

Item 7, continued:

Member Eller said it would be nice to create language that defines residency/domicile and Members concurred. Ms. Walker said she would do some research to bring draft language back to the Committee.

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
2. Chart of comparable cities – Minimum of Six Months Residency in Ward

\*

Item 8, being:

DISCUSSION OF ARTICLE II, SECTION 22 OF THE CITY CHARTER TO CONSIDER ALLOWING THE OUTGOING COUNCILMEMBER CREATING THE VACANCY TO APPOINT HIS OR HER SUCCESSOR, UNLESS SUCH VACANCY HAS BEEN CREATED DUE TO REMOVAL FROM OFFICE AS A RESULT OF PROCEEDINGS BY A COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION.

Ms. Walker said currently, the Mayor and Council can appoint a successor, but if that is not done within, 60 days, a special election must be called. In the past, Councilmembers have made recommendations on who Council should consider for the vacancy; however, many times there would not be majority vote (five affirmative votes) for one person so the names were placed into a “hat” and someone would draw a name and that person would fill the vacancy. She said this process is awkward for the person pulling the name out of the hat as well as the person whose name is not drawn. More recently, the City Clerk has accepted applications and a Review Board Committee interviews the candidates then recommends a person to Council for a vote. She said an amendment suggested by former Councilmember Castleberry in 2019, was to allow an outgoing Councilmember to appoint their own replacement. She said a subsequent amendment by Councilmember Petrone would mandate a special election be held for any Council vacancy. She said Staff has provided a chart of comparable cities for filling Mayor and/or Council vacancies.

Member Dillingham said whatever the process is, it should be consistent each time there is a vacancy to fill.

Member Jungman said the proposal to allow a Councilmember to choose their own replacement is absurd and feels candidates going through a Committee process is more practical.

Member Stawicki said if there is more than six months left on the vacating Councilmember’s term, there should be a temporary appointment until an election can be held. He does not support a Councilmember appointing their own replacement. He felt that any person filling a vacancy should be appointed through a consistent, designated procedure.

Item 8, continued:

Member Dillingham prefers the Committee process of recommending one name for a majority vote of the Council because elections can be costly and time consuming. She said vacant seats should be filled as quickly as possible and an election could take more time than a Committee's recommendations so she would like to craft language for that.

Former Councilmember Castleberry asked what would happen if the Committee sends one name forward and Council rejects the person and Chair Thompson said the process would start over. Other members felt a special election should be called if Council rejects the recommended candidate.

Member Prather said she is fine with a Committee recommending one name, but can there be an alternate process if Council rejects that person.

Ms. Walker said she will draft language for a specific process as well as a special election process for the Committee's review.

Items submitted for the record

1. Article II, Section 22 – Filling Vacant Council Positions
2. Chart of comparable cities

\*

Item 9, being:

Miscellaneous Discussion.

\*

Item 10, being:

ADJOURNMENT.

Chairman Thompson declared the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Item 6, being:

CONTINUED DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION OF ARTICLE II, SECTION 22, OF THE CITY CHARTER TO CONSIDER ALLOWING THE OUTGOING COUNCILMEMBER CREATING THE VACANCY TO APPOINT HIS OR HER SUCCESSOR, UNLESS SUCH VACANCY HAS BEEN CREATED DUE TO REMOVAL FROM OFFICE AS A RESULT OF PROCEEDINGS BY A COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION. [ALTERNATE LANGUAGE APPROVED]

Ms. Walker said at the previous meeting the Committee discussed alternate language to replace vacancies other than allowing the outgoing Councilmember creating the vacancy to appoint his or her successor. She said the Committee asked Staff to draft language that would require the use of a committee within the ward similar to the process used that past few times a vacancy occurred. She said the language requires a committee made up of five residents within the ward to make a recommendation for City Council's consideration.

Members unanimously approved the language as written.

Items submitted for the record

1. Article II, Section 22 – Filling Vacant Council Positions with draft language

\*

Item 7, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE CONSIDERATION TO ADD LANGUAGE TO THE CHARTER RELATED TO THE APPOINTMENT AND REMOVAL OF A CITY AUDITOR THAT WOULD BE A FULL TIME EMPLOYEE OF THE CITY OF NORMAN AND APPOINTED AND SUBJECT TO REMOVAL BY THE CITY COUNCIL.

Ms. Walker said there is no specific proposed language at this time. Currently, Norman does not have a City Auditor. The change as proposed would create the position of City Auditor. The City Auditor would be a full time employee of the City of Norman who would be subject to appointment and removal by City Council. She said if it's the Committee's desire to create a City Auditor position that would serve as an "at will" employee, language would need to be added to the Charter to clarify such status. She highlighted other cities in the metro and surrounding areas. Oklahoma City was the only city that has an auditor position and that position is appointed by City Council. Stillwater has an Audit Committee that is appointed by City Council.

Committee members discussed pros and cons of this proposal. Vice-Chairman Cubberley said City Council has the ability to hire an auditor for any specific purpose and felt this position would just be adding another level of bureaucracy, which is not needed for a city the size of Norman. Member Stawicki suggested the City Controller be a Council employee. Member Eller like the notion of an internal auditor not for finances, but for practices.

After further discussion, it was unanimously approved not to create the position. No change to the Charter will move forward to City Council.