



CITY OF SWEET HOME CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 17, 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 (6:32 PM)
Committee Member Mike Reynolds
Committee Member Angie Yon

ABSENT

Committee Member Lisa Gourley

STAFF

Cecily Hope Pretty, Deputy City Manager
Adam Leisinger, Special Projects Manager

Approval of Minutes

- a) 2025-06-04 Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to approve the minutes of the June 4, 2025 Charter Review Committee meeting. Committee Member Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley, Parker

Public Comment

There was no public comment to be heard.

New Business

- a) Full Charter Review

Deputy City Manager Pretty stated that she did not find many examples where a majority of affirmative votes of the entire Council were required but noted exceptions in Lebanon and Beaverton. She offered the following potential scenarios for the Committee to consider requiring more affirmative votes: the hiring or firing of Council-appointed positions, filling of Council vacancies, land use decisions, utility rate changes, modifications to City Municipal Code, discipline or removal of Councilors, or approving Ordinances with emergency clauses.

Committee Member Reynolds expressed support for requiring four affirmative votes for all Council action in Section 18.

Vice Chair Jarvis expressed concern with changing the minimum thresholds for action if the amendment to allow the Mayor to vote only as a tie-breaker. He moved to reconsider the previous vote regarding the status of Mayor as tie-breaker. Committee Member Reynolds seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to revert the recommended change regarding the Mayor as tie-breaker and restore the original Charter language. Committee Member Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley, Parker

Discussion resumed regarding potential categories to require at least four affirmative votes. Vice Chair Jarvis suggested the firing of the City Manager, rate increases, and discipline or removal of an elected official. There was Committee consensus to utilize the list proposed by Deputy City Manager Pretty. Vice Chair Jarvis expressed support for requiring five votes to discipline or remove elected officials.

Committee Member Reynolds moved to require four affirmative votes for the categories provided by Deputy City Manager Pretty. Committee Member Yon seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Jarvis offered a friendly amendment to separate Councilor discipline and removal for discussion. Committee Member Reynolds accepted the amendment. The amended motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley, Parker

Discussion ensued regarding whether more specific disciplinary guidelines and consequences should be included in the Charter.

Committee Member Reynolds moved to modify eligibility to run for future terms if a seated Councilor misses 10 or more regular City Council meetings during their term. Committee Member Yon seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley, Parker

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to modify Chapter II, Section 3 to state: "If the mayor-elect is a mid-term City Councilor, the fourth-place City Council candidate in that election shall be considered elected to this instant vacancy and serve the remaining two years of the seat vacated." Committee Member Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley, Parker

Vice Chair Jarvis recommended the addition of the ability to appoint a City Councilor Pro Tem in the event of a known long-term absence of a Councilor by four affirmative votes. Committee Member Reynolds asked of the length of the absence. Vice Chair Jarvis suggested a minimum of 60 days. Deputy City Manager Pretty asked if the intent was that the appointee be required to meet the same candidate requirements as if they were running in a standard election. Vice Chair Jarvis indicated same.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved that City Council consider establishing a method to identify a pool of potential candidates and to select Pro Tem Councilors to fill long-term vacancies and the recommended length.

Deputy City Manager Pretty noted that the burden to maintain a pool of candidates would fall upon staff and create an additional administrative workload. Vice Chair Jarvis withdrew his motion.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved that City Council consider establishing a method to select Pro Tem Councilors to fill long-term vacancies and the recommended length. Committee Member Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley, Parker

Deputy City Manager Pretty requested that the Committee consider the addition of the Deputy City Manager having signatory authority for checks to provide an additional staff member who could sign checks in the City Manager's absence.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to include the Deputy City Manager in the signatory authority in Section 19. Committee Member Yon seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley, Parker

Deputy City Manager Pretty requested the Committee's feedback regarding the term limit for a City Manager Pro Tem and noted that City Manager recruitments often lasted nine to 12 months.

Committee Member Reynolds moved to modify the length of assignment of Manager Pro Tem from six months to 12 months. Vice Chair Jarvis seconded the motion.

Committee Member Yon suggested extending it to 18 months due to the length of time for typical City Manager recruitments.

Committee Member Reynolds withdrew his motion. He moved to allow up to three consecutive six-month terms as authorized through Council action with four affirmative votes. Vice Chair Jarvis seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley, Parker

Vice Chair Jarvis asked of substituting the reading of an Ordinance in full with a required summary of the Ordinance to be read by the City Attorney. Deputy City Manager Pretty replied that almost all items that come before City Council already include a Request for Council Action summarizing the item. She noted that Sweet Home's practices for reading the Ordinance were unusual in Oregon. Vice Chair Jarvis suggested that a summary would be a better substitute. Deputy City Manager Pretty replied that a definition of "summary" would be required. She reviewed practices from other cities and the League of Oregon Cities model charter.

Committee Member Parker entered at this time.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to remove the requirement to read every Ordinance in full and to allow Ordinances to be approved after being read by title only twice if first approved by unanimous vote, and that non-unanimous votes would require a reading by title only at a second meeting. Chair Thorstad seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley

Deputy City Manager Pretty requested that the Committee consider removing the requirement to post approved Ordinances in three or more conspicuous places due to the availability of electronic packets and staff's ability to print hard copies upon request. Committee Member Reynolds moved to do same. Chair Thorstad seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley

Committee Member Parker suggested changing the word “remonstrance” in Section 28 to a simpler word. There was Committee consensus for same. Deputy City Manager Pretty stated that she would substitute a more appropriate word based on staff recommendation.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to include language allowing citizens to address the City Council during the Public Comment period of the agenda for a time not to exceed five minutes. Committee Member Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley

Deputy City Manager Pretty asked of the Committee’s opinion on including language if there were multiple vacancies on City Council. Vice Chair Jarvis moved to create a new subsection of Section 15 that if there were three vacant City Council seats concurrently, the majority of the remaining City Councilors become a quorum for the purpose of filling vacancies. Committee Member Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley

Deputy City Manager Pretty asked of including a timeline to fill a City Council vacancy if it occurs in the second half of the term. Committee Member Reynolds moved to set a limit of 60 calendar days. Committee Member Yon seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

ABSENT: Gourley

Deputy City Manager Pretty asked of granting the Mayor veto power. There was consensus not to grant veto power.

Committee Business for the Good of the Order

a) Next Steps

Chair Thorstad stated that two public open houses would be hosted by staff to gather public feedback on the City Charter.

There was consensus to skip the planned July meeting and reconvene on August 5th once open house comments were compiled.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 PM.

Chair

ATTEST:

City Manager – Ex Officio City Recorder