter*,<sup>33</sup>  
LYALL SCHWARZKOPF, *secretary*,  
JAN SANDBERG, *vice-chair*, and  
BARRY CLEGG, *chair*,

May 21, 2013.

*Minneapolis Charter Commission.*

By   
Barry F. Clegg  
Its Chair

---

<sup>33</sup>Mr. Melendez served as reporter throughout the revision project, and as a commissioner until March 2006.



**MINNEAPOLIS CHARTER COMMISSION**  
**PLAIN-LANGUAGE CHARTER REVISION**

**REVISED CHARTER**

Proposed  
1 May 2013

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## **Article I General Provisions**

### **§ 1.1. Name**

This charter governs a city named the “City of Minneapolis” in Hennepin County, Minnesota. For this charter’s purposes, the “City” means the City of Minneapolis, and its provisions refer to the City unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

### **§ 1.2. Status**

The City is a municipal corporation having adopted this home-rule charter under the Minnesota Constitution, article XII, section 4. This charter is effective as of January 1, 2015, subject to any amendment after that date.

### **§ 1.3. Authority**

- (a) **Basic authority.** Subject to applicable law, this charter and action taken under its authority are the basis for the conduct of all the City’s business.
- (b) **Restatement and supersession.** This charter fully restates and supersedes every prior version of, and any ordinance or other municipal act inconsistent with, this charter. But except as this charter or an amendment explicitly provides otherwise, the charter does not affect—
  - (1) any ordinance or other municipal act adopted before its adoption or its latest revision or amendment;
  - (2) the existence, status, function, composition, powers, or duties of any board, commission, committee, department, or other public body; or
  - (3) the office, tenure, powers, or duties of any officer.
- (c) **Laws.**
  - (1) **Inconsistent laws superseded.** This charter supersedes any special law in effect at the time of the charter’s latest revision on January 1, 2015, to the extent of any inconsistency between them.

- (2) **Certain laws preserved.** The charter does not affect any special or other law to the extent that the law—
  - (A) confers upon the City, or upon any board, commission, committee, department, or officer for which this charter or an ordinance provides, a power, right, duty, or role in addition to those for which the charter or ordinance provides; or
  - (B) covers a matter that this charter does not cover.
- (d) **Construction.** For this charter’s purposes, except as this charter otherwise provides—
  - (1) each term used in this charter has the same meaning as in the Minnesota constitution and statutes, and other law relating to the same subject;
  - (2) the canons of construction and other principles of interpretation in the Minnesota statutes apply to this charter;
  - (3) each heading is a part of the charter, and may be used in interpreting its provisions, although the heading is subject to the text;
  - (4) the settled interpretation of any term or provision from a version of the charter before its latest revision on January 1, 2015, is valid in interpreting the revised charter to the extent that the charter carries forward the interpreted provision or term;
  - (5) any reference to population or other enumeration refers to the latest decennial federal census; and
  - (6) a “resident” means an inhabitant who resides within the City, regardless of whether he or she is a citizen within the meaning of the federal or state constitution or any other law.

#### § 1.4. Powers

- (a) **Powers plenary.** The City, acting through the boards, commissions, committees, departments, and officers for which this charter or an ordinance provides, may exercise any power that a municipal corporation can lawfully exercise at common law.
  - (1) **Eminent domain.** The City Council may, and any other authorized board may, establish the procedure by which the City exercises through that board its power of eminent

domain, including the procedure for any appeal from an award in condemnation.

- (2) **Infrastructure.** The City may establish, plan, build, maintain, regulate, and otherwise provide for public ways and works and any other infrastructure necessary or convenient for its residential and economic development; for the comfort, convenience, health, safety, or welfare of its residents; or for the efficient delivery of municipal services.
- (b) **Laws excepting home-rule cities.** Whenever a law grants a power or an option to cities generally or to cities of a certain class, but excepts cities having adopted a home-rule charter, the City may nevertheless exercise the power or option if that exercise is not inconsistent with this charter, notwithstanding its having adopted this charter.
- (c) **Immunity.** The City enjoys immunity from suit and liability for any injury resulting from—
  - (1) the defective condition of an ungraded street;
  - (2) the ground's insufficiency where a sidewalk can go but no sidewalk has been built; and
  - (3) any other act, omission, or condition for which a municipal corporation enjoys immunity at common law or by general or special law.
- (d) **Unmentioned powers.** This charter's mention of certain powers does not limit the City's powers to those mentioned.

### § 1.5. **Enforcement**

- (a) **Liability.** An ordinance may impose a duty, and may provide that a violation will result in—
  - (1) a fine;
  - (2) imprisonment;
  - (3) another penalty;
  - (4) any combination of such penalties;
  - (5) civil liability, including—
    - (A) multiple damages, or
    - (B) a lien against property; or

- (6) forfeiture of office, in the case of an officer who violates an ordinance relating to the office.
- (b) **Jurisdiction.** Except as this charter or an ordinance provides otherwise, the district court has jurisdiction—
  - (1) over any case arising under this charter or an ordinance, including the prosecution for any violation; and
  - (2) for enforcing any subpoena issued by an officer, board, or commission under this charter who can lawfully compel the attendance or testimony of any witness or the production of any book, document, or thing.

## **Article II Boundaries**

### **§ 2.1. City**

The City has the boundaries established under law.

### **§ 2.2. Wards**

- (a) **Number.** The City comprises 13 wards, designated by number. If possible, a redistricted ward keeps the number of the former ward from which its population mostly came.
- (b) **Characteristics.** The wards must be as equal in population as practicable. Each ward must—
  - (1) not have a population more than five percent over or under the mean ward population, according to—
    - (A) the latest decennial federal census; or
    - (B) a special computation or enumeration ordered by the Charter Commission with respect to any particular block or tract, computed or enumerated as of the same time and in the same manner as the latest decennial federal census;
  - (2) consist of a compact, contiguous area, not longer than twice its width, whose boundaries lie wherever possible along the centerline of public ways and, as far as practicable, run due north–south or east–west. A lake, waterway, or other body of water within a ward does not affect these characteristics; and

- (3) minimize change in existing boundaries, except as necessary in order to effect the foregoing criteria.

(c) **Redistricting.**

- (1) **Policy.** The City must redistrict the wards, as this section 2.2(c) provides—
  - (A) after each decennial federal census;
  - (B) as required by general or special law or by judicial decree; or
  - (C) when the number of wards changes, and may not otherwise redistrict them.
- (2) **Commission.** For this section 2.2(c)'s purposes, the "Commission" means the Charter Commission.
  - (A) **Advisory group.** The Commission must appoint an advisory group of up to nine eligible voters in the City, who will advise the Commission about redistricting.
    - (i) **Qualifications.** Each advisory-group member must be a eligible voter in the City who has not, within the two years of being appointed,—
      - (I) held any elected public office;
      - (II) appeared on a ballot listing his or her partisan affiliation in any election;
      - (III) worked as an employee of any political party (as defined by the Minnesota election law); or
      - (IV) worked as an employee for the City in any capacity other than as an election judge.
    - (ii) **Application.** Each applicant for the advisory group must submit an application to the city clerk on a form that the Commission has approved. The Commission must accept applications for at least 45 days.
    - (iii) **Diversity.** The Commission must appoint the advisory group with due regard for diversity.
- (3) **Schedule.** Subject to any applicable ordinance, general or special law, or judicial decree:

- (A) **Plan.** The Commission must adopt a ward-boundary plan, which includes each ward's population and boundaries—
  - (i) after a decennial census, on February 1 in the calendar year ending in —2, or after the legislature has been redistricted, whichever is later;
  - (ii) when required by law or judicial decree, as the law or decree provides; or
  - (iii) when the number of wards changes, 60 days after the amendment takes effect (even if the change takes effect later).
- (B) **Public hearings.** The Commission must hold at least four public hearings before adopting a ward-boundary plan, and must hold at least two of those hearings after—
  - (i) giving public notice of a draft plan or plans for at least seven days before each hearing; and
  - (ii) inviting comments from each neighborhood organization recognized by the City Council.
- (C) **Adoption.** The Commission adopts a ward-boundary plan by a majority of its membership at a meeting of which it has given public notice. The adopted plan takes effect when the Commission files it with the city clerk.
- (D) **Applicability.** A ward-boundary plan applies to the first general election for which filing opens after the plan takes effect. A plan does not affect the eligibility or term of any incumbent holding office when the plan takes effect, and does not apply to any special election held before the next regular election.
- (4) **Funding.** The City Council must provide for the staff and other resources that the Commission needs.
- (5) **Ordinances.** The City Council may enact any necessary or prudent ordinance implementing this section 2.2(c). No such ordinance applies to any redistricting process that begins within 30 days.

- (6) **Jurisdiction.** The district court enjoys original jurisdiction over any case arising out of redistricting under this section 2.2(c).

### § 2.3. **Park districts**

The provisions of the preceding section 2.2 regarding redistricting wards likewise apply as far as possible to redistricting park districts, except as this section 2.3 or a general or special law otherwise provides.

