



**CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING**  
City Hall: 3750 Bridge St NW  
**Monday, February 09, 2026 at 5:30 PM**

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**AGENDA**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**
- 3. APPROVE MINUTES**
  - A. City Charter Minutes - March 10, 2025
- 4. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**
- 5. AGENDA ITEMS**
  - A. Update Regarding Mayor Term Length and Charter Commission
  - B. Charter – Changes to Section 2.05 Vacancies in Office
  - C. Charter – Changes to Section 8.01 Improvement & Levy Assessments
  - D. Charter – Changes to Section 5.01 General Provisions Filing Fee
  - E. Charter – Changes to Section 3.09 When Ordinances take effect
- 6. ADJOURNMENT**



CITY OF ST. FRANCIS  
ST. FRANCIS MN  
ANOKA COUNTY  
CHARTER COMMISSION  
Tuesday, March 10, 2025 at 5:30 PM

MINUTES

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call:** The Charter Commission meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Malcolm Beck.

**2. Roll Call:** Present were Malcolm Beck, Sarah Udvig, Steve Kane, Gary Zimmerman, and Evan Feist, and Amy Faanes. Also present was City Clerk, Jenni Wida and City Administrator Kate Thunstrom.

**3. Approve Minutes of January 31, 2024:** There was general consensus to approve the January 31, 2024, Charter Commission Minutes. Consensus carried 5-0-1 (Kane).

**4. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair:** Zimmerman nominated Malcolm Beck as Chair seconded by Feist. Beck asked if there were any other nominations three times. Called for a question to appoint Malcolm Beck as chair. Motion carried.

Zimmerman nominated Steve Kane as Vice Chair, seconded Faanes. Beck asked if there were any other nominations three times. Called for a question to appoint Steve Kane as the Vice Chair for the Charter Commission. Motion carried.

**5. Agenda Items:**

**A. City Charter Amendment Consideration**

City Administrator Thunstrom reviewed the Staff report concerning the consideration for a four year Mayor term and meeting with the League of Minnesota Cities to discuss dissolving the Charter Commission and becoming a statutory City.

Beck shared that he was on a committee that amended the Charter in the late 1990s and at that time he was in favor of either lengthening the Mayor's term to four years, or shortening the Council terms to two years for consistency. He added that this was on the ballot in 2014 and it failed. He said he would be more supportive of making the Mayor's term four years.

Kane noted that in 2014, the residents spoke very loudly against this.

Zimmerman said he agrees with Kane that the residents spoke clearly in the 2014 election about this. He shared that he called around to other cities and most cities in the area, other than Oak Grove, have two-year Mayor terms. He said if they do want to move this forward he would like it to go to a vote.

Udvig shared that the Council discussed this and the general consensus was that they are supportive of a four-year Mayor term; however, they would want it to go before the residents for a vote. She noted that during the 2014 election, it was not communicated clearly to the residents beforehand but the question was written very clearly on the ballot.

Faanes agreed that the Mayor's term should be the same length as the Council's terms. She noted that most other elected official's terms are four years. She shared her support for four-year Mayor terms. She said she voted in the 2014 election and does not remember a question about the Mayor's term being on the ballot. She shared that she had recently spoken to the Mayor of Corcoran whose city just switched Mayor terms for four years through a unanimous vote from their Charter Commission and Council. She noted that if they went this route, rather than through a vote by the residents, the residents would still have time to appeal this decision.

Thunstrom reviewed the different ways that this change could happen, either through a vote on an upcoming election, or a unanimous vote from the Charter Commission and Council. She added that there was a Councilmember who said they would not vote in favor of this to ensure it goes to a ballot for the residents to vote on. She explained that if they do want to put this on the ballot, they would use the Night to Unite and the newsletter leading up to it to start educating the residents on this.

Feist asked for the reasoning behind why they would want to go to a four year Mayor term. Thunstrom explained that this would not affect the current Mayor's term; however, extending the term would allow the Mayor to have more opportunity to learn, grow, and get things done as a two-year term goes by quickly.

Feist said he would like to see this go to the ballot. Kane agreed.

Thunstrom shared that Staff will bring this feedback to the Council and will start organizing what this will look like on the upcoming ballot.

