

Item 5, being:

DISCUSSION OF ARTICLE II, SECTION 2 OF THE CITY CHARTER TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE TERM OF OFFICE FOR COUNCILMEMBERS AND MAYOR SHOULD EXPIRE ON THE LAST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH IN WHICH A RUNOFF ELECTION IS HELD OR SCHEDULED TO BE HELD.

Ms. Walker said prior to 2003, the terms of the Mayor and Councilmembers expired “at the time fixed for the last regular meeting of the Council in April.” In 2003, voters approved the current language that sets the expiration of Mayoral and Councilmember terms on the first Tuesday of July. She said Staff has provided a chart of comparable cities for Mayor and Council term expirations.

Member Stawicki asked if he could provide background on why the term was changed to July since he was involved and Ms. Walker said yes. Member Stawicki said there were members of Council who were upset by the fact that they did not get to vote on their own budget in June and incoming Councilmembers voting on a budget they knew nothing about because they did not work on it for a year. He said after the change to July it became immediately clear this was not a good idea because the first year it went into effect the sitting Mayor was not re-elected and did not stay engaged in City business.

Vice-Chairman Cubberley said he advocated for the change when he was on Council, but supports changing the language back to what it was prior to 2003.

Chairman Thompson said it is confusing to citizens to elect an official in February or April, but not have them seated until July. It is also problematic for a Councilmember or Mayor when they are elected for the position, but have to wait months to be sworn in and seated. He said many times elected candidates will try to involve themselves in the process before it is really appropriate.

Member Dillingham agreed and said once a candidate has been certified by the Election Board as having won the election then that candidate should be sworn-in and seated as soon as possible.

Members felt the seating of newly elected officials should be tied to the certification of the election results.

Items submitted for the record

1. Article II, Section 2– Mayor and Councilmember’s Term Expiration
2. Chart of comparable cities – Expiration/Beginning of Terms

Item 4, being:

CONTINUED DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION OF ARTICLE II, SECTION 2 OF THE CITY CHARTER TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE TERM OF OFFICE FOR COUNCILMEMBERS AND MAYOR SHOULD EXPIRE ON THE LAST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH IN WHICH A RUNOFF ELECTION IS HELD OR SCHEDULED TO BE HELD.

Ms. Walker highlighted draft language for the Committee's consideration which would change the date for Councilmember Elects to be sworn in. The language proposed would tie the effective date of the office to the Cleveland County Election Board's certification of the election results. Concern was expressed by the Committee regarding the variability of term length using this approach and Staff was asked to work on language to bring back at next meeting.

Items submitted for the record

1. Article II, Section 2– Mayor and Councilmember's Term Expiration with draft language

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Item 5, being:

CONTINUED DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION OF ARTICLE II, SECTION 10, OF THE CITY CHARTER THAT WOULD REQUIRE A CANDIDATE FOR CITY COUNCIL TO RESIDE IN THE WARD IN WHICH HE OR SHE SEEKS ELECTION FOR A MINIMUM OF SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO FILING FOR SAID OFFICE.

Ms. Walker said the draft language requires that a Councilmember candidate reside in ward in which they seek election for six months prior to the date of the Municipal election. It also included language to address changes in ward boundaries due to reapportionment of wards within six months of the election date. That language states if a candidate's ward designation has changed in the six months prior to the election due to reapportionment, the six month residency requirement would be waived.

Members unanimously approved the language as written.

Items submitted for the record

1. Article II, Section 10 – Requiring a Person to Reside in a Ward for a Minimum of Six Months in order to be an Eligible Candidate for a Councilmember Position with draft language

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Item 2, continued:

YEAS: Members Bates, Cubberley, Dillingham, Griffith, Jungman, McBride, Pipes, Stawicki, Vinyard, Williamson-Jennings, Chairman Thompson

NAYES: None

Chairman Thompson declared the motion carried and the minutes approved; and the filing thereof was directed.

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Item 3. Continued discussion and possible action of Article II, Sections 2, 5, 6, and 14, of the City Charter to consider whether the term of office for Councilmembers and the Mayor should be changed from two years to three years.

