



INDEPENDENCE

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A GREAT AMERICAN STORY

IndependenceMO.org

Presentation Outline

- Why review the City Charter?
- Discuss process for Charter review
- Seek City Council direction for next steps

The City Charter

- “The most important political office is that of the private citizen.” - Louis D. Brandeis
- Original Charter Commission objective: ensure “a high level of competence, efficiency, and responsiveness to the wishes of the electorate in the city government of Independence.”
- Charter Amendment Advisory Board objective: “affirming the basic appropriateness of the original charter” while “expanding upon it and modernized the terminology.”

Previous Activity

- Special Election Amendments to the Charter: 1985, 1987, 1999, 2002
- Changes proposed in 1996 as a result of Charter Review Commission. Voted down 13,858 to 5,512.
- Independence for All 2018-2021 and Independence for All 2022-2026
- Study Session Presentation: May 2018 and February 2020
- Independence Chamber of Commerce 2022 Priority
 - Initial petition signed by over 75 members

Why Review the City Charter?

- Current City Charter has served the City well, but has limitations
- Last citizen commission-led update: 1985
- Independence for All: innovative, transparent, efficient operations
- Many references in the Charter are dated
- Case law has changed regarding several provisions
- Other City functions are not described as they did not exist
- Preamble: “Provide for more efficient, adequate and economical government.”

Last Charter Update (as of 2020): Peer Cities

Municipality	Last Charter Update
Lee's Summit, MO	2016
Kansas City, MO	2014
Blue Springs, MO	2019
Columbia, MO	2001
Springfield, MO	2012
Unified Government of Wyandotte County	1997
Independence, MO	2002*

What to Review

- Presumes City Charter Review Committee
- Two different strategies
 - Limited scope of review set by City Council
 - Potential recommendation and adoption of series of amendments (Recommended approach)
 - Wholesale review
 - Potential recommendation and adoption of new City Charter

Charter Review Process

- Add provision to Article 15 to create a mandatory charter review process
- Recommend short time frames between reviews
- Future commissions would not have to propose any changes

Procedural Changes

- Section 11.6: Changes to the dollar amount above which a bond is required
- Article 7: Changes to the timing of initiative and referendum elections

Public Utilities

- Clarity needed around Section 3.17
- Specific to electric utility; City has added Water and Sewer utilities
- Changes in GFOA and GASB municipal finance standards

Personnel Board

- Law has evolved since the adoption of Section 3.29
- Review of powers and duties needed to clarify relationship to the City Manager

Political Activities

- Section 5.4
- Various portions have been ruled unconstitutional
 - Needs to be deleted at a minimum
 - New language that is constitutional is preferred

Administrative Departments

- Thoughtful review of Article 3
- Nature of local government is shifting dramatically and rapidly
- Flexibility needed to structure the administrative departments in a way that is highly adaptable to the needs of the time

NCL Model City Charter Update

- The National Civic League's work inspires, supports and celebrates civic engagement.
- November 2021-9th Edition
- Model City Charter: First Introduced in 1900
- Revised Highlights:
 - Heightened attention to role of public engagement
 - Improved commitment to equity and inclusion

Summary

- Addressing Outdated Provisions
- Adaptiveness and Innovation
- Resident-Centered Democratic Governance
- Diversity/Equity/Inclusion

The Review Process

- City Council adoption of resolution
 - Approve individuals to serve as City Charter Commissioners (size can vary)
 - Set scope of work and deadline to complete
 - Recommend use of a consultant to facilitate process, supplemented by City staff support
- Charter Commission conducts review, makes recommendations
- City Council votes to place any amendments or updates on ballot for voter consideration

Staff Direction

- City Council Resolution
 - Approval of Commission
 - Names of commissioners
 - Scope of work
 - Deadline
 - Directive to include funding in upcoming budget for consultant support



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