



Council Study Session

October 16, 2023

Agenda Item	Charter Amendment Discussion	
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Item Type	Requested by Council <input type="checkbox"/> Update <input type="checkbox"/> Request for Direction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing <input type="checkbox"/> New Business <input type="checkbox"/> Old Business <input type="checkbox"/>	

SUMMARY

Over time the City’s operational requirements have changed creating a need to update sections of the City Charter. At the request of Council, staff has reviewed prior Charter Commission recommendations and current internal processes finding two areas for addressing within the charter that relate to its following articles:

- Article 14 – Chief of Police: Powers and Duties, Section 2
- Article 3 – Elective Officers and Article 6 – Recorder

Staff recommends, due to operational needs, that Council begin consideration of placing two ballot items on the upcoming spring ballot to:

- 1) Update the language in Article 14, Section 2 allowing the Chief of Police to designate an officer to attend City Council meetings and act in his/her stead as Sergeant-at-Arms; and
- 2) Remove the City Recorder as an elected official and any article provisions related to the duties of that role in recognition of the substantial reduction in the position’s responsibilities to become solely administrative in nature.

If the Charter amendment to the Recorder’s office passes, a City staff member would take on the City Recorder role, aligning it more closely with the evolving nature of the position, which over time, has transitioned from one that primarily involved discretionary functions to one predominantly focused on administrative responsibilities. The Recorder position will be under the supervision of the office of management to ensure timeliness and professionalism befitting for the City of Ashland.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

Excellence in governance and City Services.

Sustainability through creativity, affordability, and right sized service delivery.

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Article 14 – Chief of Police: Powers and Duties, Section 2

This article states: “The Chief of Police shall attend all meetings of the City Council and perform the duties of the Sergeant-at-Arms of that body...” Staff has determined this language in the Charter is too restrictive and recommends the Charter be amended to state *The Chief of Police, or their designee*. This wording would allow the Chief of Police the discretion to make operational decisions for the department based on needs and staffing and allow greater flexibility to the Chief of Police regarding work schedule.





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Article 3 – Elective Officers and Article 6 – Recorder

These articles outline the Recorder as an elected position, term, powers and duties, vacancy, and absence guidelines. Staff has determined the following:

- Ashland is unique in that no other City recorders in the area are elected.
- The duties of this position have changed over time particularly in regard to financial duties. The Recorder no longer conducts audits nor performs fund accounting for the City.
- The City is in need of a trained position filled by an individual who can complete records requests & management, records retention, licensing needs and council duties in a thorough and timely manner.
- This position as an elected officer presents considerable risk to the City of job duties are unfulfilled or completed in a manner not in accordance with state law.
- The job duties of the recorder do not need to be done by an elected official.
- The League of Oregon Cities did research in 2016 and found that Ashland, Elgin, Jacksonville and Prescott were the only cities in the entire state that had elected recorders.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Article 14 – Chief of Police : Powers and Duties, Section 2: No fiscal impact

Article 3 – Elective Officers and Article 6 – Recorder: Human Resources will need to conduct a thorough review of job description to include duties and research comparable cities wages. General research was conducted on recorder wages and the following was found:

City	Population	Low Salary	High Salary	Elected
Lake Oswego	41,148	\$3,843	\$4,671	No
Keizer	39,376	\$3,154	\$4,114	No
McMinnville	34,515	\$3164	\$4,747	No
Tualatin	27,914	\$3098	\$3935	No
West Linn	27,420	\$3295	\$4500	No
Klamath Falls	22,501	\$2589	\$3748	No
Ashland	21,642	\$3846	\$3846	Yes
Milwaukie	21,305	\$3108	\$3966	No
Sherwood	20,22	\$3760	\$4769	No

Along with ensuring efficiencies within the office by transitioning the position to a professional position, there is potential for long-term salary savings to better align job responsibilities and salary by transitioning this position to a non-elected position. More research will need to be done if this position is removed from the charter to determine role and responsibilities and commensurate salary.





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2024 Spring Election Cost: No fiscal impact to the City of Ashland. The Clerk of the City Council Pro Tem has contacted the Jackson County elections Office and confirmed that when a ballot measure is included in a Primary or General Election in even numbered years, the County Clerk budgets and pays for election costs.

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

Provide staff with direction to return to Council with potential timeline and ballot language of potential charter changes to be considered for spring election ballot measures.

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

- City Charter – Article 3 Elective Officers
- City Charter – Article 6 Recorder
- City Charter – Article 14 Chief of Police: Powers and Duties

ARTICLE 3 Elective Officers

Section 1. Elective Officers The elective officers of the City shall be: a Mayor, Recorder, six (6) Council Members, five (5) Park Commissioners and a Municipal Judge. (Charter amendment 5-23-78)

Section 2. Qualifications All elective officers except the Municipal Judge shall be residents and qualified voters in the City. (Charter amendment 5-23-78).

