



CITY OF SWEET HOME CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 03, 2025, 5:30 PM
Sweet Home City Hall, 3225 Main Street
Sweet Home, OR 97386

Mission Statement

The City of Sweet Home will work to build an economically strong community with an efficient and effective local government that will provide infrastructure and essential services to the citizens we serve. As efficient stewards of the valuable assets available, we will be responsive to the community while planning and preparing for the future.

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM.

Roll Call

PRESENT

Chair Josh Thorstad, City Councilor
Vice Chair Gary Jarvis
Committee Member Jeff Parker
Committee Member Mike Reynolds
Committee Member Angie Yon

ABSENT

Committee Member Lisa Gourley

STAFF

Jason Ogden, City Manager / Police Chief
Cecily Hope Pretty, Deputy City Manager
Blair Larsen, City Attorney
Adam Leisinger, Special Projects Manager

Approval of Minutes

- a) 2025-05-06 Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2025 Charter Review Committee meeting. Committee Member Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley

Public Comment

There was no public comment to be heard.

Charter Review

- a) Revisit Chapters I-III

Chair Thorstad requested feedback from the Committee on the tracked changes proposed by staff based on the prior meeting. City Attorney Larsen added that staff was open to modifications of proposed language throughout the review process. No feedback was provided.

Chair Thorstad asked of revisiting Chapter II, Section 3 given the recently approved Charter amendment for direct election of the Mayor. City Attorney Larsen stated that the amendment did not change the powers of the Mayor but allowed voters to select the Mayor directly by election beginning in November 2026.

Chair Thorstad raised the issue of Councilors vacating their seat in the case of running for Mayor.

Vice Chair Jarvis noted conflicts in language between appointments and elections to fill vacancies. Discussion ensued regarding the concept of “resign to run” and whether that was appropriate for Sweet Home. Vice Chair Jarvis stated he was not in favor of Councilors being required to resign their Councilor seat in order to run for Mayor.

Chair Thorstad noted concerns with the potential of losing quorum if a “resign to run” clause was added. No action was taken for Chapter II, Section 3.

b) Chapters IV-VIII Review

Committee Member Reynolds asked of strengthening attendance requirements for Councilors under Chapter IV, Section 12 and asked of Councilor agreement to codes of conduct. City Attorney Larsen replied that the City Council adopts Council Rules separately from the Charter.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to modify the language to include “or elected to another City of Sweet Home office upon installation to that Sweet Home office” in order to resolve the issue of running for Mayor and being seated as a Councilor simultaneously. Committee Member Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley

City Attorney Larsen raised the issue of combining vacancies to be filled by Council with vacancies to be filled by the City Manager and suggested separating the processes into different sections.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to separate the vacancy appointment process into two sections divided by the Council process and the City Manager process. Committee Member Yon seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley

Committee Member Reynolds raised the question of a threshold for absences before removal from the Council and noted a suggestion to the Committee to set a limit of 10 absences per calendar year. City Attorney Larsen stated that there was no current guideline as to how to treat unexcused absences. Discussion ensued regarding acceptable thresholds and associated consequences. Vice Chair Jarvis expressed concern with setting an attendance standard in the Charter without a clear process for enforcement. City Attorney Larsen suggested that staff investigate common practice regarding absences, conduct violations, and removals and to return with recommendations for the Committee. There was consensus for same. Chair Thorstad reminded the Committee that modifications to Council Rules were not under the purview of the Committee.

Vice Chair Jarvis requested that vacancies be filled by offering the seat to the next highest vote-getter in the previous election and to continue through candidates by number of vote to fill seats rather than by Council appointment. Committee Member Parker suggested a time limit for this process such as within 120 days of the election. Discussion ensued regarding the vacancy process.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved that the Mayor shall offer a vacant position to the next highest vote-getter in the previous election, and should they decline, to the second next highest vote-getter in the previous election, if the vacancy occurs within the first half of the term of office for the vacant position. Committee Member Parker seconded the motion.

Committee Member Reynolds requested more staff research prior to making a decision.

The question was called. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Parker

NAY: Reynolds, Yon

ABSENT: Gourley

Chair Thorstad asked that staff still do additional research.

Committee Member Reynolds asked if the City Council would be required to accept all the changes suggested by the Committee. City Attorney Larsen stated that City Council could choose to accept, deny, or modify any of the Committee's recommendations.

Committee Member Parker asked of the 24-hour acceptance period for appointments to vacancies by the City Manager as stated in Chapter IV, Section 13.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to strike the sentence regarding the 24-hour vacancy acceptance requirement in its entirety. Committee Member Yon seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley

Committee Member Parker asked of requiring meeting notices to be posted in a certain number of locations. Discussion ensued regarding whether additional requirements should be placed. There was consensus to leave Section 14 as it is.

Discussion ensued regarding Section 15 and the ability to compel Councilors to attend meetings. Vice Chair Jarvis requested to revisit Section 15 after further information was provided regarding Councilor absences. There was consensus for same.

Committee Member Reynolds expressed a desire to maintain the Mayor as a voting member of the City Council rather than a tie-breaker in Section 16.

Vice Chair Jarvis expressed support for the Mayor as a tie-breaker as a form of accountability to the voters.

City Attorney Larsen suggested delaying the conversation until the discussion of Section 19. There was consensus for same.

Committee Member Reynolds moved to modify the title of President Pro Tem to Council President. Vice Chair Jarvis seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley

Committee Member Reynolds expressed concern with the ability of three Councilors to pass a vote with only four members present as stated in Section 18. Discussion ensued as to whether certain topics should require four yes votes.

Deputy City Manager Pretty requested that staff be allowed to develop some proposed language and bring it back to the Committee for consideration at a future meeting. There was consensus for same.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to modify Chapter VI, Section 19 to state: "He/she shall sign all ordinances passed by the council within three days after their passage *where practicable*." Committee Member Yon seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued regarding the use of simplified language or extending the timeline for signatures.

Vice Chair Jarvis withdrew his motion. He moved to amend the timeline to 30 days within the adoption of Council except in the case of emergency, where it shall be signed upon passage. Committee Member Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley

Committee Member Parker exited at this time.

The Committee took up Section 16 again at this time. Chair Thorstad expressed support for the role of the Mayor as only a tie-breaker vote. Discussion ensued regarding the role of the Mayor in relation to their Council colleagues.

Committee Member Parker re-entered at this time.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to modify the Mayor to have only a tie-breaker vote in Section 16. Committee Member Yon seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Parker, Yon

NAY: Reynolds

ABSENT: Gourley

Committee Business for the Good of the Order

a) Next Steps

There was consensus to convene again on June 17th to review the remainder of the Charter.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

ATTEST:

Chair

City Manager – Ex Officio City Recorder