- (a) **Number.** The City comprises six park districts, designated by number. If possible, a redistricted park district keeps the number of the former district from which its population mostly came.
- (b) **Commission.** For this section 2.3's purposes, the "Commission" means the Charter Commission.
- (c) **Park & Recreation Board.** Before holding the last two public hearings on any park-district boundary plan, the Commission must notify the Park & Recreation Board of a draft plan or plans. The Commission must consider any recommendation by the Board.

### § 2.4. **Precincts**

- (a) **Precincts, polling places.** For the convenient administration of elections, the City Council must divide each ward into precincts and designate a polling place in each precinct. Each precinct must lie wholly within a single ward and park district.
- (b) **Effective date.** An act dividing a ward into precincts, or designating a polling place, takes effect after 90 days or at such later time as the act provides. An act designating a new polling place may take effect sooner if the old polling place is unavailable.

### § 2.5. **Annexed territory**

Any annexed territory joins the ward and the park district to which it is adjacent or, if adjacent to more than one ward or district, the least populous such ward or district.

### § 2.6. **Special districts**

For the more efficient delivery of municipal services in the City and its surroundings, and with a view toward their orderly growth—

- (a) the City Council may designate any area within three miles of the City's boundaries as a special district, in which it may—
  - (1) lay out the streets and other infrastructure so that they consistently continue the City's system,
  - (2) accept or dedicate property for streets or any other public purpose, and
  - (3) plat the district accordingly; and
- (b) except as prohibited by law, the City may acquire realty and extend infrastructure beyond the City's boundaries without designating a special district.

### **Article III Elections**

#### **§ 3.1. General provisions**

- (a) **General law applies.** Unless it is inconsistent with this charter, the Minnesota election law applies to each municipal election.
- (b) **Voting method.** The voters elect the City's elected officers by single transferable voting (also known as "ranked-choice voting" or "instant-runoff voting"). The City Council must provide by ordinance the method of counting the votes and of breaking a tie.
- (c) **Administration.** The city clerk administers each election under the City Council's direction. The clerk must give public notice of the time and place of holding each election at least 15 days before the election.
- (d) **Ballots.** The City Council must provide by ordinance for the ballot's format.
  - (1) **Nonpartisan ballot.** The ballot for each elected office is a nonpartisan ballot. Each candidate for Mayor or for Council member may state, in up to three words, his or her political party or principle, which will appear on the ballot.
  - (2) **Order.** The candidates' names must appear on a single ballot, which lists the offices being elected in this order:
    - (A) Mayor;
    - (B) Council member;
    - (C) Board of Estimate & Taxation member;

- (D) Park & Recreation commissioner at large; and
- (E) Park & Recreation commissioner by district.

### § 3.2. Regular elections

- (a) **Election years.** A regular election occurs in the last calendar year before any elected officer's term expires.
- (b) **Regular election.** The City holds its regular election on the uniform municipal election day for which the Minnesota election law provides.
- (c) **Schedule.** For each regular election, the City Council must provide by ordinance for a filing period of at least 15 days, unless the law provides otherwise. No act scheduling a filing period applies to any election held in the same calendar year.

### § 3.3. Special elections

- (a) **Elected office.** A special election occurs whenever a vacancy occurs in an elected office before the term expires, and this charter does not provide another method of filling the vacancy. For each special election, the City Council must provide by ordinance for a filing period of at least eight days.
- (b) **Other special elections.** The City Council must schedule a special election as required by law on any question that the voters may lawfully decide, and may schedule any other lawful special election. Unless the law provides otherwise, the Council may schedule such an election in connection with the next regular election. This section 3.3(b) is subject to section 9.4(e).

## Article IV City Council

For this charter's purposes, the "Council" means the City Council for which this article IV provides.

### § 4.1. Function.

- (a) **Governing body.** The governing body is the City Council, in which the City's general legislative and policymaking authority resides.
- (b) **Scope.** The Council may act on the City's behalf in any matter, except where—

- (1) this charter reserves the action for a different board, commission, or committee; or
  - (2) the action is inconsistent with this charter or otherwise unlawful.
- (c) **Council as statutory board.**
- (1) **Generally.** Where the law provides for municipal action through a board or commission, and this charter does not reserve that authority to a board or commission other than the Council, the Council must either—
    - (A) itself serve as the board or commission for which the law provides, even if the board or commission is a statutory rather than a municipal agency; or
    - (B) provide by ordinance for the board or commission, in which case—
      - (i) the board’s or commission’s membership may (but need not) consist partly or wholly of Council members, and
      - (ii) the Council may (but need not) organize the board or commission as a municipal department.
  - (2) **Board of appeal and equalization.** The Council may provide under this section 4.1(c) for a board of appeal and equalization, in which case it may also provide that any such board must return to the Council the assessment rolls that the board has revised, in which case the Council may confirm the board’s revisions or return the rolls to the board for further revision.
- (d) **Franchises.** The Council may grant and regulate any lawful franchise.
- (e) **Licenses.** The Council may grant a license only if the license expires within one year.
- (f) **Liquor licenses.**<sup>1</sup> Subject to any other applicable law, the Council may grant a license for the sale of liquor.

<sup>1</sup>This provision is the subject of a statute that requires a different vote for amendment than other charter provisions. It will therefore be proposed as a separate

- (1) **Zoning.** The Council may grant a liquor license only in an area zoned for commercial or industrial use, not for residence or office use.
  - (A) **Off-site consumption.** If the liquor will not be used or consumed on the premises, then the area for which the license is granted must contain at least five acres.
  - (B) **On-site consumption.** If the liquor will be consumed on the premises, then—
    - (i) the area for which the license is granted must contain at least seven acres, and
    - (ii) the licensed business must, according to standards that the Council establishes by ordinance—
      - (I) derive a substantial part of its income from selling food for consumption on the premises, and
      - (I) provide adequate facilities for food to be consumed on the premises.
  - (C) **Calculating acreage.** The acreage required under this section 4.1(f)(1) includes any contiguous area in which any applicable ordinance permits the sale of liquor.
  - (D) **Continuing eligibility.** The Council may grant a liquor license without regard to this section 4.1(f)(1)'s requirements for acreage or food consumption if—
    - (i) the charter or any other applicable law permitted such a license as of November 1, 1974, or
    - (ii) the licensed site's latest use included the sale of liquor under such a license.
- (2) **Wine licenses.** The Council may grant a license for the on-sale of wine, which may include the on-sale of intoxicating malt beverages, to a restaurant whose gross receipts are at least 70 percent attributable to the sale of food, if the

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amendment. If that amendment passes, then it will be incorporated into this revision in the form shown here. Otherwise, the existing charter's provision will be codified here.

restaurant otherwise qualifies for the license under each applicable law or ordinance.

- (3) **On-site consumption.** The Council must by ordinance establish standards so that a business holding a liquor license in an areas smaller than seven acres—
  - (A) does not sell, serve, or permit to be consumed any wine or intoxicating malt beverage, unless the buyer orders a meal; and
  - (B) does not have a bar or bar area.
- (4) **Other limits.** The Council may by ordinance impose additional limits on granting a liquor license.
- (5) **Other laws and ordinances apply.** All laws and ordinances that otherwise apply to a licensed site remain applicable after the Council has granted a liquor license.

#### § 4.2. **Organization.**

- (a) **Composition.** The Council comprises one Council member elected by and from each ward.
- (b) **Term; election.** Each Council member's term is four years. Each ward's voters elect their Council member in each year following a year whose number is evenly divisible by four.
- (c) **Council judges elections.** The Council judges its members' elections, for which purpose it may compel the testimony of any witness who may have relevant information, and may compel the production of any relevant book, document, or thing.
- (d) **Vacancy.**
  - (1) **Early vacancy.** When a Council member vacates his or her office before March 1 in the year of the next regular election, the Council must schedule a special election filling the vacancy, held within 75 days after the vacancy occurs.
  - (2) **Late vacancy.** When a Council member vacates his or her office—
    - (A) after March 1 in the year of the next regular election, and
    - (B) before filing opens for the election,—the Council appoints a successor who serves out the unexpired term.

- (3) **Election after vacancy.** When a Council membership is vacant at the time of an election, the elected member takes office upon being elected and qualified, and serves out the unexpired term as well as the term for which he or she was elected.
- (e) **City clerk.**
- (1) **Election.** The City Council elects the city clerk, to whose election section 8.4(b) does not apply.
  - (2) **Duties.** The city clerk must—
    - (A) keep the corporate seal and all municipal papers and records, including (but not limited to) the City Council’s proceedings (sec. 4.4(e));
    - (B) administer each election under the City Council’s direction (sec. 3.1(c)), and may administer an election for the Minneapolis Public Schools board of education if that board so authorizes;
    - (C) provide for each ordinance that the City Council adopts to be promptly codified, and generally review the code of ordinances at least once every five years; and
    - (D) perform any other duties for which this charter or an ordinance provides, or that the Council requests.
  - (3) **Oaths.** The city clerk may administer an oath or affirmation in any proceeding under this charter.