Ms. Walker said during the last meeting, Member Bates requested this issue be revised in order for Staff to prepare language for three year terms for elected officials, with odd-number ward elections continuing to occur together in the same year, even-numbered ward election occurring the next year together, and the Mayoral election occurring every third year as a standalone election. She said Staff prepared a chart. She said to achieve this without affecting current terms, the language is drafted to begin in 2023 as follows:

| | Current Term | New Term |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Odd Wards | July 2, 2019 – July 7, 2021 July 7, 2021 – 2023 | 2023 – 2026 (Tuesday following election results) |
| Even Wards | July 3, 2019 – July 7, 2020 July 7, 2020 – July 5, 2020 July 5, 2022 – 2024 | 2024 – 2027 (Tuesday following election results) |
| Mayor | July 2, 2019 – July 5, 2022 | July 5, 2022 – 2025 (Tuesday following election results) |

Item 3, continued:

Member Bates said the current timing sometimes does not allow a sitting Councilmember to run for Mayor without losing their seat, whereas other Councilmembers can run without giving up their seat. He is trying to make it more equitable for all Councilmembers. He said almost all elections for higher offices occur on even years and changing the terms would allow for better time management if running for a higher office. He said the Mayor has a leadership role that is different from the rest of Council, but when it comes down to their ability to be involved and understand the issues there is really no difference in decision making power. He would not want to shorten the Mayor's term, but adding one extra year to the term of the Councilmembers will give them more time to be involved and understand the issues they are voting on.

Member Stawicki said the Mayor does a lot more City activities outside of Council meetings than other members of Council, which means they are only equal in terms of their vote on Council. He suggested creating nine (9) wards which would be one-third of the Council each year being elected each year and the Mayor would not vote at the Council meetings.

Member Pipes said if the Mayor does not vote then a big chunk of accountability is gone.

Member McBride said he supports three year terms for each member of Council including the Mayor and Member Pipes agreed.

Member Dillingham said she was not excited about three year terms because of the loss of engagement with the voters. She said the City is known for its engagement with voters and complacency may creep in with a three year term. She said it is critical to stay in touch with constituents because the demographics do change and it is Council's responsibility to understand what voters are thinking and it puts more pressure on the Councilmember to make sure they have ward meetings or other types of communication. She said face to face communication is important and the best way to do that is keeping Councilmembers engaged is to keep the two year terms.

Member Williamson-Jennings agreed and said two year terms keep representatives accountable and engaged with constituents wants from their representatives.

Councilmember Stawicki asked if any other cities separate Mayor and Council elections as Ms. Walker said she would research that for the Committee.

Member Griffith and Member Jungman support two year terms for Councilmembers.

Member Cubberley said he supports three year terms because it takes time to build relationships and get things done. He said larger City issues can take over a year of Committee and/or Council discussion before making it to Council for a vote so an extra year can make a big difference. He said three years is really not that long and Councilmembers can always be responsive to constituents.

Item 3, continued:

Member Bates said there is an interesting dynamic in a Mayoral race that could potentially be heavily influenced by the fact that there are four wards up for election at the same time. He said by separating the Mayor and Council races it makes it very clear to the public what type of race will be taking place.

Chairman Thompson said issues the Council was working on when he was sworn in as a Councilmember were not the same issues candidates running for office were talking about in the ward races. He voted on issues Council had been discussing for a very long time that he was uneducated about. He said when Council turns over quickly it lacks consistency of knowledge. He said it takes time to get new Councilmembers “up to speed” and new Councilmembers may not agree with the direction current seated Councilmembers are going.

Member McBride moved that the proposal to change the term of office for Councilmembers and the Mayor from two to three years be approved, which motion was duly seconded by Member Cubberley,

Items submitted for the record

1. Proposed Article II, Section 2 – Mayor and Councilmember’s Term Expiration

and the question being upon approving the proposal to change the term of office for Councilmembers and the Mayor from two to three years a vote was taken with the following result:

| | |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| YEAS: | Members Bates, Cubberley, Griffith, McBride, Pipes, Chairman Thompson |
| NAYES: | Members Dillingham, Jungman, Stawicki, Williamson-Jennings, Vinyard |

Chairman Thompson declared the motion carried the proposal term of office for Councilmember and the Mayor from two to three years was approved.

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Item 4. Discussion of Article II, Section 11, to consider whether to allow partisan elections for municipal office.

Member Cubberley said City items are more issue focused than party focused.

Member Dillingham said it makes it so much easier to knock on a door, answer the phone, and answer an email when you are focusing on the issue and talking about the roads, water, stormwater, etc.

Member Pipes felt the City should stay status quo on this issue.