

**Moorhead City Charter Commission
Meeting Minutes
August 3, 2011 – 7:30 AM
City Hall Boardroom (1st Floor)**

Charter Commission Members:

At-Large Representative	Eileen Hastad	Present
At-Large Representative	Russell Hanson	Absent
At-Large Representative	Roger Buscher	Present
At-Large Representative	Ken Tangen	Present
At-Large Representative	Jim Danielson	Present
Ward 1 Representative	Darvin Landa	Present
Ward 1 Representative	Patricia Staples	Absent
Ward 2 Representative	Travis Reimche	Present
Ward 2 Representative	Ronald Hagemann	Present
Ward 3 Representative	Tom Krabbenhoft	Present
Ward 3 Representative	Doug Fagerlie	Present
Ward 4 Representative	Yoke-Sim Gunaratne	Present
Ward 4 Representative	Dick Bolton	Present

City Staff:

City Clerk	Jill Wenger	Present
Assistant City Attorney	John Shockley	Present

Charter Commission Meeting

1. Call to Order

Minutes: Charter Commission Chair, Jim Danielson, called the meeting to order.

2. Roll Call

Minutes: Roll call of the Commission members was noted.

3. Approval of Minutes

A. May 4, 2011

Motion to Approve made by Roger Buscher and seconded by Darvin Landa

Approve minutes of May 4, 2011

Motion Passed by unanimous vote

4. Reports of the Chair, Officers, Commissions and Committees

Minutes: No reports were presented.

5. Public Comment

Minutes: No citizens addressed the Commission.

6. Unfinished Business

A. Outcome of Proposed Charter Amendments

Minutes: It was reported that at the June 13, 2011 meeting the Moorhead City Council tabled the Charter Commission's proposed ordinance to repeal subdivision 2 of section 2.11 of the Charter of the City of Moorhead related to hydrant fees. The Council requested that City staff provide the Mayor and Council with a briefing memo following discussion with Moorhead Public Service (MPS) regarding revised hydrant rates prior to final consideration of the ordinance change. City staff will provide notice to the Charter Commission when the ordinance change is scheduled for further Council consideration.

Charter Commission Members noted the following:

- The Charter Commission Chair represents the Charter and brings forward any recommendations of the Charter to the Mayor and Council.
- Individual Charter Commission members can voice disagreement to any Charter recommendation as part of the "Citizens Addressing the Council" portion of the Council meeting.

B. Elections by Ward

Minutes: It was noted that City staff compiled a number of resources related to elections by ward and council composition comparisons from other cities.

Charter Commission Members noted the following:

- Moorhead residents appear comfortable with the current council composition and ward representation arrangement.
- Council members elected as at-large representatives may carry a more holistic and balanced viewpoint.
- Two Council representatives per ward allow citizens to express their viewpoint to at least two different individuals who represent the ward's point of view.
- Concern was noted regarding the cost to run for election as an at-large representative as compared to those who would campaign only to the population contained in a single ward.
- It is preferred that Council be comprised of both at-large and ward-based representatives.
- Concern was noted regarding expansion of the current Council size beyond eight Council members and one Mayor.
- An expanded number of Wards would decrease the size per ward allowing candidates to more effectively campaign and elected representatives to communicate with citizens.
- A voting mayor could better represent the at-large population.
- Currently the Mayor only votes in the case of a tie which allows the position to remain relatively impartial.
- Council members who represent the community at-large may be

more effective than those interested only in the interests of a single ward.

- In recent elections, student populations and residents in rental housing appear to have an increased influence on election results, although these populations more typically vote during the presidential election and not the state or city general elections.

It was noted that the City of Moorhead population is 38,065 according to the 2010 U.S. Census.

No proposals to alter, change or modify the makeup of the Council composition were presented although the Commissioners agreed that continued discussion on the topic is important.

C. Oakport Annexation and Redistricting

Minutes: John Shockley, Assistant City Attorney, noted that redistricting is controlled by state law. The annexation of Oakport and the redrawing of ward boundaries will not require any action by the City of Moorhead until 2021 or 2022, following the next U.S. Census.

7. New Business

A. Timeline for Council to act on Charter Commission Recommendations

Minutes: Concern was noted regarding an uncertain deadline for decision-making when the Charter Commission brings forward a recommendation to the Mayor and Council. It is preferred that a clear procedure and timeline be determined and communicated for both groups.

John Shockley, Assistant City Attorney, stated that he would research state statute for any specific requirements and forward this information to the Charter Commission

8. Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn made by Darvin Landa and seconded by Ronald Hagemann
Motion Passed by unanimous vote

Minutes: It was determined that the Charter Commission would meet in early October to further discuss council composition/elections by ward and a timeline for Council to act on Charter Commission recommendations. Notice of the meeting date will be coordinated by City staff.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jill Wenger, City Clerk