Minutes for the City of Lansing Charter Commission

Regular Meeting | Tuesday, April 15, 2025, 6:30 PM
Tony Benavides City Council Chambers,
Lansing City Hall, 10th floor, 124 W. Michigan Ave.

Present: Commissioners Adams Simon, Anderson (6:33), Bauer, Boyd, Dowd, Jeffries, Lopez, Qawwee, Washington (6:33)

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 6:30 PM.

Roll Call

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

Adopt the Agenda

Moved by Commissioner Dowd to adopt the agenda as presented.
Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Bauer to approve the April 1, 2025, minutes as presented.
A typo was corrected by unanimous consent.
Motion carried.

Public Comment

Randy Dykhuis spoke about BWL communications and appointments to Boards and Commissions.

Amanda Castillo spoke about the proposed ethical investment clause.

Officer Reports

Chair

Chair Jeffries reported that members of the Police and Fire Boards of Commissioners will be in attendance on April 22, to answer questions.

Vice-Chair

Vice-Chair Adams Simon reported that Eastside Neighborhood Organization and Southwest Action Group are always open to hearing updates from the Commissioners at their meetings.

Clerk

No report.

Old Business

A. Article 5: Line-by-line Review

Attorney Rewa overviewed the April 10 legal opinion that addresses 5-204.

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to amend 5-204 to add .5, which reads "Consistent with generally accepted practice in the municipal utility industry and in acknowledgement that the Board of Water and Light is a City owned public utility, which receives City services without cost and utilizes City property in the fulfillment of its purposes, the Board shall continue to be authorized to contribute payments to the City. All existing agreements for payments shall remain in full force and effect upon adoption of this Charter. Future agreements for payments shall be documented in writing, based on a formula and terms mutually acceptable to the City and Board and comply with this Charter and state law. In determining the formula, the City and Board shall consider the following factors, but not to the exclusion of other factors that may be or become relevant: the financial burden of the payment on the Board or its ratepayers, the financial burden of use of services and property on the City or its taxpayers, and any and all shared services or infrastructure."
Motion carried.

5-101 was adopted as presented unanimously.

Commissioner Lopez asked if the Charter needs language about ad hoc commissions created by the mayor.

5-102.1, .3, .4, .5, and .6 were adopted as presented unanimously. 5-102.2 has an outstanding question about the naming of certain boards and commissions.

Commissioner Anderson asked if 5-103.1 still needed language about felony convictions.

5-103.1 was adopted as presented unanimously.

Commissioner Washington expressed opposition to the mayor making all appointments to boards.

Commissioner Boyd suggested that the Council make nominations for the mayor to decide.

Vice-Chair Adams Simon suggested all board appointments work like the Board of Ethics- each ward council member appoints one person, and the mayor appoints the at-large.

Commissioners Qawwee, Lopez, Anderson, Adams Simon, Bauer, and Washington discussed the role of Council in the appointments process, and transparency in the appointment process.

Commissioner Washington expressed support for an appointment process similar to the Board of Ethics process.

Commissioners noted that the lists of current Board and Commission members and applicants are available on the City's website. They also discussed the role of a strong mayor.

Commissioner Washington expressed support for a City Manager form of government.

Commissioners discussed term limits for boards and commissions.

5-103.4 was adopted as presented unanimously.

Commissioner Lopez suggested informational sessions about the various boards.

Vice-Chair Adams Simon expressed support for offering training to members of boards and commissions.

Commissioner Bauer echoed support for training.

Commissioner Washington echoed support for training.

5-103.6, .7, and .11 were adopted as presented unanimously.

Commissioners discussed the implications of allowing City employees to sit on boards and commissions.

Vice-Chair Adams Simon moved to adopt 5-104 as presented, with a typo correction.

Motion carried 7-2 with Commissioners Boyd and Dowd against.

5-105.1, .2, .3, .5, .6, .7, and .9 were adopted as presented.

Proposed language is forthcoming for 5-105.1, .4, .8, .10, and .11 to align with other Charter provisions and current procedure.

Commissioners discussed where to put language for training members of boards and commissions.

5-106.1 was adopted as presented.

5-107.1 was adopted as presented.

5-108.1, .2, and .3 were adopted as presented.

Vice-Chair Adams Simon discussed adding language to enforce Board of Ethics recommendations.

5-501.1 and .2 were adopted as presented.

5-502.3 and .4 were adopted as presented.

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to change all references of “Board” in Chapter 5 to Board of Ethics.
Motion carried.

5-502.5, .6, and .7 were adopted as presented.

Commissioners discussed enforcement of Board of Ethics recommendations.

5-504.1, .2, and .3 were adopted as presented.

5-505.1, .2, and .3 were adopted as presented.

Moved by Commissioner Bauer to change all charter references to “Planning Board” to Planning Commission.
Motion carried.

5-601.1 was adopted as presented.

5-602.1 and .2 were adopted as presented.

Public Comment

Randy Dykhuis spoke about adding sustainability advisory board to the Charter and the timeline of appointments.

Fred McLaughlin spoke about opportunities for engagement with boards and commissions.

Commissioner Remarks

No remarks.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Jeffries at 8:12 PM.