

1. 6:00 P.M. Charter Commission Meeting Packet At 6 Pm (REVISED)

Documents:

[CHARTER COMMISSION ANNUAL MEETING PACKET 10-15-2025
\(REVISED\).PDF](#)



CITY OF ANOKA
HOME RULE CHARTER COMMISSION

AGENDA

ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, **October 15, 2025** 6:00 p.m.
Anoka City Council Worksession Room
Upper Level

USE MAIN ENTRANCE PLEASE

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ROLL CALL**

3. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary

MEETING MINUTES

4. a. Minutes of 06.25.2025 Special Meeting.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Request by City Council for Charter Commission review of City Charter Section 2.05, Vacancies in Elected Offices.

6. **OTHER BUSINESS (NONE)**

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting Date: 10.15.2025
Item Description: Election of Officers
Submitted By: Amy Oehlers, ACM

The Commission conducts their election of officers at the annual meeting.

At your last meeting when you elected officers there was a bit of confusion on the process.

Here is the recommended process.

- Current President asks if there are members interested in serving as the President.
 - Members would then be given an opportunity to state their interest, introduce themselves to the Commission and provide some background information on themselves and why they would like to serve as President.
- Once that process is completed, the current President would call for nominations.
 - The name of each nominated individual will be written down by staff.
 - After the President has called for nominations **3 times**, the nominations would then be closed.
 - Voting would proceed.
 - Each nominated individual will be voted upon separately starting in the order the nomination was made.
 - Members will vote by voice stating Aye or Opposed.
 - Members may only vote once for each position.
 - Staff will record how many Aye votes are cast for each individual.
 - The individual that receives the most Aye votes, will have been elected to the position.

Once the President has been elected, the new President will take over presiding the meeting.

The same process for Vice-President and Secretary would then occur.

This is an open voting process and paper ballots have not typically been used because staff would not know who is interested in serving in a position until it is stated at the meeting. In addition, voted paper ballots are of public record, so there really is no reason a paper ballot would be necessary.

FYI:

- President (currently Don Collins)
- Vice President (currently Doug Dehn)
- Secretary (this is just on paper, staff does all the secretarial work for the Commission) Currently Angela Eaton.



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CITY OF ANOKA
HOME RULE CHARTER COMMISSION
 25th day of June, 2025, 6:00 P.M.
 COUNCIL WORKSESSION ROOM, UPPER LEVEL
 ANOKA CITY HALL

DRAFT

CALL TO ORDER

President Collins called the meeting of the City of Anoka Home Rule Charter Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Administration Conference Room of Anoka City Hall.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Anderson, Baldwin, Collins, Dehn, Doffing, Evans, Hanson, Knapek, McFarland, Norton, Pierce, and Wetzel.

Staff present: Assistant City Manager Amy Oehlers and City Attorney Scott Baumgartner.

Commissioners absent: Cleveland and Gilbert.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Baldwin to approve the November 20, 2024, minutes, as presented. Motion was seconded by Pierce. Vote taken: All Ayes. Minutes were approved.

NEW BUSINESS

4a. Request by City Council for Charter Commission Review of City Charter Section 2.05, Vacancies in Elected Officials

President Collins noted that this topic has been discussed for the past four or five years, including a joint meeting with the City Council. He stated that he rushed to get something out in the packet and realized there were a few errors in the document. He thanked Commissioner Doffing for her analysis and asked her to share some of the information she gathered.

Commissioner Doffing commented on a League of Minnesota Cities training for elected officials that she had completed as a previous member of a City Council, which provided her with the information and knowledge of where to look for information. She reviewed the language currently included in Section 2.05 of the City Charter.

Commissioner Pierce asked if the Council's objection to the current language is that the Mayor would appoint.

Assistant City Manager Oehlers stated that both the current and past mayors have expressed

the opinion that they do not want to appoint on their own.

Commissioner McFarland stated that if the elected officials cannot agree, the Mayor should be the tie breaker, as he was also elected to make that decision.

Commissioner Baldwin commented that the people did make decisions in electing the members of the Council and the Mayor. He stated that in the same manner as the Senate, if there is a tie, the presiding officer makes the choice.

Commissioner Evans commented that perhaps then, if the two choices are qualified and the Mayor does not want to make the choice, they could do a blind draw.

Commissioner Baldwin stated that it is a tough choice, and they should not be doing a blind draw; that choice should be made by the Mayor and Council.

Commissioner Pierce stated that the Mayor runs every two years, while the members of the Council run every four years.

It was suggested that in the case a decision could not be made, it could move to the next election, noting the cost of a special election.