#### § 4.3 Meetings.

- (a) **Quorum.** The Council’s quorum is a simple majority of its membership, disregarding any vacancy. A quorumless meeting may adjourn to a more convenient time, and may take measures to obtain a quorum.
- (b) **Majority.** The Council ordinarily acts by simple majority of a quorum, disregarding any abstention. Where this charter or a general law, special law, ordinance, rule, or other authority provides for action by a majority of the Council’s membership, it refers to a majority of the members then serving, disregarding any vacancy.
- (c) **Organizational meeting.** The Council must elect its officers and organize its committees at the first meeting in January following each general election.

- (1) **Election.** The Council elects or appoints its officers by a majority of its membership.
- (2) **President.** The Council at its organizational meeting must elect from its membership a presiding officer.
- (d) **Regular meetings.** The Council's rules must provide for regular and other necessary meetings.
- (e) **Special meetings.** The Council's rules may provide for special meetings. The Mayor may call a special meeting by notice to each Council member. A special meeting may transact only the business stated in the notice.
- (f) **Attendance.** The Council may compel the attendance of absent members, and may remove or otherwise penalize a member for continued nonattendance, unless there is a good reason for the nonattendance.

#### § 4.4. Proceedings

- (a) **Vote required.**
  - (1) **Rules.** The Council at its organizational meeting may by simple majority adopt or amend its rules of order for the conduct of its own business. The Council may thereafter amend its rules by simple majority unless the rules themselves require a supermajority. The Council may decide a question of order under its rules by simple majority.
  - (2) **Acts.** An act by the Council takes a simple majority, except as this charter or the law otherwise provides. For this article IV's purposes, the noun "act"—
    - (A) means any ordinance, resolution, appropriation, any other lawful action, and any action amending, repealing, or otherwise affecting any such act; but
    - (B) does not include a rule or other vote that relates to the Council's internal organization or procedure.
  - (3) **Absolute majority required for certain actions.** The Council may take the following action only with a majority of its membership:
    - (A) adopt an ordinance or resolution;
    - (B) appoint or remove an officer under section 8.4(b);
    - (C) appropriate money; and

- (D) authorize an improvement to a sidewalk subject to a special assessment (sec. 4.4(a)(5)).
- (4) **Supermajority required for certain actions.** The Council may take the following action only with the prescribed supermajority:
  - (A) by two-thirds of its membership, authorize an improvement (other than a sidewalk) subject to a special assessment (sec. 4.4(a)(5));
  - (B) by two-thirds of its membership, regrade a graded street;
  - (C) by two-thirds of its membership, sell realty;
  - (D) by two-thirds of its membership, vacate wholly or partly any public way or plat, which power the Council enjoys exclusively;
  - (E) by two-thirds of its membership, remit or discharge any judgment in the City's favor;
  - (F) by two-thirds of its membership, pass an act over the Mayor's veto (sec. 4.4(c));
  - (G) by three-fourths of its membership, authorize a slaughterhouse within the City. No person may operate a slaughterhouse within the City without such authorization; and
  - (H) by three-fourths of its membership, authorize an unbudgeted payment out of current funds (sec. 9.2(a)(3)).
- (5) **Improvements.** The Council may by a majority of its membership authorize a sidewalk, with or without a special assessment. The Council may, by two-thirds of its membership, authorize any other improvement subject to a special assessment. The Council may by a majority of its membership act with respect to an improvement already authorized or to a special assessment in connection with such an improvement.
- (b) **Ordinances.** The Council may adopt an ordinance (including an act amending or repealing an ordinance already adopted) only—
  - (1) at least one week after its introduction at a meeting;

- (2) after a report from a committee to which the matter was referred at a Council meeting held at least one week earlier; or
  - (3) by unanimous consent.
- (c) **Mayor's signature or veto.** The Council must present each act to the Mayor in the manner that this charter prescribes for giving notice. The act takes effect (subject to publication (sec. 4.4(d)), in the case of an ordinance or resolution)—
- (1) when the Mayor signs it;
  - (2) five days after its presentation to the Mayor, if he or she neither signs nor vetoes it; or
  - (3) if the Mayor vetoes it by returning it to the city clerk with an objection within five days (excluding Sundays) after its presentation, only if the Council at its next meeting by two-thirds of its membership again passes the act over the Mayor's veto.
- (d) **Publication.** An ordinance or resolution takes effect upon publication in an official newspaper. An act so published—
- (1) is admissible as evidence,
  - (2) establishes a presumption that the act is valid, and
  - (3) is entitled to judicial notice.
- (e) **Record.** The city clerk must carefully and faithfully record the Council's and Council committee's proceedings, including each act adopted and each member's vote on each such act. The clerk must keep the proceedings on file and available for inspection and copying during normal business hours at the clerk's office.

#### § 4.5. Executive Committee

- (a) **Function and powers.** The Executive Committee enjoys the powers and performs the duties that this charter, or the Council by ordinance or resolution, prescribes.
- (b) **Organization.** The Executive Committee comprises—
  - (1) the Mayor, as chair;
  - (2) the Council president; and
  - (3) up to three Council members elected by the Council.

The Committee's members may not all belong to the same political party unless the Mayor and all the Council members belong to the same political party.

- (c) **Rules.** The Executive Committee may adopt rules of order for the conduct of its own business.

## **Article V**

### **Board of Estimate & Taxation**

For this article V's purposes, the "Board" means the Board of Estimate & Taxation.

#### **§ 5.1. Policy**

Through the Board of Estimate & Taxation, the City coordinates in the general interest its various taxes and taxing and borrowing powers.

#### **§ 5.2. Functions and powers**

- (a) **General functions and powers.** The Board enjoys the powers and performs the duties that this charter prescribes.
- (b) **Employment.**
  - (1) **Compensation.** The Board may provide for any necessary employees and for their compensation.
  - (2) **Unclassified service.** The Board may employ in the unclassified service—
    - (A) an executive secretary, and
    - (B) an auditor.

#### **§ 5.3. Organization**

- (a) **Composition.** The Board comprises six members:
  - (1) the Mayor;
  - (2) the Council president;
  - (3) the Council member who chairs the Council committee whose charge includes the budget;
  - (4) a commissioner elected by and from the Park & Recreation Board (or, if the Board has not elected a commissioner, the Board's president); and

- (5) two members elected by the voters in a regular election held in each year following a year whose number is evenly divisible by four.
- (b) **Officers.** The Board elects, in addition to its president (sec. 5.2(b)), a member as its vice-president.
- (c) **Vacancies.** The Mayor and the City Council must, by an appointment under section 8.4(b), fill any vacancy in the office of any member elected to the Board by the voters.

#### § 5.4. **Meetings**

The Board meets at least monthly.

#### § 5.5. **Borrowing power**

The Board may, with at least five affirmative votes, borrow against anticipated tax revenues up to half the amount due and not delinquent, which debt is redeemable or otherwise payable not later than the revenue is anticipated.

#### § 5.6. **Taxing power**

Subject to article IX, the Board may tax the taxable property in the City for its own purposes as provided by law.

### **Article VI Park & Recreation Board**

For this article VI's purposes, the "Board" means the Park & Recreation Board.

#### § 6.1. **Policy**

Through the Park & Recreation Board, the City provides for parks, parkways, and recreational opportunities for its current and future residents' use. The Board may likewise provide for service for nonresidents.

#### § 6.2. **Functions and powers**

- (a) **General function and powers.**
  - (1) **Charter powers.** The Board establishes, governs, administers, and maintains, and may design, develop, and improve—

- (A) the parks, parkways, and recreational opportunities in and adjacent to the City;
  - (B) each lake, waterway, or other body of water in the park system;
  - (C) the ornamental and shade trees in the City's streets, alleys, and public grounds and ways; and
  - (D) any gallery, museum, or school in the park system.
- (2) **Other powers.** The Board also enjoys all the powers for which any general law, special law, or ordinance provides, including any power necessary and proper for exercising its enumerated powers or for performing its lawful functions.
- (3) **General powers.** When exercising its powers under this charter, the Board may act on the City's behalf and enjoys all powers necessary and proper for the exercise of its function under this charter, including (but not limited to)—
- (A) eminent domain;
  - (B) power over public ways that pass through, over, or adjacent to property that it owns or governs, including the power to open, improve, or vacate a public way;
  - (C) power over the shores and waterways adjacent to any lake, waterway, or other body of water that it owns or governs, including exclusive power over any lake, waterway, or other body of water whose shore it entirely owns.
- (4) **Powers beyond City's boundaries.** The Board may exercise all the same powers and functions with respect to any park, parkway, or other property that it owns or governs outside the City as with respect to the parks and parkways inside the City.
- (b) **Status.** The Board is a unique department of the City and, in the exercise of its general functions and specially defined powers, may, on the City's behalf—
- (1) adopt a seal;
  - (2) make contracts;
  - (3) buy and sell property;
  - (4) accept and administer, invest, or otherwise dispose of gifts; and

