

Charter Commission

July 24, 2019 – 5:30 p.m.

Members Present: Ben Stowe, Donald Heinonen, Pamela Jorstad, Michael Meuers, Casey McCarthy, Randi Su Tanem, Ara Gallo

Staff Present: City Attorney Al Felix, City Clerk Michelle Miller

Vice Chair McCarthy noted a quorum and called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the January 10, 2019 meeting was presented for approval. **Motion by Meuers, seconded by Tanem to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.**

Oath of Office

City Clerk Miller administered the Oath of Office to reappoint Commission members Michael Meuers (term ending 06/01/2023) and Pam Jorstad (term ending 09/01/2023).

Election of Officers

Chair Stowe opened nominations for Charter Commission Officers.

- Motion by Meuers, seconded by Tanem, to nominate Gallo as Chair. Gallo declined. Motion was withdrawn.
- Motion by Jorstad, seconded by Tanem, to nominate Heinonen as Chair. Motion carried.
- Motion by Tanem, seconded by Meuers, to nominate Gallo as Vice Chair. Motion carried.

Resignation of Ben Stowe

Stowe advised that he is resigning from the Charter Commission due to moving out of the city limits. **Motion by Meuers, seconded by Gallo to accept his resignation. Motion carried.**

Motion by Gallo, seconded by Jorstad, declaring a vacancy on the Charter Commission. Motion carried.

Consider Application of James Dodds

Meuers noted that the references provided by James Dodds were not from the Bemidji area.

Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Jorstad to accept the application of James Dodds as a member of the Charter Commission. Gallo expressed concern with his application. Tanem also expressed concern with the references given. Motion failed by the following vote: Yeas: Jorstad, Heinonen. Nays: Meuers, Tanem, McCarthy, Gallo. Stowe abstained.

Motion by Gallo, seconded by Tanem, to invite Dodds to a future meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Yeas: Jorstad, Heinonen, Meuers, Tanem, McCarthy, Stowe. Nays: Gallo.

Stowe directed Miller to ask Dodds for local references.

Section 2.03 – Review Proposed Ordinance Language

The proposed ordinance was presented to council for a first reading on January 22, 2019. Councilmember Erickson stated that she would not support this ordinance. Since this ordinance will need to pass by unanimous vote, Albrecht did not conduct the first reading of the ordinance and sent to back to the Charter Commission for further discussion.

Motion by Meuers, seconded by Gallo to put the question related to Section 2.03 of the Bemidji City Charter – Council Composition and Election on the 2020 Ballot with the exact language of the question to be discussed. Motion carried.

Members discussed the draft of the question as follows:

“Shall Section 2.03 of the Council-Manager Charter be amended to change the term of the mayor from two years to four years; which term shall coincide with the Presidential Election?”

After lengthy discussion it was decided to prepare different versions of the question to discuss at a future meeting.

The next meeting was scheduled for October 2 at 5:30 p.m.

Adjourn

With no further business, a motion by Meuers, seconded by Tanem, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle R. Miller
City Clerk