Commissioner McFarland stated that this has happened three times, and it has gone smoothly with the Council suggesting someone, and the Council either agreeing or the final decision being made by the Mayor. He noted that it seems to be working.

Commissioner Knappek stated that the Charter does not require a full Council to be present, only a quorum.

Commissioner Doffing stated that two members of the Council could leave the Council for one reason or another, which would leave three members, and that would still be a quorum.

Commissioner Pierce stated that the basic thing that could be added is to impose some restrictions on who could be appointed.

City Attorney Baumgartner stated that there are a few issues that should be discussed. He noted that the first item has already been discussed as to who should make the appointment and who should be considered for appointment.

Assistant City Manager Oehlers read the draft language that the Commission previously suggested as to who should be considered for appointment.

Commissioner Dehn asked who would make the decision in the case that the Mayor is the one who is gone from the Council.

City Attorney Baumgartner replied that the Mayor Pro Tem would make the decision in that case.

Commissioner Knappek believed that all members of the Council should be present for this type of vote.

Commissioner Doffing commented that life happens, and there are circumstances where someone could not attend a meeting. She reviewed the processes that could be followed as posted by the League of Minnesota Cities. She used the example of an emergency situation where multiple Council members were lost, noting that perhaps in that scenario, it would make sense to appoint three previous members of the Council to get business going because they have experience.

President Collins stated that he reviewed the minutes for the past seven years to find the discussions on this topic and provided an overview of those discussion points. He also noted variations in the process for appointments that have occurred, the length of time the process has taken, and other items that could be considered. He asked if there should be consideration of a primary election, but was unsure that could be answered tonight. He recognized that this is a complex issue and was unsure it could be solved tonight.

Assistant City Manager Oehlers reviewed the triggers at which a primary election would be required.

President Collins asked if a candidate must declare their intent for a specific position when filing for office.

Assistant City Manager Oehlers stated that all seats are at-large, but if there are two and four-year terms available, the candidate must declare if they are running for the two or four-year term.

Commissioner Evans recognized that City elections occur every two years and asked if School Board elections are held in off years. She asked if a special election for a Council person could occur with the School Board election.

Assistant City Manager Oehlers stated that she could speak with Anoka County Elections and the School District, but recognized that voting precincts for the School District are different than precincts for City elections.

City Attorney Baumgartner commented that would still be a special election.

Assistant City Manager Oehlers confirmed that the City would not save any money by holding an election with the School District.

Commissioner Baldwin commented that there is an election every two years; therefore, any appointed person would serve less than two years before the next election.

President Collins asked if it would be acceptable for someone to be appointed for up to two years.

Commissioner Doffing commented that the residents have voted in the elected officials, and that body should be making the decision. She stated that if the decision is not liked, that would be remembered in the next election for the person appointed and those making the appointment.

Commissioner Knappek asked what the Council's desire for this meeting is.

City Attorney Baumgartner commented that former Mayor Rice was uncomfortable being the person who would make the decision and thought the citizens should be the ones to make the decision, noting that has trickled down to Mayor Skogquist. He stated that it is not that they are shrinking their duty, but wondering if they should be the ones to make the decision rather than the people. He stated that the discussion then went to how long a reasonable amount of time would be for someone appointed to serve.

Commissioner Baldwin recognized the cost of a special election.

City Attorney Baumgartner stated that the Council also recognizes that cost.

Commissioner Baldwin noted difficult decisions the Council must make related to assessments, taxes, and other items that impact residents. He believed that the residents should be able to rely on the Council to make the decision to appoint someone to a vacant seat. He recognized that these are tough decisions, but this is the job of the Council. He did not believe that appointing someone to serve is a tough decision.

Commissioner Pierce asked if the Council has indicated anything they would like to change.

Assistant City Manager Oehlers stated that the Council would like a recommendation on how long an appointed person should be allowed to serve and who should make the decision in the case of a tie vote.

Commissioner Baldwin replied that an appointed person should be allowed to serve no more than two years.

Commissioner Pierce stated that perhaps the language should be clarified to state that in the case of a tie, the Mayor shall choose from those being considered in the tie vote.

A motion was made by Doffing, seconded by Pierce, to recommend the language to state, "in the event of a tie vote, the Mayor shall appoint one of the voted upon eligible persons to fill the vacancy". Vote taken: All Ayes.

The meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Approval Attestation: Amy T. Oehlers, Assistant City Manager

Meeting Date: 10.15.2025

Item Description: Request by City Council for Charter Commission review of City Charter, Section 2.05, Vacancies in Elected offices.