- (5) exercise any other lawful power for which this charter provides.
- (c) **Ordinances.** The Board may enact any necessary or prudent ordinance within this article VI's purposes. Such an ordinance may provide for a fine, imprisonment, other penalty, or any combination of such penalties for its violation, in which case the city attorney prosecutes any such violation. Any resulting fine or other monetary penalty goes to the park & recreation fund.
- (d) **Park museum.** The Board has accepted a gift of property for the benefit of a park, museum, gallery, or school of arts and crafts, which a donor-designated nonprofit organization administers according to the terms under which the gift was accepted and according to any agreements with the Board. The Board must annually levy a tax on property in Hennepin County, as provided by law, whose proceeds go to a fund that pays for the park, museum, gallery, or school, and may not be diverted for any other purpose.
- (e) **Park police.** The Mayor must appoint as many police officers for the parks and parkways as the Board requests. The Board must pay for such police out of the park & recreation fund, may regulate and direct them, and may discipline or discharge them (subject to the Civil Service Commission's rules).
- (f) **Realty.**
  - (1) **Supermajority required for certain actions.** The Board may dedicate, buy, lease, or name or rename realty with at least six affirmative votes.
  - (2) **Acquiring realty.** The Board may acquire realty—
    - (A) by purchase, contract, or mortgage, and
    - (B) by assessing the benefited property, in which case the Board must identify the property benefited and determine the appropriate assessment.
  - (3) **Mortgages.** The Board may issue or give back a mortgage, with or without bonds securing the unpaid purchase price, that evidences its indebtedness for any such realty.
  - (4) **Selling realty.** The Board may sell realty only if it has abandoned the realty, and the district court approves the sale.
- (g) **Compensation.** The Board may provide for the commissioners' compensation.

- (h) **Employment.**
  - (1) **Employment and compensation.** The Board may provide for any necessary employees and for their compensation, may regulate and direct them, and may discipline or discharge them (subject to the Civil Service Commission's rules, in the case of an employee in the classified service).
  - (2) **Unclassified service.** The Board may employ in the unclassified service—
    - (A) the superintendent,
    - (B) its attorney,
    - (C) the park police chief,
    - (D) a landscape architect, and
    - (E) any officer or other employee for whose unclassified status this charter or a general or special law provides.
  - (3) **Other agents.** The Board may employ any necessary contractor or other agent.
- (j) **Purchases.** The Board may buy supplies for the recreational and eating facilities under its charge without going through the City's purchasing department.
- (j) **Mayor's signature or veto.** The Board must present each act to the Mayor in the manner that this charter prescribes for giving notice. The act takes effect—
  - (1) when the Mayor signs it;
  - (2) five days after its presentation to the Mayor, if he or she neither signs nor vetoes it; or
  - (3) if the Mayor vetoes it by returning it to the Board with an objection within five days (excluding Sundays) after its presentation, only if the Board at its next meeting by two-thirds of its membership again passes the act over the Mayor's veto.

### § 6.3. Organization

- (a) **Composition.** The Board comprises nine commissioners, elected in each general election in which a Mayor is elected:
  - (1) three commissioners at large, and
  - (2) six commissioners elected by district.

- (b) **Removal.**
  - (1) **Petition.** On a petition sworn by at least 10 residents, the district court, after notice and hearing, may remove any commissioner for malfeasance or misdemeanor in office.
  - (2) **Nonattendance.** The Board may remove any commissioner absent from its meetings for 90 days.
- (c) **Vacancies.** The Board, with at least six affirmative votes, may fill any vacancy in its membership.
- (d) **Secretary.** The Board elects a secretary who does not serve on the Board. The secretary may administer an oath or affirmation in any proceeding under this article VI.
- (e) **Attorney.** The Board may appoint its own attorney at law.

#### § 6.4. Meetings

- (a) **Quorum.** The Board's quorum is a simple majority of its membership, disregarding any vacancy. A quorumless meeting may adjourn to a more convenient time, and may take measures to obtain a quorum.
- (b) **Majority.** The Board ordinarily acts by simple majority of a quorum, disregarding any abstention. Where this charter or a general law, special law, ordinance, rule, or other authority provides for action by a majority of the board's membership, it refers to a majority of the board's members then serving, disregarding any vacancy.
- (c) **Rules.** The Board may adopt rules of order for the conduct of its own business.
- (d) **Organizational meeting.** The Board must annually hold an organizational meeting on the first weekday in January that is not a holiday.
  - (1) **Election.** The Board elects or appoints its officers by a majority of its membership.
  - (2) **President.** The Board at its organizational meeting must elect from its membership a presiding officer.
- (e) **Special meetings.** The Mayor may call a special meeting by notice to each member. A special meeting may transact only the business stated in the notice.

- (f) **Record.** The secretary must carefully and faithfully record the Board's proceedings, including each act adopted and each member's vote on each such act, which the secretary must promptly file in the Board's office. The secretary must keep the Board's proceedings on file and available for inspection and copying by any voter during normal business hours at the Board's office.
- (g) **Acts.** For this article VI's purposes, the noun "act"—
  - (1) means any ordinance, resolution, appropriation, any other lawful action, and any action amending, repealing, or otherwise affecting any such act; but
  - (2) does not include a rule or other vote that relates to the Board's internal organization or procedure.

## § 6.5. Finances

- (a) **Taxing power.**
  - (1) **Charter powers.** Subject to article IX's provisions, the Board may tax the taxable property in the City—
    - (A) to improve and rehabilitate parks, and to maintain parkways;
    - (B) to acquire, equip, maintain, improve, and govern the parks, parkways, and playgrounds and other recreational facilities;
    - (C) to conduct recreational programs for the public;
    - (D) to plant, care for, maintain, and remove trees and shrubs; and
    - (E) to control pollution in lakes.
  - (2) **Other taxing powers.** The Board may otherwise tax as provided by law.
  - (3) **Maximum.** The Board's taxing power is subject to the maximum set under section 9.3(a)(4), except as this charter or any applicable law otherwise provides.
  - (4) **Accounting.** The city finance officer must deposit any money levied under this section 6.5(a) in an appropriate fund or funds upon which the Board can draw. No money may be paid out of any such fund except pursuant to a warrant signed by the Board's president and secretary and countersigned by the finance officer.

- (b) **Borrowing power.** The Board, with at least six affirmative votes, may borrow an amount on which the annual interest does not exceed \$50,000, for up to 50 years, with the debt secured by the parks and parkways.

#### § 6.6. Parkways

- (a) **Jurisdiction.** The Board has the same power and jurisdiction to establish, improve, modify, discontinue, or vacate parkways that the City has over city streets.
- (b) **Special assessments.** The Board may levy and collect assessments, in the same manner as the City Council levies and collects assessments, from property owners whose land the Board's improvements specially benefits.
- (c) **Water mains and sewers.** The City Council may lay water mains and sewers along or under parkways with the same power and jurisdiction that it has over city streets.

### **Article VII Administration**

#### § 7.1. Mayor

- (a) **Term; election.** The Mayor's term is four years. The Mayor is elected by the voters in a regular election held in each year following a year whose number is evenly divisible by four.
- (b) **Duties.** The Mayor must—
  - (1) take care that all laws and ordinances are faithfully observed and enforced within the City;
  - (2) take care that each other officer discharges his or her duties, for which purpose the Mayor may seek a writ of mandamus or other appropriate action against any delinquent officer;
  - (3) recommend action in the City's interest by any other government;
  - (4) address the City Council annually on the state of the City, and recommend appropriate measures for the City's physical and economic development; and

- (5) notify the City Council and any other interested board, commission, committee, or department of any litigation against the City.
- (c) **Delegation.** The Mayor may appoint a proxy or other representative to serve in his or her place on any board, commission, committee, or other public body of which he or she is a member. Any such appointment must expire not later than the Mayor's term expires.
- (e) **Vacancy.** Whenever the Mayor vacates his or her office before the year of the next regular election, or in that year before March 1, the City Council must provide for a special election filling the vacancy within 90 days after the vacancy occurs.
- (f) **Succession.**
  - (1) **Temporary vacancy.** Whenever the Mayor cannot discharge his or her duties, or the office is vacant pending an election, then the Council president (or, if the Council president cannot act, the Council vice-president) must act as Mayor until the Mayor (or the Council president, if the vice-president is acting as Mayor) resumes his or her duties or a new Mayor takes office. Any action taken by the Council president or vice-president, or any other successor, acting as Mayor is as valid as if taken by the Mayor. Any successor acting as Mayor draws the Mayor's salary instead of the salary of the office by virtue of which he or she is acting as Mayor.
  - (2) **Succession plan.** The City Council must by resolution adopt a succession plan, which must establish a line of succession beyond the Council vice-president. The Council must review the plan at each organizational meeting.
- (g) **Resources.** The City Council must provide for the staff and other resources that the Mayor needs for the effective performance of his or her duties.
  - (1) **Staff.** For the Mayor's support, the Council must provide for at least—
    - (A) one administrative deputy,
    - (B) two administrative aides,
    - (C) one administrative assistant,
    - (D) one executive secretary, and
    - (E) any other appropriate staff.

The Mayor may appoint any such staff without regard to section 8.4(b). The Mayor's staff serves in the unclassified service.

