



# Charter Review Committee Minutes

March 4, 2026

Chair Dave Drotzmann called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. Committee members in attendance included: Kyndra Stone, Paul Wolverton, Karyn Jones, and Monique Brandley. Val Hoxie and Rod Hardin were excused. Also present was Mayor Doug Primmer as Council representative, and staff to include: City Manager Byron Smith, City Attorney Rich Tovey, and City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong.

Byron announced the meeting was being live streamed on YouTube and reminded all Council members present, as there was a quorum, that they should not discuss City business.

Dave thanked all those present and asked the Committee to consider changing the agenda to take action on the February Meeting Minutes prior to reviewing the proposed charter language. The Committee agreed.

## **Meeting Minutes**

Kyndra moved and Karyn seconded to approve the February 3 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously with Members Dave, Kyndra, Paul, Monique, and Karyn in favor.

## **Presentation- Proposed Charter Language**

Byron reviewed the Committee's proposed changes found in the agenda packet and presented through a PowerPoint (attached) speaking on: why and how the committee was formed; starting in October, the committee has met to review the entire Charter, while also giving specific focus to a variety of subjects per Council direction, to include: geographic representation for council members, ward boundary adjustment, elected vs appointed municipal judge, city manager residency requirements, city attorney supervision and employment process; what a City Charter is and why it is necessary, and Hermiston's Charter history; and specifically reviewed all recommended changes.

Committee members thanked staff and other subject matter experts who presented information, gave guidance, and answered questions to include the League of Oregon Cities and Municipal Court Judge Cameron Bendixsen, stating the Committee had extensive conversations while reviewing each subject thoroughly to come together with these recommendations for the best interest of the City and its constituents.

## **Public Comment**

Jackie Linton, City of Hermiston Resident- thanked Committee members for volunteering their time and stated she believes the Municipal Court Judge should be an elected position and asked who would be involved in the hiring process of the City Attorney.

- Response from Committee/Staff: The City Attorney would be hired in a joint effort between the entire City Council and City Manager.

Krista Van Veen, City of Hermiston Resident- thanked Committee members for volunteering their time and spoke regarding her concerns redistricting ward boundaries as this may divide the community instead of bringing people together for shared interests and ensuring ward councilors are voting for the betterment of the entire community not just their wards interests.



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Nate Rivera, City of Hermiston Resident- thanked Committee members for volunteering and asked if Charter recommendations would be placed in the form of one or multiple questions to the voters and stated he supports the Municipal Court Judge being an elected position.

- Response from Committee/Staff: This Committee is not recommending how it will be presented to the voters, it will be the decision of the Council on how to proceed.

Krista Van Veen, City of Hermiston Resident- asked if these proposed redistricting changes would create more work for ward councilors and if it would be possible to redraw boundaries based on the voting population instead of the population as a whole, as Hermiston does not have a large voting population.

- Response from Committee/Staff: there would be no impact on council work load if the proposed redistricting came into effect, and redistricting must be done in accordance with Voting Right Act and the Department of Justice in a way where each area is fairly represented, this is why the proposed changes are being recommended to make sure the City is in compliance, therefore her suggested redistricting would not be possible.

Liliana Gomez, City of Hermiston Resident- Asked if an election expert spoke on this subject and if the Municipal Court Judge becomes an appointed position, if they will need to live in Hermiston, and if not, they should be required to at least live in Umatilla County.

- Response from Committee/Staff: An Election Expert did not present to the Committee, and if the Municipal Court Judge becomes an appointed position they will not be required to live in Hermiston.

Jill Litzsinger, PCP Umatilla County Vice-Chair Greater Hermiston Conservatives, City of Hermiston Resident- (directly quoted from email public comment submission) "To run for office, they need to live in the boundaries of side office! They shouldn't be given a year to move. In order to represent this community, they should know something about it. That means they should already have lived in the community before they run for an office.

I don't mind that the charter is reviewed every 10 years. But it should be reviewed with the constituents. So that they are better informed.