Section 3. Salaries Any change in the amount of the present compensation received by elective officers, except for the Recorder and Municipal Judge, shall be submitted to the vote of the people; however, the salary of the elected Recorder shall be in the amount being paid in 1974 and be adjusted starting with the fiscal year 1974-75 in the same percentage as the average salary adjustments of the other supervisory employees and department heads of the City of Ashland; further, the salary of the Municipal Judge will initially be the same as for the year 1978-79 and thereafter to be adjusted in the same percentage as the average salary adjustment of the other supervisory employees and department heads of the City of Ashland. (Charter amendment 5-23-78).

Section 4. Vacancies An office shall be deemed vacant upon the incumbent's death; adjudicated incompetence; conviction of a felony; other offense pertaining to his/her office, or unlawful destruction of public records; resignation; recall from office or ceasing to possess the qualifications for the office; or, in the case of the Mayor or Council Member, upon his/her absence from the City for thirty (30) days without the consent of the Council or upon his/her absence from meetings of the Council for sixty (60) days without like consent, and subsequent declaration of the vacancy by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Council.

A vacant elective office in the City shall be filled within sixty (60) days by the Council electing some qualified person to fill such vacancy. The appointee's term of office shall begin immediately upon appointment and shall continue until a successor, elected at the next biennial election, takes office for the unexpired term. The Council shall have the power, by a two-thirds affirmative vote, to expel any member of the Council for disorderly conduct in Council or inattention to duties. No Council member shall be expelled without notice and a hearing by the Council.

Section 5. Term The term of all elective officers shall begin the first day of January following their election.

Section 6. Interest in City Contracts During the term of office, no elective officer shall violate any provision of the State of Oregon Code of Ethics as contained in ORS Chapter 244. (Amended by vote 11-8-94.)

ARTICLE 6 Recorder

Section 1. Term The Recorder in office at the time this Charter takes effect shall continue in office until the end of his/her term of office as fixed by the Charter of the City in effect at the time this Charter is adopted. At each biennial general election held in 1970, and every fourth year thereafter, a Recorder shall be elected for a term of four (4) years.

Section 2. Powers and Duties The Recorder shall act as Clerk of the Council and shall keep plain and correct records of all business and proceedings of the Council. He/she shall maintain a file of all papers presented to him/her officially, and safely keep all files, records and papers of the corporation pertaining to his/her office, and these shall be open to the public. At the expiration of his/her term of office, he/she shall turn over to his/her successor any and all records, books, and papers pertaining to said office.

The Recorder must draw all orders for the proper payment of monies against the proper funds that have been appropriated by the City Council, and, together with the Mayor, sign the same. He/she may make periodic audits of all City accounting records.

The Recorder, shall, as soon as the Council shall make a general levy of the taxes for the city, certify the same, together with any and all special benefits and assessments then due, to the Clerk of the County Court.

The Recorder shall record, in a book to be kept for that purpose, all ordinances and resolutions passed by the City Council, and the same shall be signed by the Recorder, as well as signed and approved by the Mayor therein.

Section 3. Vacancy A willful absence of the Recorder from the City for more than thirty (30) days without the consent of the Council, carelessness or inattention to the duties of the Recorder, shall be grounds for the Council to declare the office vacant; and it may fill such vacancy in the same manner as vacancies in the office of Council members are filled.

Section 4. Absence In the Recorder's absence, the Mayor shall appoint a Clerk of the Council Pro Tem who, while acting in that capacity, shall have all the authority and duties of the Recorder.

ARTICLE 14 Chief of Police: Powers and Duties

Section 1. The Chief of Police shall be the conservator of the peace within the limits of the City of Ashland and, in addition to the authority vested in him/her by the City Council, he/she shall have the authority and jurisdiction of a constable, and shall qualify and discharge the duties of constable, in the same manner and to the same effect as required of constables under the statutes of this State. He/she shall, within the County of Jackson, arrest any and all persons guilty of any breach of the peace committed in his/her presence, and take them before the judge of the City Court, or some Justice of the Peace for trial. He/she shall also have the power, under any warrant from the Judge, or any Justice of the Peace, to arrest any person in any part of the State of Oregon for any criminal offense or the violation of any City ordinance and, in case the Council shall establish a police force for the City, he/she shall by virtue of his/her office be Chief of such force.

Section 2. The Chief of Police shall attend all meetings of the City Council, and perform the duties of the Sergeant-at-Arms of that body, watch over, care for and preserve all the City property and good morals of the City; and it shall be his/her duty, and the duty of any and all police officers, to see that all the laws and ordinances of the City, and the provisions of this Charter, are enforced, to file complaint with the City Judge against any persons violating any of the provisions of this Charter, or the laws or ordinances of the City; and a failure or neglect to faithfully perform any or all of such duties shall be cause for removal from office by the City Council.