

**CITY OF BEMIDJI**  
**CHARTER COMMISSION**  
**ANNUAL REPORT – DECEMBER 31, 2019**  
*IN ACCORDANCE WITH MINNESOTA STATUTES 410.05, Subd. 2*

**January 10, 2019 Special Meeting**

Oath of Office

City Clerk Miller administered the Oath of Office to appoint Commission member Ara Gallo (term ending 06/01/2022).

Section 2.03 – Review Proposed Ordinance Language

The proposed ordinance was presented to the commission. Members discussed the importance that the term of the mayor coincide with the presidential election and that the language should reflect that. Stowe reviewed the responses of the council members on their position of this change. Erickson seemed to be the only council member opposed to this change.

**Motion by McCarthy, seconded by Tanem to modify the Section 2.03 as follows:**

**“The mayor shall be elected at large and shall serve for a term of ~~two~~ four years and until his/her successor is elected and qualified, which term shall coincide with the Presidential Election.”**

**And directed staff to present the ordinance for a first reading at the next regularly scheduled council meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

The City Clerk will make the changes to the ordinance for First Reading at the January 22, 2019 Council meeting. (Council returned the ordinance to the Charter Commission to be put on a ballot rather than adopted by ordinance.)

**July 24, 2019 Annual Meeting**

The Bemidji Charter Commission held the required annual meeting. The City Clerk administered Oath of Office to reappointed members Michael Meuers (term ending 06/01/2023) and Pam Jorstad (term ending 09/01/2023). The Commission also held election of officers.

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.

**October 2, 2019 Special Meeting**

Consider Application of James Dodds to Fill Unexpired Term Ending June 1, 2021

**Motion by Jorstad, seconded by Tanem to accept the application of James Dodds as a member of the Charter Commission. Motion carried.**

Consider Application of Ruthie Wilson to Fill Unexpired Term Ending June 1, 2020

Heinonen noted that since the Commission requested James Dodds to appear before them before considering his application if that is the practice that should be done for future applicants. Gallo and Meuers stated that the commission asked for local references and Dodds was invited to attend a meeting as a courtesy. Meuers suggested that since members need to live in the city, that references should also live in the city. Meuers also expressed concern that politics should not play a role within the Charter Commission. Heinonen questioned the history of a husband and wife serving on the commission. Tanem suggested tabling the application until Felix can provide clarification on the issue.

**Motion by Jorstad, seconded by Tanem, to table the application of Ruth Wilson until the Charter Commission can discuss with Al Felix. Motion carried.**

Section 2.03 – Review Proposed Ordinance Language

The Charter Commission previously approved the question relating to the term of the Mayor be put on the 2020 General Election Ballot. However, the exact language needs to be approved. The proposed language is currently 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?”

**Motion by Meuers, seconded by Tanem, approving the language for the 2020 General Election Ballot 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, and shall coincide with the Presidential Election?” Motion carried.**

Commission members discussed recent conduct by council members and if this body has any authority over conduct of council members. It was suggested to review the current Recall language in the charter at the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle R. Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Michelle R. Miller  
City Clerk