Redrawing the lines entails what? So the conservatives cannot have any seat in the city council? So that their voices are not heard? Or is it just so that you can have the majority of the hispanic vote in each ward?

All city councilors might represent their ward, but they also represent the city of hermiston, and the surrounding areas within their wards. In all voters should have a say in that.

The municipal court judge should stay an elected position.

Changing the elected city council president should remain every two years, unless you plan on changing the mayor to every year as well!"

- Response from Committee/Staff: All elected positions are non-partisan and that is not changing, many items in this written comment were addressed during the presentation and seems that this person may not have an understanding of the current Charter or what is being proposed.



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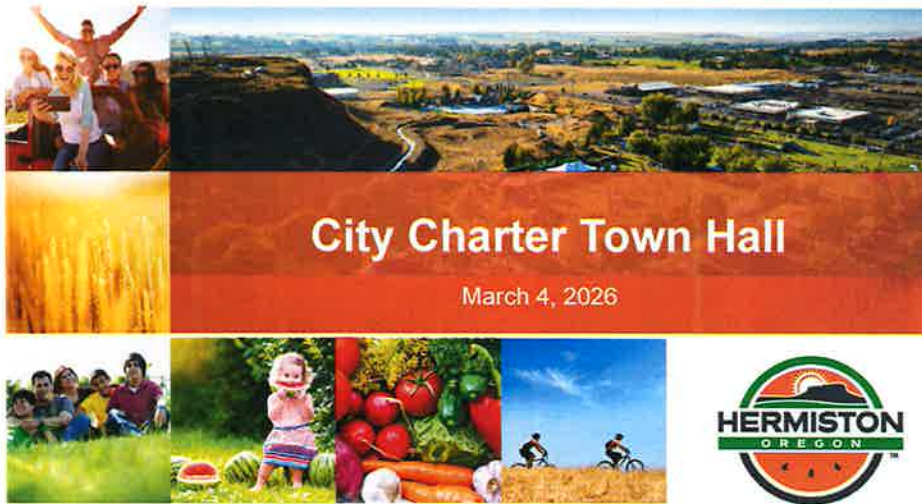
After additional comments, the Committee spoke regarding their comfort level with the recommended changes; Monique moved and Paul seconded to accept the final proposed changes and that they be presented to the Council. Motion carried unanimously with Members Dave, Kyndra, Paul, Monique, and Karyn in favor.

Dave thanked staff, all members of the Committee, and Mayor Primmer for their dedication to this process.

Byron stated the Council and Community will be presented this information at an upcoming City Council meeting for review and approval for preparation of the November ballot. Committee members will be invited to the Council Meeting when this is presented as well.

## **Adjournment**

There was no other business and Chair Drotzmann adjourned the meeting at 6:21pm.



## Outline

- Process
  - **Resolution No. 2382**
- Review Proposed Changes
- Public Comments/Discussion
- Committee Discussion/Business
- Possible Recommendation to City Council



## Resolution 2382

- Begin meetings in 2025 (First Meeting – October 2025) (4 Mtgs)
- Complete Review within 6-9 months
- Hold a Publicly Advertised Public Hearing
- Seven city electors with staff support
- City Council Liaison – Mayor Primmer
- Recommendations to Council
- Potential Ballot Measure



## Resolution 2382


- Review the entire Charter
- Specific Sections to Review
  - **Geographic representation for Council Members**
  - **Ward Boundary Adjustment**
  - **Elected vs. Appointed Municipal Judge**
  - **City Manager Residency Requirement**
  - **Ordinance Adoption Process**
  - **City Attorney Supervision/Hiring**



# HERMISTON OREGON Charter Review Process

- Review Committee
  - David Drotzmann, Chair
  - Kyndra Stone, Vice Chair
  - Monique Brandley
  - Karyn Jones
  - Paul Wolverton
  - Rod Hardin
  - Val Hoxie