Beck asked about the City's current population. Wida said it is just over 8,500 residents.

Kane shared that he does not think it is a bad idea to move to a statutory City. He noted that the Charter Commission has a hard time filling its vacancies at times.

Udvig stated she does not see a reason why they would not at least explore moving to a statutory City. She added that the Council has shown support for exploring this and said it may be a good idea to have a joint meeting to discuss this further.

Thunstrom explained the differences between a Charter City and a statutory City.

Beck shared that he has always wanted to make sure that the Charter does not encumber the City when trying to move forward on things and he does not think it has other than causing some slight delays. He noted the delays for ordinances allow more time for the public to review the decision.

Faanes shared that she would be interested in having a joint meeting with the League of Minnesota Cities to discuss this and find out more information about other cities that have made this change. She said the more information they have to make this decision, the better. She added that she likes having someone to go to as a Councilmember if there are any discrepancies or questions. She said she also likes having the Charter Members appointed by the judge. She

noted the Charter opens up transparency and gives residents more time to review something the Council is trying to pass.

Beck added that they have been a Charter City since St. Francis was incorporated.

Thunstrom shared that there are 108 Charter cities out of the 854 cities in the State.

Beck shared that he sees the Charter as something that is constantly evolving to keep up with the times.

Thunstrom explained that if not everyone agrees with dissolving the Charter, then it would have to go to a ballot and if they do not have this discussion in time they may have to wait until 2028. She said they will really need to watch the timing with this.

Faanes asked when the League of Minnesota Cities would be able to meet with them on this. Thunstrom said they could try to get them out in April or May for a meeting.

Beck noted that some of the Charter changes that they have done have been passed with the full consensus of the Charter Commission and the Council.

Thunstrom shared that with all of the presence on social media, there are faster ways to be transparent and communicate with residents rather than having to have an ordinance published for 30 days, which can slow projects down in the weather-sensitive climate they are in. She said that they need to restructure this regardless.

The Charter Commission consensus was to hold a joint meeting with the League of Minnesota Cities to discuss moving from a Charter City to a statutory City.

**6. Adjournment:** Motion by Udvig, second by Kane to adjourn the annual Charter Commission meeting adjourned at 6:16 pm. Motion carried.

Submitted by,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jenni Wida, Deputy Administrator/City Clerk



**CHARTER COMMISSION  
AGENDA REPORT**

**TO:** Commission Chair and Committee  
**FROM:** Kate Thunstrom, City Administrator  
**SUBJECT:** Update Regarding Mayor Term Length and Charter Commission  
**DATE:** February 9, 2026

**OVERVIEW:**

In 2025 we discussed with the Charter Commission and Council issues related to the extension of the Mayor term and the longevity of the Commission. Below, for information purposes only, is an update on those two discussions.

**1. Mayor Term**

Currently the Mayor term as outlined in the City Charter is two years in length. The question was brought forward in regards the interest of extending the term to four years.

There was not unanimous consensus by the Charter or Council, and this item would be required to be placed on a ballot. It was agreed that the appropriate time to move this forward would be the 2028 election due to the local turnout of voters.

**2. Charter Commission**

Both groups discussed the longevity of the Commission and if there was a point on which it should be dissolved.

There was not unanimous consensus by the Charter or Council, and this item would be required to be placed on a ballot. It was agreed that the appropriate time to move this forward would be the 2028 election due to the local turnout of voters.

Both items are on hold at this time and will be addressed in 2027 to determine if this will be placed on the 2028 ballot and the education and steps necessary for that to happen.



# CHARTER COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Commission Chair and Board  
**FROM:** Kate Thunstrom, City Administrator  
**SUBJECT:** Charter – Changes to Section 2.05 Vacancies in Office  
**DATE:** February 9, 2026

**OVERVIEW:**

Updates to the City Charter can be necessary as the city makes changes through budget, policy or through changes in state law. The following item has been identified in the current city charter.