- (2) **Contingent fund.** The Council must annually appropriate a fund of not less than \$5,000 for use at the Mayor's discretion. The Mayor may not contribute from this fund to any individual's political campaign. The Mayor must report each expense from this fund to the Council.

## § 7.2. Departments

- (a) **The departments generally.** The City Council must establish, organize, and otherwise provide for these departments:
  - (1) a city coordinator;
  - (2) a city clerk (sec. 4.2(e));
  - (3) a city assessor;
  - (4) a city finance officer and budget office, including a director;
  - (5) a city attorney and legal department;
  - (6) a civil rights department, including a director, and a civil rights commission (sec. 7.2(d));
  - (7) a department of community planning & economic development;
  - (8) a fire department (sec. 7.4);
  - (9) a health department, headed by a health commissioner;
  - (10) a planning commission (sec. 7.2(e));
  - (11) a police department (sec. 7.3);
  - (12) a public-works department;
  - (13) a purchasing department;
  - (14) a regulatory-services department; and
  - (15) any other department necessary or convenient for the efficient delivery of municipal services.
- (b) **Departmental organization.** The ordinance establishing each department must provide for an officer or a board or commission as its head, for any other necessary officer, and for appropriate staff and other resources. The Mayor nominates and the City Council appoints

each department's head under section 8.4(b), except as this charter or any applicable law or ordinance otherwise provides.

(c) **City attorney.**

- (1) **Function.** Except as this charter otherwise provides, the city attorney and the legal department under his or her direction—
  - (A) serve as the attorneys and counselors at law to the Mayor, the City Council and its committees, and the other boards, commissions, committees, departments, and officers for which this charter provides; and
  - (B) counsels, and delivers an opinion on any legal question from, the Mayor, the City Council and its committees, and the other boards, commissions, and committees for which this charter provides, who must consult only the city attorney (and must not employ or pay any other attorney) for any necessary legal advice.
- (2) **Deputy city attorneys.** The city attorney may appoint two deputies, who serve in the unclassified service, but with the same employee benefits (except as to hiring and removal) as an officer in the classified service. If a deputy is appointed from the classified service, then he or she is treated as taking a leave of absence while serving as a deputy, after which he or she is entitled to return to his or her permanent grade in the classified service. If no vacancy is available in that grade, then the least senior employee so classified returns to his or her grade before being so classified.
- (3) **Park & Recreation Board.** This section 7.2(c) does not apply to the Park & Recreation Board, except to the extent that the Board so requests.

(d) **Civil rights commission.**

- (1) **Appointment.** The City Council must provide by ordinance for the appointment of a civil rights commission, to which section 8.4(b) does not apply.
- (2) **Jurisdiction.** For the purpose of enforcing civil-rights legislation, the civil rights commission enjoys jurisdiction over each board, commission, committee, department, officer, and other agency or agent, notwithstanding anything in this charter to the contrary. No board, commission, committee, department, officer, or other agency or agent may limit the civil rights commission's jurisdiction.

(e) **Planning commission.**

- (1) **Commission.** The commission consists of—
  - (A) the Mayor;
  - (B) a member elected by (but not necessarily from) the board of county commissioners;
  - (C) a member elected by and from the City Council;
  - (D) a member elected by and from the Park & Recreation Board;
  - (E) a member elected by and from the Minneapolis Public Schools board of education;
  - (F) a member who is a resident, appointed by the City Council; and
  - (G) four members who are residents and are not members of any board otherwise represented on the commission, appointed under section 8.4(b).
- (2) **Function.** The commission must—
  - (A) prepare a comprehensive plan for the City's physical development and improvement, with particular regard to public utility and convenience and the general welfare;
  - (B) recommend to any appropriate board, commission, committee, department, or officer specific plans for public improvements, consistent with the comprehensive plan;
  - (C) recommend to the City Council ordinances regulating the zoning of buildings and other structures with respect to their size, location, and use; and
  - (D) perform any other duties for which an ordinance provides.
- (3) **Plans and plats.** No public office may receive or record any plan, plat, or replat of any street or other realty in the City, intended for dedication to public use or for the benefit of the fronting or adjacent property, unless the planning commission has endorsed its approval on the plan, plat, or replat. The commission's disapproval rejects, and its approval accepts, the proposed dedication on the City's behalf. But accepting such a dedication does not subject the City to any duty to

maintain the dedicated property until the City has entered, used, or improved upon it.

- (4) **Public improvements.** The City may not authorize or incur debt for any public improvement, including (but not limited to) any structure of permanent character intended for ornament or commemoration, unless—
  - (A) the planning commission approves the location and design;
  - (B) the commission, within 30 days after receiving a plan for a proposed improvement's location and design, notifies the City Council of particular objections, and the Council approves over the commission's objections; or
  - (C) the commission does not notify the Council of particular objections within 30 days.
- (f) **Purchasing.** The City Council may require that each officer, board, commission, or department buy goods through the purchasing department, except as this charter otherwise provides.

### § 7.3. Police

- (a) **Police department.** The Mayor has complete power over the establishment, maintenance, and command of the police department. The Mayor may make all rules and regulations and may promulgate and enforce general and special orders necessary to operating the police department. Except where the law vests an appointment in the department itself, the Mayor appoints and may discipline or discharge any employee in the department (subject to the Civil Service Commission's rules, in the case of an employee in the classified service).
  - (1) **Police chief.**
    - (A) **Appointment.** The Mayor nominates and the City Council appoints a police chief under section 8.4(b).
    - (B) **Term.** The chief's term is three years.
    - (C) **Civil service.** The chief serves in the unclassified service, but with the same employee benefits (except as to hiring and removal) as an officer in the classified service. If a chief is appointed from the classified service, then he or she is treated as taking a leave of

absence while serving as chief, after which he or she is entitled to return to his or her permanent grade in the classified service. If no vacancy is available in that grade, then the least senior employee so classified returns to his or her grade before being so classified.

- (D) **Public health.** The chief must execute the City Council's orders relating to the preservation of health.
- (2) **Police officers.** Each peace officer appointed in the police department must be licensed as required by law. Each such licensed officer may exercise any lawful power that a peace officer enjoys at common law or by general or special law, and may execute a warrant anywhere in the county.
- (b) **Temporary police.** The Mayor may, in case of riot or other emergency, appoint any necessary temporary police officer for up to one week. Each such officer must be a licensed peace officer.
- (c) **Funding.** The City Council must fund a police force of at least 0.0017 employees per resident, and provide for those employees' compensation, for which purpose it may tax the taxable property in the City up to 0.3 percent of its value annually. This tax is in addition to any other tax, and not subject to the maximum set under section 9.3(a)(4).

#### § 7.4. Fire

- (a) **Fire department.**
  - (1) **Fire chief.**
    - (A) **Appointment.** The Mayor nominates and the City Council appoints a fire chief under section 8.4(b).
    - (B) **Civil service.** The chief serves in the unclassified service, but with the same employee benefits (except as to hiring and discharge) as an officer in the classified service. If a chief is appointed from the classified service, then he or she is treated as taking a leave of absence while serving as chief, after which he or she is entitled to return to his or her permanent grade in the classified service. If no vacancy is available in that grade, then the least senior employee so classified returns to his or her grade before being so classified.

- (2) **Senior management.**
  - (A) **Senior managers.** The department's senior managers are those holding the titles (which may be held by one or more employees)—
    - (i) assistant chief,
    - (ii) deputy chief,
    - (iii) fire marshal,
    - (iv) assistant chief of training, or
    - (v) engineering officer.
  - (B) **Appointment.** The fire chief appoints, with the City Council's assent, without examination, a senior manager from the department's firefighters with the rank of captain or higher; and may discharge him or her at will, without regard to the Civil Service Commission's rules. An officer who accepts such an appointment is treated as taking a leave of absence, retains his or her grade and seniority in the classified service, and earns seniority in that grade while serving as a senior manager, after which he or she is entitled to return to his or her permanent grade in the classified service. If no vacancy is available in that grade, then the least senior employee so classified returns to his or her grade before being so classified.
- (3) **Officers and staff.**
  - (A) **Appointment.** The fire chief, with the City Council's assent, appoints (subject to the Civil Service Commission's rules) the department's other officers and other employees.
  - (B) **Layoffs.** The fire chief may (subject to the Civil Service Commission's rules) discharge an employee in the City's interest. If the City Council directs that the department reduce its force, then the chief must recommend only such layoffs as will not impair the department's operations.
- (b) **Fire marshal.** The fire marshal must take care that all laws and ordinances against danger from fire are faithfully observed and enforced, for which purpose the marshal may enter and inspect any

building (including a dwelling) at any reasonable time. The marshal must examine and record the cause of any fire.