Submitted By: Amy Oehlers, ACM

At their August 18, 2025 meeting, the City Council reviewed the recommendation by the Charter Commission on changes to the City Charter related to filling vacancies in elected offices.

The Council requested this item be sent back to the Charter Commission for further review and request that a Charter recommendation be brought back to them again for consideration.

Attached is the following information:

- Charter recommendation sent to the City Council at August 18, 2025 meeting.
- Council's request to review some of the recommendations made by the Charter Commission. Specifically the use of the work "applicants", how the vacancy is advertised and also address a scenario of a 2-1-1 vote on the appointment.
- Excerpt of City Council minutes of August 18, 2025.
- Staff's memo to the City Council for the August 18, 2025 meeting.
- **Email from Mayor Skogquist regarding filling vacancies.**

The Council discussed that the City Council needs to develop a standard practice of how the appointment is made, i.e. advertising the vacancy, application process, interview process, etc. It was mentioned at the August 18, 2025 City Council meeting that this process should be adopted by an Ordinance of the City Council. The Commission may want to discuss this and include recommendations on what the Charter Commission thinks would be a good process.

If you would like to listen to the discussion on this topic that the Council held at their meeting on August 18, 2025, you may access the recording on QCTV.org or by clicking this link: [Click Here](#) (it is item 9.1 at ticker 2.01).

CHARTER RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL AUGUST 2025

Section 2.05 Vacancies in Elected Offices.

A vacancy in an elected office shall be deemed to exist in case of the failure of any person elected thereto to qualify on or before the date of the second regular meeting of the Council in the month of January following his/her election, or by reason of his/her death, resignation, removal from office, for malfeasance, or nonfeasance, removal from the City, conviction of a felony before or after his/her qualification, or for reasons prescribed by State Law. In each such case, the Council shall, by Resolution, declare a vacancy to exist and shall forthwith appoint an eligible person to fill the vacated seat.

In the event of a tie vote by the Council of applicants to fill the vacancy, and the Council's inability to rectify the tie and agree on an appointment to fill the vacancy within thirty (30) days from the occurrence of the fact giving rise to the vacancy, the Mayor shall appoint one of the eligible applicants of the tied vote to fill the vacancy.

At the next regular City election, the vacated seat shall be placed upon the ballot for the purpose of filling the vacated office for the remainder of its original term. The appointed person shall serve until the person elected qualifies for such office. If the vacated office would have normally been filled at the next regular City election, the appointed person shall serve until the newly elected individual's term commences in January following the election and they have qualified for such office.

~~If the Council is unable to agree on an appointment to fill the vacancy within thirty (30) days from the occurrence of the fact giving rise to the vacancy, the Mayor shall appoint a person to fill the vacancy.~~

COUNCIL REQUEST FOR FURTHER CHARTER COMMISSION REVIEW AUGUST 2025

*Red text is the Charter Commissions previous recommendation.

*Green text is what the Council would like the Charter Commission to discuss.

*Council would also like the Charter Commission to re-discuss when/if Special Elections should occur.

Section 2.05 Vacancies in Elected Offices.

A vacancy in an elected office shall be deemed to exist in case of the failure of any person elected thereto to qualify on or before the date of the second regular meeting of the Council in the month of January following his/her election, or by reason of his/her death, resignation, removal from office, for malfeasance, or nonfeasance, removal from the City, conviction of a felony before or after his/her qualification, or for reasons prescribed by State Law. In each such case, the Council shall, by Resolution, declare a vacancy to exist and shall (following the adopted process for advertising the vacancy?) and shall forthwith appoint an eligible person to fill the vacated seat.

In the event of a tie vote by the Council of applicants eligible individuals to fill the vacancy, and the Council's inability to rectify the tie and agree (definition of what agree would mean, i.e. majority vote?), on an appointment to fill the vacancy within thirty (30) days from the occurrence of the fact giving rise to the vacancy, the Mayor or in the Mayor's absence, the Mayor Pro-tem shall appoint one of the eligible applicants individuals of the tied vote to fill the vacancy. Should there be a scenario of a 2-1-1 vote on the appointment of an eligible individual, the Mayor or in the Mayor's absence, the Mayor Pro-tem shall appoint one of the eligible individuals that received the highest vote.

At the next regular City election, the vacated seat shall be placed upon the ballot for the purpose of filling the vacated office for the remainder of its original term. The appointed person shall serve until the person elected qualifies for such office. If the vacated office would have normally been filled at the next regular City election, the appointed person shall serve until the newly elected individual's term commences in January following the election and they have qualified for such office.

