



**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

<b>AGENDA SECTION</b>	PUBLIC HEARING
<b>MEETING DATE</b>	MARCH 9, 2026

<b>ITEM:</b>	<b>First Reading of Ordinance 1724, Amending the Columbia Heights City Charter Regarding Mayoral Oversight of the Police Department.</b>		
<i>Presenting Item:</i> Aaron Chirpich, City Manager			
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> Administration		<b>BY/DATE:</b> Sara Ion / March 4, 2026	
<b>CORE CITY STRATEGIES:</b> <i>(please indicate areas that apply by adding an "X" in front of the selected text below)</i>			
_ Community that Grows with Purpose and Equity		X Engaged, Effective and Forward-Thinking	
_ High Quality Public Spaces		_ Resilient and Prosperous Economy	
_ Safe, Accessible and Built for Everyone		_ Inclusive and Connected Community	

**BACKGROUND**

At the January 15, 2026, Columbia Heights City Charter Commission Meeting the commission held a second reading of the changes proposed to the City Charter regarding mayoral oversight of the Police Department to better align the role with current practice shifting oversight to the duties of the City Manager. During this Charter Commission meeting the following summary of was approved.

**SUMMARY:**

**CHAPTER 2 – FORM OF GOVERNMENT**

**Removal of the language related to “appointment, control, and direction of all police officers of the city”**

**Section 10. THE MAYOR.** The mayor shall be the presiding officer of the council, and shall exercise all powers and perform all duties conferred and imposed upon the mayor by this charter, the ordinances of the city, and the laws of the state. A president pro tempore shall be chosen who shall serve as president in the mayor’s absence, and who shall, in the mayor’s absence, exercise all powers and perform all duties conferred and imposed upon the mayor by this charter, the ordinances of the city and the laws of the state. In the absence of both the mayor and the president pro tempore, the council member with the most seniority (as determined by consecutive uninterrupted years of service to date) shall exercise and perform said powers and duties. The mayor shall ~~have the appointment, control, and direction of all police officers of the city, and shall~~ be recognized as the official head of the city for all ceremonial purposes, by the courts for the purpose of serving civil processes, and by the governor for the purposes of the military law. In the event of a vacancy in the office of mayor, whether by death, resignation, or any other cause, the council shall order a special election to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term except in the case of a recall, the vacancy shall be filled in the manner provided by this charter.

**CHAPTER 6 – ADMINISTRATION OF CITY AFFAIRS**

Removal of the language related to duties “except the police department and enforcement of the laws pertaining to said department shall be under the sole control of the mayor”

**Section 53. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE CITY MANAGER.** Subject to the provisions of this charter and any regulations consistent therewith which may be adopted by council, the city manager shall control and direct the administration of the city's affairs, ~~except that the police department and the enforcement of the laws pertaining to said department shall be under the sole control of the mayor.~~ The city manager's powers and duties shall be: (a) To see that this charter and the laws, ordinances and resolutions of the city are enforced; (b) To appoint and, except as herein provided, remove the city clerk, all heads of departments, and all subordinate officers and employees in the departments, all appointments to be upon merit and fitness alone; (c) To exercise control over all departments and divisions of the city administration created by this charter or which may be hereafter created by the council except as herein provided; (d) To attend all meetings of the council, with the right to take part in the discussions but having no vote; but the council may at its discretion exclude the city manager from meetings at which the city manager's removal is considered; (e) To recommend to the council for adoption such measures as the city manager may deem necessary for the welfare of the people and the efficient administration of the city's affairs; (f) To keep the council fully advised as to the financial condition and needs of the city, and to prepare and to submit to the council the annual budget; (g) To prepare and to submit to the council for adoption an administrative code incorporating the details of administrative procedure, and from time to time to suggest amendments to the same; and (h) To perform such other duties as may be prescribed by this charter or required of the city manager by ordinances or resolutions adopted by the council.

**SUMMARY OF CURRENT STATUS**

The public notice for this City Charter Amendment Hearing, Ordinance 1724, was published to the Columbia Heights Website and also printed in The Life News Paper.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION(S):**

MOTION: Move to close the public hearing and waive the reading of Ordinance 1724, there being ample copies available to the public.

MOTION: Move to set the second reading of Ordinance No. 172, being an ordinance amending the City Charter of Columbia Heights, for March 23, 2026, at approximately 6:00p.m.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Summary of Charter Commission Changes  
Ordinance 1724