- (c) **Fire police.** The City Council may provide for fire police within either the fire department or the police department. The fire department may command the police officers at any fire.
- (d) **Fire emergencies.** If necessary for the protection of life or property from an unusual fire, a riot, or a like emergency, the fire chief may—
  - (1) compel the attendance of any employee in the fire department (including an off-duty firefighter), for which purpose the chief may make any necessary or prudent rule; and
  - (2) appoint additional officers or other firefighters for temporary service during the emergency, without regard to the Civil Service Commission’s rules.
- (e) **Funding.** The City Council must fund a fire department that can maintain adequate staffing.
  - (1) **Operating expenses.** The department’s operating expenses are paid out of the general fund.
  - (2) **Capital expenses.** The department’s capital expenses are paid out of the permanent-improvement fund, or the proceeds from bonds issued for the purpose, or out of the general fund.

## **Article VIII**

### **Officers and Other Employees**

#### **§ 8.1. Definitions**

For this charter’s purposes—

- (a) an “officer” includes—
  - (1) each elected officer (sec. 8.3(a)(2)),
  - (2) each member or officer of a board or commission for which this charter provides, and
  - (3) each employee listed in section 7.2 or appointed under section 8.4(b); and
- (b) an “employee” includes—
  - (1) everyone in the classified or unclassified service who is not an officer, and

- (2) each officer, other than a member of a board, commission, or committee who is not otherwise classified as an employee under this charter, an ordinance, or a general or special law.

## § 8.2. **Officers generally**

Except as this charter otherwise provides:

- (a) **Oath.** Before taking office, each officer must sign and file with the city clerk an oath in substantially the following form: “I swear [*or* ‘affirm’] that I will faithfully discharge the office of [title], and will support the constitutions of the United States and of Minnesota.”
- (b) **Bond.** The city clerk, the finance officer, and any other officer that the City Council requires, must before taking office deliver an executed bond in whatever amount and form and on whatever conditions the Council requires.
- (c) **Term.** Except as this charter, an ordinance, or a general or special law otherwise provides, each officer’s term is two years.
- (d) **Tenure.** Each officer takes office, after having qualified and taking the required oath—
  - (1) in the case of an elected officer elected in a regular election, on the first weekday in January that is not a holiday in the calendar year next following the election;
  - (2) in the case of an elected officer elected at a special election, when the results are certified;
  - (3) in the case of an officer appointed under section 8.4(b), on the first weekday in January that is not a holiday in an even-numbered year; and
  - (4) in the case of any other office, as any applicable ordinance provides, otherwise upon election or appointment.
- (e) **Holding over.** Each officer serves until his or her successor has qualified and takes office.
- (f) **Duties.** Each officer must perform the duties that this charter or any other applicable general or special law, ordinance, or rule, or the electing or appointing body, prescribes.
- (g) **Vacancy.**
  - (1) **Determination.**
    - (A) **Elected office.** Each board to which the voters elect an elected officer determines when that office is vacant.

- (B) **Other office.** The electing or appointing body determines when any other office is vacant.
- (2) **Resignation.** Any officer may resign—
  - (A) by tendering a written resignation that the electing or appointing authority accepts; or
  - (B) in any other manner provided by law.
- (3) **Removal.** The electing or appointing body (or, in the case of an elected office, the City Council) may remove any officer after notice and hearing. The notice must specify—
  - (A) the cause for removal, and
  - (B) the hearing's time and place.

The electing or appointing body may compel the testimony of any witness who may have relevant information, and may compel the production of any relevant book, document, or thing. This section is subject to section 8.4(b)(6), for whose purposes the appointing body is the City Council.

- (4) **Vacancies.** The electing or appointing body may fill any vacancy that this charter does not provide another method of filling. Where the voters are the electing body, the City Council may fill the vacancy. A successor filling a vacancy serves only until an elected successor takes office or for the unexpired term's remainder.
- (h) **Notice.** Any notice to an officer may be given by—
  - (1) certified mail addressed to his or her last-known residence, or
  - (2) delivery in the manner provided by law for service of a summons in a civil action,mailed or delivered at least 10 days before the meeting or other event for which notice is given.

### § 8.3. Elected officers

- (a) **“Elected office” defined.** For this charter's purposes—
  - (1) an “elected office” means one that the voters elect; and
  - (2) an “elected officer”—
    - (A) means the incumbent holding an elected office, and includes an appointee filling a vacancy in such an office pending an election; but

- (B) does not include an officer elected by a board or commission to an office that is not an elected office.
- (b) **Qualifications.** No person is eligible as an elected officer unless he or she can vote for that office. A redistricting does not affect the eligibility or term of any incumbent holding office when the plan takes effect.
- (c) **Resignation.** Any elected officer may resign by tendering a written resignation to the city clerk.
- (d) **Holding over.** Each elected officer serves until his or her successor has qualified and takes office.

#### § 8.4. Other officers

- (a) **Other offices.** The City Council may establish any other necessary office, in which case the Council must provide for its title, appointment, term, compensation, and duties.
- (b) **Appointment by Mayor or Council.** Where a general law, special law, ordinance, rule, or other authority provides for an officer's appointment by the Mayor, by the City Council, by any board or commission whose membership mostly consists of Council members, or by any combination of them, and does not explicitly override this section 8.4(b), then the appointment is vested collectively in the Mayor, Executive Committee, and Council as this section provides. The Council may prescribe the Executive Committee's process, and may require consultation with any interested Council committee or member, but may not limit the candidates that the Mayor may nominate or the Committee may review. This section 8.4(b) does not apply to any appointment for which another provision within this charter provides unless the other provision explicitly refers to this section.
  - (1) **Nomination by Mayor.** The Mayor enjoys the exclusive power of nominating the officer in the first instance.
  - (2) **Recommendation by Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee must review the Mayor's nomination, which it may forward to the City Council with a recommendation that the candidate be appointed.
  - (3) **Appointment by City Council.** The City Council may appoint a candidate that the Executive Committee has recommended. The Council may not appoint a candidate that the Executive Committee has not recommended.

- (4) **Failure of appointment.** If an office has been vacant for at least 90 days (or 30 days in the case of the police chief), or if the Mayor has nominated three candidates that the Executive Committee or the Council has rejected, then the Executive Committee may by a majority of its membership name three or more candidates, from whom the Mayor must nominate one. If the Mayor has not, after 20 days, nominated a candidate so named, then the Executive Committee may by a majority of its membership recommend one such candidate to the Council, and the Council may appoint the recommended candidate, without the Mayor's nomination. This process recurs until an officer is appointed.
- (5) **Suspension.** The Executive Committee may suspend without pay any officer appointed under this section 8.4(b). Any such suspension expires after five days unless the City Council extends it.
- (6) **Removal.** The City Council may not remove an officer appointed under this section 8.4(b) unless the Executive Committee so recommends, and may not remove a Civil Service commissioner except for cause.
- (7) **Holding over.** Any officer subject to appointment under this section 8.4(b) whose term has expired but whose successor has not been appointed may continue in office for up to 180 days. The Executive Committee may thereafter appoint a temporary successor for up to 90 days. The office is otherwise vacant until a successor is appointed and qualifies.

#### § 8.5. **Classified service**

For this section 8.5's purposes, the "Commission" means the Civil Service Commission for which section 8.5(c) provides.

- (a) **Policy.** Through the Civil Service Commission, the City will adopt and follow fair, impartial, and practical rules for the classified service. Except as this charter otherwise provides, the City must fill each vacancy in the classified service in a fair and impartial manner with the most qualified applicant according to an examination that measures qualifications and fitness for the job.
  - (1) **Examination.** The examination may inquire into the applicant's experience, skill, and character to the extent that the job requires them.

- (2) **Nondiscrimination.** The examination may not inquire into any applicant's—
    - (A) ancestry, color, or race;
    - (B) cultural or ethnic background;
    - (C) political, ideological, or philosophical belief or affiliation;
    - (D) marital or parental status;
    - (E) national or regional origin;
    - (F) religion, or religious or denominational affiliation; or
    - (G) sexual or affectional orientation or preference,or into any other status on the basis of which discrimination is unlawful.
  - (3) **Written answers.** Where a job requires expert knowledge, the examination may seek narrative answers, in which case the examiners must examine the answers and rank the applicants without seeing their names.
- (b) **Classified service defined.**
- (1) **Classified service.** The “classified service” includes—
    - (A) each employee of the Commission; and
    - (B) each officer and other employee not in the unclassified service.
  - (2) **Unclassified service.** The “unclassified service” includes the elected officers and—
    - (A) for each board or commission—
      - (i) its members, and
      - (ii) its secretary, if he or she serves without pay;
    - (B) each officer, and the head of each department not organized around an officer, listed in section 7.2(a)(1)–(15); and
    - (C) any officer or other employee for whose unclassified status this charter or a general or special law provides.
- (c) **Commission.**
- (1) **Function and powers.** The Civil Service Commission administers the classified service, with respect to which it—

- (A) must classify each job into a grade based on the job's description and duties, so that each grade includes jobs with similar descriptions and duties;
- (B) must establish standards and qualifications for each job, and design a competitive examination that measures those standards and qualifications;
- (C) must administer or provide for the administration of a competitive examination after giving public notice for each job in the classified service, and must—
  - (i) maintain an application register of each applicant for examination, listing the job sought;
  - (ii) based on the results, maintain an eligibility register listing eligible applicants in order of their standing on the examination, on which eligibility expires—
    - (I) for a job represented by a bargaining unit, as the collective-bargaining agreement provides;
    - (II) for a job not represented by a bargaining unit, as the examination notice provides; otherwise
    - (III) within two years, unless the Commission extends it;
  - (iii) certify to the board, commission, department, or officer that will fill any vacancy a list of the eligible applicants standing highest on the appropriate list from the eligibility register (see sec. 8.5(d)(2));
- (D) must maintain and monitor a service register of each employee in the classified service, listing his or her title, compensation, employment record, and any other useful information;
- (E) may waive an examination for unskilled labor, and instead provide for hiring by fair and equitable means or arrange for tests of physical fitness or other qualifying tests; and
- (F) may waive an examination in a particular case if—

- (i) the job requires unusual professional or scientific credentials or expertise; and
- (ii) the Commission unanimously concludes after a public hearing that a competitive examination is impracticable,

in which case its next report must so note.

