

Minutes for the City of Lansing Charter Commission

Regular Meeting | Tuesday, April 1, 2025, 6:30 PM

Tony Benavides City Council Chambers,
Lansing City Hall, 10th floor, 124 W. Michigan Ave.

Present: Commissioners Adams Simon, Anderson, Bauer, Boyd, Dowd Jeffries, Lopez, Qawwee, Washington

Absent: none

Staff Present: City Clerk Swope, Deputy Clerk Drever, Attorney Rewa

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jeffries at 6:31 PM.

Roll Call

Clerk Swope called the roll of the Commission. A quorum was present.

Adopt the Agenda

Moved by Vice-Chair Adams Simon to adopt the agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Bauer to approve the March 25, 2025, minutes as presented.

Motion carried.

Public Comment

Darren Calis, chairman for UAW for City of Lansing, spoke about proposed language for 3-206 and 3-207 and how they impact employees.

Loretta Stanaway spoke about the City Council having their own legal counsel.

Linda Keefe spoke about the Board of Water and Light and sustainability efforts in the Charter.

Officer Reports

Chair

Chair Jeffries did a quorum call for the following Tuesdays: April 8, 22; May 6, 20; June 3, 17; with the intent to start meeting weekly.

Vice-Chair

No report.

Clerk

Clerk Swope acknowledged written communications and late additions in the packet.

Presentation

A. Charles Randall, Internal Auditor

Charles Randall, the City's Internal Auditor, presented to the Commission on his role with the City and the audit language in Article 3 Chapter 4 of the Charter. Then, he took questions from the Commission on the schedule of audits, optimizing information sharing, who decides what audits to conduct, and the Council's audit committee.

Old Business

A. Article 5: Line-by-Line Review

5-202

Attorney Rewa overviewed the March 21 legal opinion that addresses 5-202.

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to have the General Manager hold public meeting twice a year, instead of quarterly.

Motion failed.

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to allow the quarterly meetings to be conducted by the General Manager or a designee.

Motion carried by the following roll call vote:

YEA (5)- Commissioners Jeffries, Lopez, Qawwee, Bauer, Boyd

NAY (4)- Commissioners Dowd, Washington, Adams Simon, Anderson

Moved by Commissioner Qawwee to approve the language for 5-202.3 that reads: "The General Manager or a designee shall hold a public meeting at least quarterly to interact with the public and ratepayers on the services provided by the Board. Notice for the meeting shall be published by posting to the Board's website and by any means determined by the Board to achieve widespread dissemination to the general public within the Board's service area to inform on matters of municipal concerns."

Motion carried by the following roll call vote:

YEA (5)- Commissioners Jeffries, Lopez, Qawwee, Bauer, Boyd

NAY (4)- Commissioners Washington, Adams Simon, Anderson, Dowd

5-103

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to delete 5-103.12 from the Charter

Motion carried.

5-205

Attorney Rewa overviewed the legal opinion that addresses proposed changes to 5-205.

Dick Peffley, BWL General Manager, and Heather Shawa, BWL Assistant Manager, sat before the Commission to answer questions. Mark Matus, BWL General Counsel, was also available.

Commissioners clarified the intended number and locations of public hearings on rate increases.

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to amend 5-205.2 to call for two public hearings for rate increases.

Commissioner Washington expressed opposition to the amendment due to not seeing the need for a second public hearing.

Motion carried 8-1, with Commissioner Washington voting against .

Moved by Commissioner Anderson to amend the proposed language to elaborate on the notice process.

Motion carried. 5-205.2 now reads “The Board shall conduct at least two public hearings at least 45 days prior to the effective date of any changes in rate structure. The public hearings shall be held at different times of day to maximize the opportunity for public attendance. At least 60 days before the first public hearing, the Board shall file with the City Clerk a statement explaining the new rates and charges together with a notice of the public hearings. Notice shall also be published by posting to the City’s and the Board’s website and by any means determined by the Board of Water and Light to achieve widespread dissemination to the general public within the Board’s service area to inform on matters of municipal concern.”

5-206

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to strike from 5-206.3 “The hearing officer shall report to the Board and the Mayor the results of each hearing conducted and shall make recommendations to the Board on any hearing which has not been resolved. The Mayor may make recommendations to the Board on each unresolved hearing. The Board shall report its final action on any unresolved dispute, together with the hearing officer's report and recommendations to the Mayor and the City Council.”

Motion carried. 5-206.3 now reads “The Board shall establish a procedure for the resolution of disputes between the Board of Water and Light and any of its customers concerning services or billing for services furnished in accordance with filed rates, rules and regulations, and established Board policies and procedures. The procedure shall incorporate the designation of an independent hearing officer.”

The Commission moved to item C, Article 4: Line-by-Line Review.

C. Article 4: Line-by-Line Review

Attorney Rewa overviewed the March 28 legal opinion that addresses 4-304. She answered questions from commissioners regarding the relationships between councils, mayors, and attorneys across the state.

City Attorney Venker and Deputy Attorney Hager-Lawrence answered questions about the nature of their work and the language in the Charter.

No action taken.

The Commission moved to item B, Article 2: Line-by-Line Review

B. Article 2: Line-by-Line Review

Attorney Rewa overviewed the March 14 legal opinion that addresses 2-104, followed by discussion among the commissioners.

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to keep 2-104.1 as is.

Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Dowd to keep 2-104.2 as is

Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Bauer to keep 2-104.3 as is.

Motion carried.

The Commission will review and decide on the Internal Auditor and City Attorney language at a later meeting.

The Commission revisited Item A: Article 5: Line-by-Line Review to discuss 5-103.

A. Article 5: Line-by-Line Review

Chair Jeffries overviewed the proposed language for 5-103.8 that addresses 8-member boards and commissions. Commissioner Washington encouraged the Commission to consider how appointments are made to boards and commissions.

Moved by Commissioner Qawwee to amend 5-103.8 and .9 to read:

“.8 Each Board established by this Charter shall be composed of eight members. ~~Four~~ **Three** members shall be from the City at-large and one member shall be appointed from each of the ~~four~~ **five** wards of the City in the following pattern:

(a) The First ward member shall have a term expiring in ~~1981~~ **2029** and every four years thereafter.

(b) The Second ward member shall have a term expiring in ~~1982~~ **2026** and every four years thereafter.

(c) The Third ward member shall have a term expiring in ~~1979~~ **2027** and every four years thereafter.

(d) The Fourth ward member shall have a term expiring in ~~1980~~ **2028** and every four years thereafter.

(e) The Fifth ward member shall have a term expiring in 2029 and every four years thereafter.

.9 ~~The members~~ One member from the City at-large shall ~~be appointed to staggered terms, at least one of which shall expire each year.~~ **have a term expiring in 2026 and every four years thereafter. One member from the City at-large shall have a term expiring in 2027 and every four years thereafter. One member from the City at-large shall have a term expiring in 2028 and every four years thereafter.**

Motion carried.

Public Comment

No comments.

Commissioner Remarks

Commissioners discussed their additional meetings.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Jeffries at 8:37 PM.