

TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Kate Thunstrom, City Administrator
SUBJECT: Mayor Term Length and Council Term Limits
DATE: February 24, 2025

OVERVIEW:

Staff has been requested to provide information regarding two items that are directed by our City Charter. This topic tonight is for information and discussion to provide staff further direction on a Council request.

1. City Council Term Limits

Staff has reviewed the question regarding Council Term limits and has found that per, MN Statute, a city cannot place limits on the number of terms that a seat can hold. *“All officers of charter cities chosen and qualified shall hold office until their successors qualify”*

2. Mayor Term

Currently the Mayor term as outlined in the City Charter is two years in length. The question was brought forward in regards the interest and process that would extend the term to four years.

- a. This would not amend the current mayor term, and would be effective if approved for the term beginning 2026

As this is an amendment to the City Charter, and changes need to be made in one of the following ways:

Process to Amend Charter Language

Option A. City Council may propose an amendment to the Charter.

1. Council submits the ordinance proposing an amendment to the Charter Commission
2. Charter has 60 days for review (which may be extended by the commission an additional 90 days by filing a resolution determining that additional time is necessary with the City Clerk)
3. After the review, Commission returns any amendments or its own substitute amendment to the council.
4. The Council then submits to the voters either the amendment or originally proposed amendment.

Option B. Charter Commission may recommend the Council amend the Charter by Ordinance

1. Within one month of receiving the recommendation, City must public notice of a public hearing of the proposal.
2. Public hearing must be held at least two weeks but not more than one month after the notice is published.
3. Within one month of the public hearing, Council must vote on the proposed amendment.
4. The vote must be unanimous.
5. If adopted, the ordinance becomes effective 90 days after passage and publication unless a later date is provided in the ordinance.

Residents have the right to Petition if not placed on a ballot

1. Within 60 days after passage and publication, a petition signed by registered voters equal in number to at least 5% of the registered voters in the city or 2,000 whichever is less, may be submitted to force a referendum on the amendment.
2. If a petition is filed, the city will submit the question to a general or special election.

State Statute 410.12, subd.6 Amendments, cities of the fourth class

Cities of a fourth class, having less than 10,000 residents, having a home rule charter may propose amendments by ordinance without submission to the Charter commission.

1. Such ordinance if enacted, shall be adopted by at least four-fifths vote of all its members
2. Vote shall be after a public hearing upon two weeks published notice containing the text of the amendment.
3. No sooner than three months after the passage of the ordinance, council shall submit the amendment to the people
4. The Council shall submit the proposed amendment to the people at a general or special election (subd.4 Election)
5. If 51% of the votes are in favor, it shall take effect 30 days from the date of the election or at such other time as fixed in the amendment.

This item was on a ballot, November 4, 2014

Question: *Shall Section 2.02 of the Charter of the City of St. Francis be amended as proposed by the Charter Commission to change the two year term for mayor to four years starting with the mayor elected in the 2014 general election and each mayor elected thereafter.*

Results: Yes 690 (37.22%) No 1,164 (62.78%)

Staff recommends any changes to a Council term be placed on a ballot question for full transparency.