- (2) **Composition.** The Commission comprises three residents, appointed under section 8.4(b), who—
  - (A) favor merit, efficiency, and affirmative action in the public service; and
  - (B) hold no other office or employment under the federal, state, municipal, or any other government, or any department, agency, court, or political subdivision of any such government.

Each commissioner serves a three-year term, with one commissioner's term expiring each year on March 1.

- (3) **Meetings.** The Commission must annually hold an organizational meeting on the second Monday in August.
- (4) **Rules.**
  - (A) **Notice for rulemaking.** The Commission may, after giving public notice, adopt any necessary or prudent rule in furtherance of this section 8.5's purposes.
  - (B) **Contents.** These rules must encourage the filling of each vacancy by promotion, and provide for—
    - (i) hiring, evaluation, discipline (including by suspension for up to 90 days, with or without pay), and discharge with a view toward an efficient and effective classified service;
    - (ii) promotion (including raised compensation) based on competitive examination, efficiency, character, conduct, and seniority;
    - (iii) transfer among jobs in the same grade or class;
    - (iv) leaves of absence;
    - (v) reinstatement of employees laid off or otherwise discharged without fault; and

- (vi) with the Commission's consent, temporary employment without examination in an emergency or pending a hire from the eligibility register, for up to 60 days per vacancy.
  - (C) **Notice of rules.** The Commission must send its rules, including each amendment, to—
    - (1) the Mayor,
    - (2) the City Council, and
    - (3) each other board, commission, and officer who can hire an employee in the classified service.
  - (D) **Report.** The Commission must annually report in January to the Mayor and the City Council, and publish its report to each other board, each commission, and each officer who can hire an employee in the classified service. The report must cover the preceding calendar year, and include—
    - (1) the Commission's rules, including any amendment during the preceding year;
    - (2) each action under this section 8.5(c);
    - (3) an accounting for the civil service fund;
    - (4) the state of the civil service and any results of the Commission's work; and
    - (5) any recommendation for the civil service's greater efficiency and integrity.
- (d) **Employment.**
- (1) **Application register.** Each applicant on the application register is entitled to notice of each examination for a job for which he or she has applied and qualified.
  - (2) **Eligibility register.** Except as otherwise provided by law:
    - (A) each vacancy in the classified service is filled from the eligibility register; and
    - (B) the Commission must certify the first three eligible applicants standing highest on the eligibility register, unless a board, commission, department, or officer is filling more than one vacancy from the same list, in which case the Commission must certify one additional applicant for each additional vacancy.

- (3) **Service register.** The City must pay an employee in the classified service only for the time and at the rate that the service register shows his or her employment.
  - (4) **Tenure.** After a probationary period that begins upon hiring, an employee in the classified service may be disciplined or discharged only as this charter, the Commission's rules, or any other applicable law or agreement provides.
    - (A) **Probation.** The probationary period is established—
      - (1) by the applicable collective-bargaining agreement or other contract between the City and the bargaining unit or employee; or, if there is no such contract,
      - (2) by ordinance; or, if there is no applicable contract or ordinance,
      - (3) by a rule that the Commission adopts.
    - (B) **Discharge.** No employee in the classified service, having completed the probationary period, may be discharged except for just cause after—
      - (1) written notice of the cause for dismissal;
      - (2) a hearing before the Commission, or an officer or board that the Commission designates; and
      - (3) a finding by the hearing authority that the evidence supports the cause charged and warrants dismissal.
    - (C) **Suspension.** A supervisor may, without regard to this article VIII's other provisions, discipline a subordinate employee by means of a suspension for up to 30 days.
- (e) **Administration and enforcement.**
- (1) **Enforcement.** The Commission must take care that this section 8.5 and its rules are faithfully observed and enforced, for which purpose any commissioner may inquire of any responsible officer, board, commission, or department. Any commissioner in the exercise of the Commission's functions and powers, and any hearing authority that the Commission designates, may compel the testimony of any witness who may have relevant information, or the production of any relevant book, document, or thing.

- (2) **Cooperation.** Each officer, board, commission, and department must—
  - (A) furnish any information that the Commission requests for the service register;
  - (B) administer an examination as the Commission requests, without additional compensation; and
  - (C) cooperate with any inquiry by the Commission.
- (3) **False statement.** Any applicant who knowingly furnishes false information on an application for employment in the classified service forfeits—
  - (A) his or her entry on the application register,
  - (B) any employment held in the classified service, and
  - (C) eligibility for such employment for three years.
- (4) **Bribery.** Any person who, in connection with or for the purpose of influencing any examination or other action under this section 8.5—
  - (A) offers, accepts, or solicits any money, service, or other thing of value; or
  - (B) seeks or accepts any recommendation from any officer or employee of the City,is subject to punishment as provided by law or ordinance.
- (f) **Fund.** The City Council must annually establish a civil-service fund for this section 8.5's purposes by levying, in addition to any other tax, a tax upon all taxable property in the City that yields at least 2.5 cents per resident. The Commission may use the proceeds from this fund and controls its own finances. Any unspent balance in the fund at the fiscal year's end goes to the City's general fund.

## **Article IX Finance**

### **§ 9.1. Fiscal year**

The fiscal year coincides with the calendar year.

## § 9.2. Appropriations

- (a) **Payments.** Except as this section 9.2 otherwise provides, no money may be paid out of the City's treasury except—
  - (1) pursuant to a budgeted appropriation, and approval of a contract or order for payment, by the City Council or other authorized board or commission;
  - (2) in payment of principal or interest on a bond issued or other debt incurred under this charter; or
  - (3) pursuant to a resolution by the City Council, by three-fourths of its membership, authorizing a payment out of current funds.
- (b) **Routine claims and bills.** The City Council (or, in the case of a matter under its charge, the Park & Recreation Board) may by ordinance provide—
  - (1) for the current payment of claims and bills incurred in the ordinary course of business, including—
    - (A) authorized bills for goods and services,
    - (B) payroll,
    - (C) civil judgments against the City, and
    - (D) worker's-compensation and other routine claims against the City;
  - (2) for recovery of any overpayment, including civil liability up to double the amount overpaid; and
  - (3) for criminal liability for a fraud or other abuse.
- (c) **Payroll.** The finance officer may disburse the payroll from the appropriate funds.

## § 9.3. Budget

- (a) **Schedule.** Each year, for the next fiscal year—
  - (1) **Goals and priorities.** The Mayor must deliver an annual address on the state of the City establishing the City's goals and priorities. The City Council must review, and may amend, those goals and priorities before the Mayor recommends a budget.

- (2) **Departmental estimates and recommendations.** By July 1, each board with taxing power and each board, commission, department, or office that the City funds must notify the Mayor and the Board of Estimate & Taxation of—
  - (A) its estimated revenue and expenses and its budgetary needs for the next fiscal year; and
  - (B) any recommended capital improvements for the next five fiscal years.
- (3) **Recommended budget.** By August 15, the Mayor must recommend to the City Council and to the Board of Estimate & Taxation a budget, which must—
  - (A) include a message outlining the budget's significant features;
  - (B) estimate the revenue, expenses, and budgetary needs for each board, commission, department, and officer;
  - (C) recommend any capital improvements for the next five fiscal years;
  - (D) summarize all taxes applicable to property in the City and their effect; and
  - (E) recommend any necessary or prudent legislation or other action affecting the City's finances.
- (4) **Maximum taxation.** By September 15, after a public hearing, the Board of Estimate & Taxation must set the maximum amounts and rates that the City Council and other boards may levy, including the maximum amount and rate for the general fund and each other fund. The amounts and rates set under this section 9.3(a)(4) are subject to any other applicable law.
- (5) **Budget.** After a public hearing on the budget for and taxes payable in the following year, the City Council and each board must adopt a budget, which must—
  - (A) appropriate money for each board's, commission's, department's, and officer's operations;
  - (B) provide for payment of the City's general-obligation debt service;
  - (C) levy any tax, up to the maximum set by the Board of Estimate & Taxation, necessary for those purposes; and

- (D) tax the property in the City in an amount, without regard to the maximum set by the Board of Estimate & Taxation, that will satisfy any judgment against the City.
- (6) **Transfers.**
  - (A) **Administrative transfers.** The budget or an ordinance may provide for transferring money appropriated for one purpose to another by administrative transfer without further action by the City Council.
  - (B) **Transfers within same board's or department's budget.** A board that controls its own finances may transfer money appropriated for one purpose to another within its budget only if the Board of Estimate & Taxation, with at least five affirmative votes, approves a request to that effect. No such transfer may affect the proceeds from bonds issued or other debt incurred for a particular purpose.
  - (C) **Other transfers.** Any other transfer within the budget, or any additional expense in excess of the amount budgeted, requires action by the Council.
- (b) **Finance officer.** The city finance officer serves as each board's and commission's finance officer, but may not serve on the board. For this article IX's purposes, each officer, board, commission, or department must cooperate with the Mayor, with the Board of Estimate & Taxation, and with the finance officer and budget director, and must furnish any information that the Mayor, the Board, or the budget director requests.