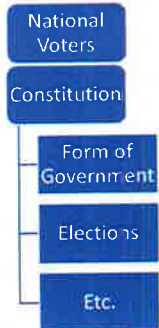


## City Charter?

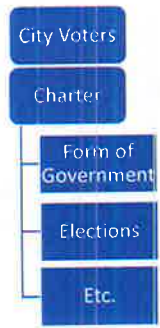
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# City Charter

## United States



## City of Hermiston

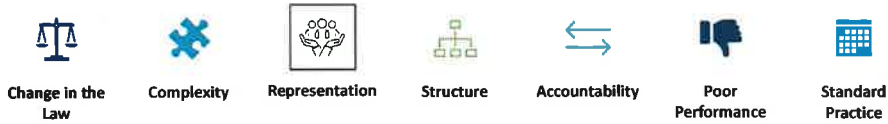


# City Charter

- History of Hermiston Charter
  - Original Adoption on March 15, 1910
  - Modified by several amendments on the following dates:
    - January 24, 1943
    - July 26, 1965
    - May 24, 1966
    - April 3, 1967
    - October 14, 1970
    - March 2, 1976
    - March 8, 1977
    - December 20, 1977
    - November 2, 1982
    - November 8, 1960
    - May 1, 1959
    - May 18, 1956
    - May 18, 1999
    - November 2, 1954
  - Current Charter Adopted 2015 After a Comprehensive Review



## Why Charter Review?



**Adopted Council Goal**  
**10 Year's Since Adoption**  
**Review ≠ Change**



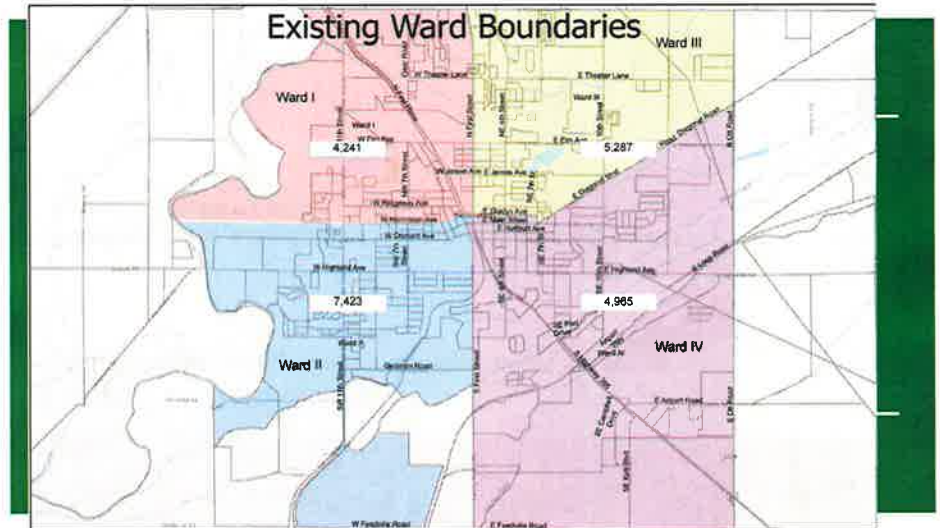
## Recommended Changes

- Changes recommended in four areas:
  - **Elections**
  - **Elected Official Roles**
  - **City Manager Role**
  - **Charter Maintenance**



## Recommended Changes

- **Elections**
  - **Redraw City Council Ward boundaries**



## Recommended Changes

- Elections
  - Change the election of ward councilors to be elected only by the electors in the individual wards



## Recommended Changes

- Elected Official Roles
  - Changing to an appointed municipal court judge
  
  - Changing the selection of city council president to every year from every other year



## Recommended Changes

- City Manager Roles
  - Allowing a newly hired city manager up to 12 months to move inside city limits
  
  - Clarifying day to day supervision of the city attorney lies with the city manager



## Recommended Changes

- City Charter Maintenance
  - Requires a review of the charter at least once every 10 years.
  
  - Makes various minor language changes to align the charter with the League of Oregon Cities Model Charter.





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**COMMENTS/QUESTIONS??**

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