

Item 7, being:

DISCUSSION 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 Charter currently requires that a Councilmember candidate reside in Norman for six months prior to filing for office. There is not a specific ward residency requirement in the Charter at this time. She said Staff has provided a chart of comparable cities for Mayor and Council residency requirements.

Member Stawicki said there should be some type of residency timeframe, but six months may be a bit long and suggested half that time. He said sometimes people decide to run for Council at the last minute and may not have that intent six months before the election. He made his decision to run for Council the day before the filing period opened; however, he had lived in his ward for years.

Vice-Chair Cubberley said it would seem to be a disservice to the ward if someone is able to move into the ward at the last minute then file for office in that ward. He said wards are different and have their own quirks and interests. He said a person running for a specific ward should have an understanding of that ward so six months is not an unreasonable time to get to know the area.

Member Jennings said she likes the six month rule because she lives on the east side and several of the poorest Norman residents live there so having no limit marginalizes poor people. She said it is an advantage for wealthier folks to move into a ward for a month or so to see how things go and then leave if they choose to leave. She said six months give someone time to learn the neighborhood and getting a true sense of that part of the City.

Member Jungman felt the voters could decide who they want for Council in their ward so he would not change anything.

Member Eller agrees with Vice-Chairman Cubberley that wards are different and have different needs so he supports living in a ward six months before being able to run for Council in that ward.

Member Jungman said he has a problem with government telling people they cannot run for office. He said the requirement to live in Norman for at least six months prior to filing is good enough.

Member McBride said he supports a requirement for living six months in a ward, but he would like to see if there is language that could address what would happen to a person if there were a ward boundary change. If that person ended up in a different ward where they had not lived in for six months, would that adversely impact that person?

Member Vinyard asked how residency is defined in the Charter because given some of the questions tonight, this needs to be addressed.

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

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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 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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