#### § 9.4. Debt

- (a) **Borrowing power.**
  - (1) **Conditions.** The City may issue bonds, borrow money, or otherwise pledge its credit only for a lawful purpose, consistent with this charter; and with the concurrence of—
    - (A) the City Council, by two-thirds of its membership;
    - (B) the Board of Estimate & Taxation, with at least five affirmative votes; and
    - (C) any other board in which this charter vests the borrowing power, by two-thirds of its membership.

- (2) **Contract.** Whenever the City acting under this charter issues bonds, borrows money, or otherwise pledges its credit, then its contract with the bondholder or other creditor incorporates this section 9.4's provisions and creates an obligation that no subsequent amendment or other action by the City can impair. Any debt contracted or engagement entered into before this charter's latest revision is as valid against the City under this charter as under any prior version of this charter.
- (b) **Sinking fund.**
  - (1) **Fund.** The City Council must maintain a sinking fund sufficient at least for paying off the City's debt as it comes due. Any tax collected for interest or principal on any such debt goes into the sinking fund, and may not be diverted to any other purpose. Any other revenue not otherwise appropriated, and any proceeds from bonds whose purpose has been discharged or abandoned, go into the sinking fund.
  - (2) **Fund insufficient.** If—
    - (A) the sinking fund will not pay the City's debt that has come due, or
    - (B) the City Council finds that buying any bonds not due whose holders are offering them for sale will serve the City's interests,then the Council may issue refunding bonds covering the shortfall. No such bond's term may exceed 30 years, and no such bond may bear interest at a higher rate than any bond that it refunds.
- (c) **Premium from bonds.** Any premium received from selling bonds must service those bonds.
- (d) **Capital improvements.** The City may not issue bonds, borrow money, or otherwise incur debt in connection with any capital improvement where the debt exceeds \$15 million for the entire project unless the voters so authorize.
- (e) **Professional sports facility.** Neither the City, nor any board, commission, committee, or department, nor any governmental body whose territorial jurisdiction is coextensive with or falls wholly within the City, may finance any professional sports facility in an amount greater than \$10 million unless the voters in an otherwise scheduled election (and not an election held only for that purpose) so authorize. For this section 9.4(e)'s purposes, "finance" includes

applying existing realty, infrastructure, overhead, or other resources, and forgoing taxes or any other revenue, as well as spending money directly, issuing bonds, or otherwise incurring debt.

- (f) **Public utilities.** The City may not issue bonds, borrow money, or otherwise incur debt for the purpose of acquiring a public utility.
- (g) **Standing.** Any taxpayer may enforce this section 9.4, and any creditor may enforce section 9.4(a)–(c), by an action in the district court.

### § 9.5. Taxable value

For this charter’s purposes—

- (a) “taxable property” includes both real and personal property; and
- (b) a taxable property’s “value” means the assessor’s estimated total market value.

### § 9.6. Improvements

- (a) **Permanent-improvement fund.**
  - (1) **Fund.** The City Council must maintain a permanent-improvement fund into which go the proceeds from—
    - (A) each bond issued, and each tax levied, for permanent improvements, whose proceeds may not be diverted to any other purpose; and
    - (B) each special assessment levied against the property fronting or benefited by any improvement of a local character.
  - (2) **Payments.** The Council may pay out of the fund for any improvement of a local character—
    - (A) in anticipation of revenue from a special assessment levied against the property fronting or benefited by the improvement; or
    - (B) to the extent that the City otherwise bears the improvement’s cost.
- (b) **Tax.** The City Council annually—
  - (1) must tax the taxable property in the City in an amount that covers the cost of any permanent improvement not defrayed by special assessment, and may levy an additional tax for

permanent improvements as long as the total tax for permanent improvements does not exceed 0.0025 percent of the value of taxable property in the City, and

- (2) may tax the taxable property in the City up to 0.0025 percent of its value for sewers and related infrastructure, the disposal and treatment of sewage and other waste, and related purposes, for which the City may acquire realty and extend infrastructure beyond the City's boundaries.

(c) **Special assessments.**

- (1) **Improvements.** The City Council may levy a special assessment that partly or wholly defrays the cost of any improvement of a local character against the property fronting or benefited by the improvement.

- (A) **Authority.** When levying a special assessment for an improvement, the City may proceed under this section 9.6(c) or under any other applicable law.

- (B) **"Improvement" defined.** For this section 9.6(c)'s purposes, an "improvement" includes—

- (i) the abatement of a nuisance,
    - (ii) public-utility or service charges,
    - (iii) solid-waste-disposal charges, or
    - (iv) any service or improvement to the public right-of-way, including but not limited to—
      - (I) maintaining a sidewalk,
      - (II) paving, repaving, or maintaining a public way or an alley, or any gutter along a public way or an alley,
      - (III) laying, relaying, maintaining, or extending a water main or sewer pipe in or through any public way or any alley, and
      - (IV) installing, operating, or maintaining a streetlight.

- (C) **Procedure.** To levy a special assessment under this section 9.6(c)—

- (i) The City Council must adopt a resolution specifying the improvements to be made. The

Council may amend or rescind the resolution during the procedures for which this section 9.6(c)(1)(C) provides.

- (ii) The public-works department must report to the Council—
    - (I) the estimated cost, and
    - (II) an assessment roll identifying each property fronting or benefited by the improvement, and each such property's owner or taxpayer.
  - (iii) The city clerk must record the department's report in the Council's proceedings, which constitutes sufficient notice of the proposed assessment to each property owner, taxpayer, and other interested person, except as this section 9.6(c)(1)(C) otherwise provides.
  - (iv) After the department's report, the Council may direct the department to advertise for and receive bids for the work and materials necessary for the improvement. The Council may not otherwise consider or act upon the department's report—
    - (I) before the next regular meeting held at least one week after the report, and
    - (II) after a public hearing held in a manner for which the Council must provide by ordinance, which ordinance must provide for mailed notice to each owner or taxpayer of each property fronting or benefited by the improvement.
  - (v) The Council may then assess and levy the improvements' cost against the property fronting or benefited by the improvement, in the proportion to which the improvement benefits each such property. The assessment and levy may occur within one year before work begins on the improvement.
- (2) **Parks and parkways.** The Park & Recreation Board may levy a special assessment that partly or wholly defrays the

cost of condemning realty for a park or parkway, or of any improvement in or along a park or parkway, against the property fronting or benefited by the park, parkway, or improvement. The City Council may levy an assessment with respect to an improvement in or along a park or parkway only after a request by the Park & Recreation Board.

- (3) **Services.** The City Council or the Park & Recreation Board may likewise assess against the property benefited the cost of municipal services to any street, sidewalk, or other property.
  - (4) **Ordinances.** The City Council and the Park & Recreation Board each, by ordinance—
    - (A) must establish the procedure for levying a special assessment, including the procedure for any appeal;
    - (B) may provide for a lien from an assessment and for the lien's priority; and
    - (C) may provide for the authority to correct, modify, or cancel a levied assessment.
  - (5) **County auditor.** The City Council or the Park & Recreation Board may—
    - (A) require that the county auditor furnish information about benefited property and its ownership in connection with a special assessment;
    - (B) set the rate, at least five cents per entry, at which the City compensates the county for this service; and
    - (C) annually deliver, by October 10, its assessment rolls to the county auditor, in which case the auditor must—
      - (i) collect the assessed payment with and in the same manner as other taxes, and
      - (ii) pay the money collected, with interest, to the City or to the Park & Recreation Board (as the case may be) along with other collected taxes being paid.
- (d) **Review of unassessed improvements.** If the City Council or the Park & Recreation Board votes to acquire realty for the City's system of streets or of parks and parkways, and the cost is not wholly assessed against the benefited property, then the City may not begin incurring any related expense until 30 days after the board voting for the acquisition determines the resulting awards and

assessments and so notifies the Board of Estimate & Taxation. The Board of Estimate & Taxation, with at least five affirmative votes, at a public hearing of which at least 14 days' notice was given, may set aside the awards and assessments and thereby cancel the acquisition. But the acquisition may proceed without waiting for 30 days, and the City may begin incurring related expenses, if the Board of Estimate & Taxation, with at least five affirmative votes, approves the acquisition.