~~If the Council is unable to agree on an appointment to fill the vacancy within thirty (30) days from the occurrence of the fact giving rise to the vacancy, the Mayor shall appoint a person to fill the vacancy.~~

9. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

9.1 ORD/Amending City Charter Relating to Filling Vacancies in Elected Office.
(1st Reading)

Mr. Lee shared a background report stating that at the May worksession, the Council requested that the Charter Commission hold a special meeting to review and make a recommendation on amending the City Charter, Section 2.05 Vacancies in Elected Offices. The Charter was advised that the Council specifically wanted a review and recommendation on filling vacancies, if by appointment, for how many months, or if there should be a special election called at some point. He shared the current language. The commission discussed this section of the City Charter. The Commission expressed that they do not feel that a Special Election should be called at any point, since an appointed person to fill a vacancy would only last until the next regular Municipal Election, which our regular elections occur in every even-numbered year. The Commission did discuss how an appointment should be handled if there was a tie vote of the Council. The Commission has made a recommendation to amend the charter as shown on the first reading of an ordinance. This recommendation was passed unanimously by the members present at the meeting (12 members present, 3 members absent). He said this is an introductory first reading, and final action on this ordinance would require a unanimous vote of all members of the City Council to pass. He shared that a public hearing would be scheduled as part of the second reading and asked to confirm attendance at that upcoming meeting.

City Attorney Scott Baumgartner said the Charter Commission had a good discussion about this topic a few times and summarized that they didn't feel the timing and necessary costs always supported a special election, and appreciated their discussion and insight.

Mayor Skogquist explained the process of Charter amendments and agreed that the Commission held a very good discussion, and thanked them for their work. He shared concerns with the current process as it could be abused and said he preferred that the citizens elect their Councilmembers instead of by appointment. He said the Charter doesn't force an open process and shared how the process has been different over time, and can cause angst, and said he would prefer a pre-approved process and not left to interpretation. He said the Commission didn't discuss that part and suggested the Council could adopt a process via ordinance instead. Mayor Skogquist said the Commission made a simple change, then spoke about the term if the Council can't agree and what the standard was regarding agreeing on an appointment, and felt it should change to be a majority of Council instead. He spoke about appointing eligible applicants, but only if the Council decides to accept applications, and said there's nothing in the Charter that says the Council has to accept applications. He shared a concern was the Mayoral appointment and the fail-safe in the Charter in the event of a tie vote, the Mayor selects, and how that could be manipulated and result in a four-member Council for two years, which may be something a few members would want.

Sharon Doffing, Charter Commission, said while the public hearing will occur on September 15, she commented on the concern that there could be a two-on-two scenario and how an acting mayor would be able to cast that second vote, and felt the public should view the Charter Commission discussion and the rationale to stay within Statute. She said the City can seek other appointments and applicants, but noted that should a devastating event occur that removed all Councilmembers, the citizens would like to have members in office, and that is the job of elected officials to appoint and carry on the business for the residents.

Mayor Skogquist said he understood the appointment of a Mayor, but other portions refer to Acting Mayor, and the only way is through a special election if there's a tie vote, and if there's never a tie, there's no way to address this. He said he's open to moving the first reading forward and discussing further at the second reading, but doesn't want to create a problem.

Mr. Baumgartner spoke further about the process for appointment and different processes over time, and the need to get to a majority and lean on who receives the most votes overall.

Commissioner Doffing shared a scenario that wouldn't result in a tie. Mr. Baumgartner shared that a vote for the 2-1-1 scenario would occur if only half the Council agreed; otherwise, it would be whoever receives the most votes.

Mayor Skogquist said that change could be considered and suggested the Council vote and provide a legal mechanism for it to be addressed.

Councilmember Rostad said she liked the idea of a clear process for future vacancies, and while she agreed with trying to avoid the cost and work of a special election, filling a vacancy for 22 months is too long, and she agreed it would be good to clear up that process.

Mr. Baumgartner said the Council could refer the ordinance back to the Commission for a revision for the 2-1-1 scenario, then suggested the language could be amended to said individual instead of applicant to address that concern. Mayor Skogquist asked if we could codify a legal process through the City code. Mr. Baumgartner said the appointment process is at the discretion of the Council and that the only mandatory portion is that the Council shall appoint.

Motion by Councilmember Campbell, seconded by Councilmember Scott, to refer the ordinance back to the Charter Commission, amending the City Charter, Section 2.05, Vacancies in Elected Offices.