**2.01 Vacancies In Office.**

**Current language:** In such case the Council shall by resolution declare the vacancy to exist shall power and publish notice of vacancy and after **thirty (30) days**, appoint an eligible person to fill the vacancy until the next Municipal election

**Proposed language:** In such case the Council shall by resolution declare the vacancy to exist shall power and publish notice of vacancy and after **fourteen (14) calendar days**, appoint an eligible person to fill the vacancy until the next Municipal election

Per City Charter, when a vacancy occurs Council declares a resolution. At that time, we must wait 30 days before the process of filling the seat takes place. Currently, the applications are collected during the 30-day period and interviews and completed around 40 days. The council ends up being short on members for roughly 60 days. Shortening the application process would not eliminate the steps taken to fill a seat. With the ability to publish vacancies quickly through the website and social media, staff propose shortening this vacancy time to 14 days. Lengthy vacancies can have a direct impact on ordinances and processes and with our current technology, the city is no longer dependent on printed papers which delayed actions.

**Option A. City Council may propose an amendment to the Charter.**

1. Council submits the ordinance proposing an amendment to the Charter Commission
2. Charter has 60 days for review (which may be extended by the commission an additional 90 days by filing a resolution determining that additional time is necessary with the City Clerk)
3. After the review, Commission returns any amendments or its own substitute amendment to the council.
4. The Council then submits to the voters either the amendment or originally proposed amendment.

**Option B. Charter Commission may recommend the Council amend the Charter by Ordinance**

1. Within one month of receiving the recommendation, City must public notice of a public hearing of the proposal.
2. Public hearing must be held at least two weeks but not more than one month after the notice is published.
3. Within one month of the public hearing, Council must vote on the proposed amendment.
4. The vote must be unanimous.
5. If adopted, the ordinance becomes effective 90 days after passage and publication unless a later date is provided in the ordinance.

**Residents have the right to Petition if not placed on a ballot**

1. Within 60 days after passage and publication, a petition signed by registered voters equal in number to at least 5% of the registered voters in the city or 2,000 whichever is less, may be submitted to force a referendum on the amendment.
2. If a petition is filed, the city will submit the question to a general or special election.

**State Statute 410.12, subd.6 Amendments, cities of the fourth class**

Cities of a fourth class, having less than 10,000 residents, having a home rule charter may propose amendments by ordinance without submission to the Charter commission.

1. Such ordinance if enacted, shall be adopted by at least four-fifths vote of all its members
2. Vote shall be after a public hearing upon two weeks published notice containing the text of the amendment.
3. No sooner than three months after the passage of the ordinance, council shall submit the amendment to the people
4. The Council shall submit the proposed amendment to the people at a general or special election (subd.4 Election)
5. If 51% of the votes are in favor, it shall take effect 30 days from the date of the election or at such other time as fixed in the amendment.

**Requested Charter Action:**

Motion, Second to (recommend / not recommend) to the City Council to adjust the language to reduce the vacancy length from 30 days to 14 days.



# CHARTER COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Charter Chair and Board  
**FROM:** Kate Thunstrom, City Administrator  
**SUBJECT:** Charter – Changes to Section 8.01 Improvement & Levy Assessments  
**DATE:** February 9, 2026

**OVERVIEW:**

Updates to the City Charter can be necessary as the city makes changes through budget, policy or through changes in state law. The following item has been identified in the current city charter.

**8.01 Power to Make Improvements & Levy Assessments.**

Current language: Any collector street or sidewalk shall be assessed at fifty percent (50%) to the benefited property.

Proposed language: Any collector street or sidewalk may be assessed at fifty percent (50%) to the benefited property.

Per City Charter, “shall” is mandatory in which “may” is permissive. Currently the City operates a street fund and is not charging the 50% assessment to streets. This change would allow the city to continue to the street program, however, protect it in the event a change is made in the future needing where the assessments are brought back.

*Process to Amend Charter Language – for information purposes*

**Option A. City Council may propose an amendment to the Charter.**

1. Council submits the ordinance proposing an amendment to the Charter Commission
2. Charter has 60 days for review (which may be extended by the commission an additional 90 days by filing a resolution determining that additional time is necessary with the City Clerk)
3. After the review, Commission returns any amendments or its own substitute amendment to the council.
4. The Council then submits to the voters either the amendment or originally proposed amendment.

