



CITY OF SWEET HOME CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 06, 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 Council President Pro Tem
Vice Chair Gary Jarvis
Committee Member Lisa Gourley
Committee Member Jeff Parker
Committee Member Mike Reynolds
Committee Member Angie Yon

STAFF

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

MEDIA

Sarah Brown, The New Era

Approval of Minutes

- a) 2025-04-01 Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2025 Charter Review Committee meeting. Committee Member Gourley seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Gourley, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

Public Comment

There was no public comment to be heard.

New Business

- a) Chapter I-III Review

Vice Chair Jarvis requested that the Charter be renumbered and allow for numerical subsections. Committee Member Parker suggested that the numbering be changed to reflect the system utilized by Halsey.

Committee Member Parker stated that he would like to include the year of the Charter's adoption in Chapter I, Section 1.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved that the Charter be reformatted to follow sections and subsections numerically and alphabetically in the style of the League of Oregon Cities' Model Charter. Committee Member Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Gourley, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

Committee Member Parker asked that language be simplified where possible to ensure it was understandable to the public.

Vice Chair Jarvis suggested that the word "will" in Section 1 be modified to "shall." Committee Member Gourley moved to modify same. Vice Chair Jarvis seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Gourley, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

There was consensus to correct "statues" to "statutes" in Chapter I, Section 2.

There was consensus to capitalize the officer titles in Section 4.

There was consensus to add "each of whom" following "and a municipal judge" in Section 4.

There was consensus to modify language to reflect the neutrality of offices.

Discussion ensued regarding the role of the treasurer. There was consensus to add clarifying language that the treasurer role is filled by the Finance Director.

Deputy City Manager Pretty stated that the practice of bonding as called for in Section 7 was not common when looking at other Charters and asked for feedback. Discussion ensued regarding the bonding of employees and contractors. City Attorney Larsen noted that the City Council could still require bonding by Ordinance whether it was mandated in the Charter or not.

Committee Member Reynolds moved to strike Section 7 from the Charter. Vice Chair Jarvis seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Gourley, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

Deputy City Manager Pretty requested feedback on the commencement of terms of office for new elected officials and noted that staff recommended a modification to ensure better clarity in the transition of duties. Discussion ensued regarding potential options for the beginning of the term of service. Deputy City Manager Pretty noted some confusion among incoming Councilors due to the current fluctuation in start dates and that Linn County Elections contacted the City regularly to request the ending terms of each elected office, so a consistent date would be preferable.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to modify the commencement of terms office of January 1st following the election in which the officer was elected in Chapter III, Section 10. Committee Member Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Gourley, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

Committee Member Parker asked of clarifying the language in Chapter III Section 8 to state "resided in the city for at least a full calendar year prior to being nominated." City Attorney Larsen noted that Councilors were elected, not nominated. Deputy City Manager Pretty stated that it may be referring to the filling of vacancies in Chapter IV. Discussion ensued regarding whether the one-year requirement referred to the year prior to filing for office or the year prior to the election. Deputy City Manager Pretty stated that the Sweet Home Municipal Code (SHMC) clarified that the requirement was for one year immediately preceding the election. She added that if the Charter was modified to reflect a different start date for the one-year requirement than what was in current Code, the Code would need to be modified to match.

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to modify Section 8 to reflect the residency length requirement as specified in the Code to state, "Any qualified elector who has resided in the city at least one year as of the date of the election may run for city council or for mayor."

Committee Member Gourley offered a friendly amendment to state “one full year.” Vice Chair Jarvis accepted the friendly amendment.

Discussion ensued whether the year requirement should end at the time of filing or the time of election. Deputy City Manager Pretty stated that the current deadline to file for office was 64 days prior to the election date per SHMC, and the first day to file was 100 days prior.

Vice Chair Jarvis withdrew his motion to allow for continued discussion modifying the residency timeline.

Chair Thorstad suggested that a full year of residency should be required prior to filing as a candidate for office. Committee Member Parker concurred. Committee Member Reynolds asked of changing it to the first day the filing period opens. Deputy City Manager Pretty noted that specifying the residency requirement to the current Code with a specific number of days would no longer allow flexibility within the Code to modify the length of the filing period.

Discussion ensued regarding extending the length of the residency requirement. There was consensus that 12 months was an appropriate length.

Committee Member Reynolds moved to modify the residency requirement to be one year prior to the opening of the candidate filing period to run for city council or for mayor. Vice Chair Jarvis seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Thorstad, Jarvis, Gourley, Parker, Reynolds, Yon

NAY: None

Vice Chair Jarvis moved to modify final sentence of Section 8 to state, “may run for city council or for mayor.” City Attorney Larsen clarified that this was captured in the previous motion. Vice Chair Jarvis withdrew his motion.

Deputy City Manager Pretty stated that a section dedicated to special elections only appeared in approximately half of the comparison Charters she examined. She noted that the City did not have the ability to call a special election outside of what was already organized through the Linn County Clerk. City Attorney Larsen clarified that Sweet Home could organize its own election but would be responsible for administration of the full process at their own cost, including ballot administration.

Committee Member Reynolds moved to strike Section 9 from the Charter.

Committee Member Gourley expressed concern that the City would lose the option to call an emergency election if the section was struck, particularly if there were several vacancies on City Council. Committee Member Reynolds withdrew his motion. He asked if Linn County Commissioners had the power to fill Council vacancies. Deputy City Manager Pretty stated they did not and that the Committee would discussion the process for filling vacancies in a future meeting.

Committee Business for the Good of the Order

- a) Meeting Schedule Proposal – First Tuesday at 5:30 PM

Deputy City Manager Pretty stated that staff proposed meeting the first Tuesday of each month at 5:30 PM. There was consensus for same.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:43 PM.

Chair

ATTEST:

City Manager – Ex Officio City Recorder