Upon a roll call vote: Mayor Skogquist, Councilmembers Campbell, Rostad, Scott, and Weaver voted in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting Date: 08.18.2025
Agenda Section: Ordinances & Resolutions
Item Description: ORD/Amending City Charter Relating to Filling Vacancies in Elected Office. (1st Reading)
Submitted By: Amy Oehlers, ACM

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At your May Worksession, the Council requested that the Charter Commission hold a special meeting to review and make a recommendation on amending the City Charter, Section 2.05 Vacancies in Elected Offices.

The Charter was advised that the Council specifically wanted a review and recommendation on filling vacancies, if by appointment, for how many months, or if there should be a special election called at some point.

Below is the current Charter language.

Section 2.05 Vacancies in Elected Offices.

A vacancy in an elected office shall be deemed to exist in case of the failure of any person elected thereto to qualify on or before the date of the second regular meeting of the Council in the month of January following his/her election, or by reason of his/her death, resignation, removal from office, for malfeasance, or nonfeasance, removal from the City, conviction of a felony before or after his/her qualification, or for reasons prescribed by State Law. In each such case, the Council shall, by Resolution, declare a vacancy to exist and shall forthwith appoint an eligible person to fill the vacated seat.

At the next regular City election, the vacated seat shall be placed upon the ballot for the purpose of filling the vacated office for the remainder of its original term. The appointed person shall serve until the person elected qualifies for such office. If the vacated office would have normally been filled at the next regular City election, the appointed person shall serve until the newly elected individual's term commences in January following the election and they have qualified for such office.

If the Council is unable to agree on an appointment to fill the vacancy within thirty (30) days from the occurrence of the fact giving rise to the vacancy, the Mayor shall appoint a person to fill the vacancy.

The commission held a discussion regarding this section of the City Charter. The Commission expressed that they do not feel that a Special Election should be called at any point, since an appointed person to fill a vacancy would only last until the next regular Municipal Election, which our regular elections occur in every even-numbered year.

The Commission did discuss how an appointment should be handled if there was a tie vote of the Council.

The Commission has made a recommendation to amend the charter as shown on the attached First Reading of an Ordinance. This recommendation was passed unanimously by the members present at the meeting (12 members present, 3 members absent). This is just an introductory First Reading.

Final action this ordinance would require a unanimous vote of all members of the City Council in order to pass.

If you would like to hear the recording of the meeting, it is available on the City website at this link [Charter Commission Special Meeting 06.25.2025](#)

FINANCIAL IMPACT

N/A

REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION

Hold the Introductory First Reading of an ordinance amending City Chapter, Section 2.05 Vacancies in Elected Office.

REQUIRED VOTE

Majority vote of Councilmembers present for a Introductory First Reading. Second Reading and Adoption of a change to the City Charter would require a unanimous vote of all members of the City Council.

From: Erik Skogquist <erikskogquist@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 9, 2025 2:50 PM
To: Amy Oehlers <AOehlers@ci.anoka.mn.us>
Cc: Greg Lee <GLEe@ci.anoka.mn.us>; Scott Baumgartner <sbaumgartner@bbg.law>
Subject: Re: Charter Commission recommendation

Hey all,

I was speaking with someone today about the charter meeting next week and I came across an old email I never sent regarding issues I saw with the most recent proposed language of the charter change. I figured I would send what was still relevant to think over and address any issues before the charter commission approves language.

1) This new language creates a scenario where if a majority of the council present at a meeting cannot pass a resolution AND there is not a tie, then there is no legal way to make an appointment. Below are a few scenarios to think through.

Scenario 1: In 2005 the city council was deadlocked between two candidates, ultimately the Mayor decided to recruit a third person who was appointed as a consensus candidate.

Scenario 2 : Two councilmembers want person A, another councilmember wants person B and the mayor wants person C, then there is no tie and no majority. What happens then with the removal of the language where the mayor ultimately makes the appointment if 30 days pass, this is at least a fallback that a prior council decision covered any deadlock scenario.

Scenario 3: The mayor and councilmember want person A and the other two councilmembers want person B. The current scenario the Mayor would appoint after 30 days of deadlock but under the new language the two councilmembers wanting person B could discuss not voting for the same person, therefore there is no tie for the Mayor to pick from but also no majority to appoint anyone. Legally there is no way to appoint someone and this could go on until the next election up to 2 years.

2) The new language still uses the term "agree" which the city attorney had an issue with in 2018/2019 since it is not clearly defined. Is agreement a plurality, majority or unanimous agreement?

Thanks,
Erik Skogquist