**Option B. Charter Commission may recommend the Council amend the Charter by Ordinance**

1. *Within one month of receiving the recommendation, City must public notice of a public hearing of the proposal.*
2. *Public hearing must be held at least two weeks but not more than one month after the notice is published.*
3. *Within one month of the public hearing, Council must vote on the proposed amendment.*
4. *The vote must be unanimous.*
5. *If adopted, the ordinance becomes effective 90 days after passage and publication unless a later date is provided in the ordinance.*

**Residents have the right to Petition if not placed on a ballot**

1. *Within 60 days after passage and publication, a petition signed by registered voters equal in number to at least 5% of the registered voters in the city or 2,000 whichever is less, may be submitted to force a referendum on the amendment.*
2. *If a petition is filed, the city will submit the question to a general or special election.*

**State Statute 410.12, subd.6 Amendments, cities of the fourth class**

*Cities of a fourth class, having less than 10,000 residents, having a home rule charter may propose amendments by ordinance without submission to the Charter commission.*

1. *Such ordinance if enacted, shall be adopted by at least four-fifths vote of all its members*
2. *Vote shall be after a public hearing upon two weeks published notice containing the text of the amendment.*
3. *No sooner than three months after the passage of the ordinance, council shall submit the amendment to the people*
4. *The Council shall submit the proposed amendment to the people at a general or special election (subd.4 Election)*
5. *If 51% of the votes are in favor, it shall take effect 30 days from the date of the election or at such other time as fixed in the amendment.*

**Requested Charter Action:**

Motion, Second to (recommend / not recommend) to the City Council to adjust the language to replace the word “shall” with “may” on public improvements.



# CHARTER COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Charter Chair and Board  
**FROM:** Kate Thunstrom, City Administrator  
**SUBJECT:** Charter – Changes to Section 5.01 General Provisions Filing Fee  
**DATE:** February 9, 2026

### OVERVIEW:

Updates to the City Charter can be necessary as the city makes changes through budget, policy or through changes in state law. The following item has been identified in the current city charter.

### 3.09 When Ordinances and Resolutions Take Effect.

**Current language:** Upon receipt of a filing fee in the amount of **five dollars (\$5.00)** the City Clerk shall place the name of the candidate on the official ballot without partisan designation.

**Proposed language:** Upon receipt of a filing fee in the amount of **fifteen dollars (\$15.00)** the City Clerk shall place the name of the candidate on the official ballot without partisan designation.

Staff is proposing that a change be made to the filing fee as an increase to \$15.00. This fee is applied towards the administrative process and requirements of a received filing.

#### *Process to Amend Charter Language – for information purposes*

#### Option A. City Council may propose an amendment to the Charter.

1. Council submits the ordinance proposing an amendment to the Charter Commission
2. Charter has 60 days for review (which may be extended by the commission an additional 90 days by filing a resolution determining that additional time is necessary with the City Clerk)
3. After the review, Commission returns any amendments or its own substitute amendment to the council.
4. The Council then submits to the voters either the amendment or originally proposed amendment.

**Option B. Charter Commission may recommend the Council amend the Charter by Ordinance**

1. *Within one month of receiving the recommendation, City must public notice of a public hearing of the proposal.*
2. *Public hearing must be held at least two weeks but not more than one month after the notice is published.*
3. *Within one month of the public hearing, Council must vote on the proposed amendment.*
4. *The vote must be unanimous.*
5. *If adopted, the ordinance becomes effective 90 days after passage and publication unless a later date is provided in the ordinance.*

**Residents have the right to Petition if not placed on a ballot**

1. *Within 60 days after passage and publication, a petition signed by registered voters equal in number to at least 5% of the registered voters in the city or 2,000 whichever is less, may be submitted to force a referendum on the amendment.*
2. *If a petition is filed, the city will submit the question to a general or special election.*

**State Statute 410.12, subd.6 Amendments, cities of the fourth class**

*Cities of a fourth class, having less than 10,000 residents, having a home rule charter may propose amendments by ordinance without submission to the Charter commission.*

1. *Such ordinance if enacted, shall be adopted by at least four-fifths vote of all its members*
2. *Vote shall be after a public hearing upon two weeks published notice containing the text of the amendment.*
3. *No sooner than three months after the passage of the ordinance, council shall submit the amendment to the people*
4. *The Council shall submit the proposed amendment to the people at a general or special election (subd.4 Election)*
5. *If 51% of the votes are in favor, it shall take effect 30 days from the date of the election or at such other time as fixed in the amendment.*

**Requested Charter Action:**

Motion, Second to (recommend / not recommend) to the City Council to adjust the language to increase the filing fee from five dollars to \$15.00.



# CHARTER COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Charter Chair and Board  
**FROM:** Kate Thunstrom, City Administrator  
**SUBJECT:** Charter – Changes to Section 3.09 When Ordinances take effect  
**DATE:** February 9, 2026

**OVERVIEW:**

Updates to the City Charter can be necessary as the city makes changes through budget, policy or through changes in state law. The following item has been identified in the current city charter.

**3.09 When Ordinances and Resolutions Take Effect.**

**Current language:** Every other Ordinance shall take effect **30 days** after the date of publication or at such later date as fixed therein. If during the **30 days** after the publication or before such later date if a later date is fixed in the Ordinance, a petition be made for Referendum by such percentage of the electors of the City...

**Proposed language:** Every other Ordinance shall take effect **7 days** after the date of publication or at such later date as fixed therein. If during the **7 days** after the date of publication or before such later date if a later date is fixed in the Ordinance, a petition be made for Referendum by such percentage of the electors of the City...

Current process for non-emergency ordinances requires that Council hear the ordinance through two readings, at the end of the week after the second reading, a notice goes into the newspaper for a 30-day comment period. Total time allowed to process an ordinance is now roughly 60 days from the first reading to the end of the 30-day comment period.

If a resident or business is requesting an ordinance change or update, including the deadline of the application, this is a minimum of 12 to 14 weeks from application submission to effective.

Recently a local and long-time business was delayed on leasing space for three months due to the full process.

This process delays ordinances that impact, or are requested by, residents, development and businesses. Staff is proposing a 7-day comment period. By this time the item has been addressed potentially at a planning meeting and at a minimum of two separate council meetings.

| Current                      | Proposed                     |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading      | 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading      |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading      |
| Following Friday Publication | Following Friday Publication |
| 30-day comment period        | 7-day comment period         |

***Process to Amend Charter Language – for information purposes***

**Option A. City Council may propose an amendment to the Charter.**

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3. After the review, Commission returns any amendments or its own substitute amendment to the council.
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**Option B. Charter Commission may recommend the Council amend the Charter by Ordinance**

1. Within one month of receiving the recommendation, City must public notice of a public hearing of the proposal.
2. Public hearing must be held at least two weeks but not more than one month after the notice is published.
3. Within one month of the public hearing, Council must vote on the proposed amendment.
4. The vote must be unanimous.
5. If adopted, the ordinance becomes effective 90 days after passage and publication unless a later date is provided in the ordinance.

**Residents have the right to Petition if not placed on a ballot**

1. *Within 60 days after passage and publication, a petition signed by registered voters equal in number to at least 5% of the registered voters in the city or 2,000 whichever is less, may be submitted to force a referendum on the amendment.*
2. *If a petition is filed, the city will submit the question to a general or special election.*

**State Statute 410.12, subd.6 Amendments, cities of the fourth class**

*Cities of a fourth class, having less than 10,000 residents, having a home rule charter may propose amendments by ordinance without submission to the Charter commission.*

1. *Such ordinance if enacted, shall be adopted by at least four-fifths vote of all its members*
2. *Vote shall be after a public hearing upon two weeks published notice containing the text of the amendment.*
3. *No sooner than three months after the passage of the ordinance, council shall submit the amendment to the people*
4. *The Council shall submit the proposed amendment to the people at a general or special election (subd.4 Election)*
5. *If 51% of the votes are in favor, it shall take effect 30 days from the date of the election or at such other time as fixed in the amendment.*

**Requested Charter Action:**

Motion, Second to (recommend / not recommend) to the City Council to adjust the language to replace the length of comment period from 30 days to 7 days after the second reading.