

Minutes for the City of Lansing Charter Commission

Regular Meeting | Tuesday, March 4, 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: 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 Qawwee to adopt the agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Dowd to approve the February 4, 2025, minutes as presented.

Motion carried.

Public Comment

Dick Peffley spoke about the Board of Water and Light.

Curtis Hertel spoke about the importance of maintaining the Board of Water and Light as a strong independent public utility.

Angela Witwer spoke about the importance of maintaining the Board of Water and Light as a strong independent public utility.

Tim Daman spoke about the Chamber of Commerce supporting maintaining the Board of Water and Light as a strong independent public utility.

Randy Dykhuis spoke about transparency in the appointments process for Boards and Commissions, and implementing term limits for appointees to Boards and Commissions.

Elisha Franco spoke about her role as the Internal Auditor for the Board of Water and Light.

Mike McDaniel spoke about his role on the Review Team for the Board of Water and Light following the December 21, 2013, storm.

Linda Keefe spoke about residents struggling to pay their Board of Water and Light bills.

Joy Gleason spoke about transparency for the Board of Water and Light, with regards to appointments to the board and financial decisions.

Loretta Stanaway spoke about a proposal for per diems for City Council and implementing term limits for Board of Water and Light board members.

Officer Reports

Chair

Chair Jeffries overviewed the Commission's schedule for upcoming meetings: March 18 will address the Board of Water and Light; March 25 will address a Sustainability Office with a presentation from the Public Service Department; April 1 will have a presentation from the Internal Auditor.

Vice-Chair

No Report.

Clerk

Clerk Swope acknowledged written communications in the packet and acknowledged a handout representing data of City Clerk responsibilities across the state.

Old Business

A. Article 2: Line-by-line Review

Commissioners discussed per diems for City Council.

B. Article 4: Line-by-line Review

Commissioners discussed updating outdated language referencing affirmative action programs and the organization of departments.

Motion failed, to keep the language in 4-304.1 the same, by the following roll call vote

YEAS: Commissioners Adams Simon, Bauer, Jeffries, Qawwee

NAYS: Commissioners Anderson, Boyd, Dowd, Lopez, Washington

Commissioners Boyd and Dowd explained their nay votes are due to not yet having a decision on the role of City Attorney: selection process and relationship to Council and Mayor.

Commissioner Washington expressed support for an elected City Attorney.

Commissioner Boyd expressed opposition for an elected City Attorney.

Commissioner Bauer expressed support for the framework for the City Attorney in 4-304 .1-.4.

Commissioner Qawwee expressed the potential barriers to removing a City Attorney from office if the position were elected.

Commissioner Lopez inquired about if the removal of all Department Heads would be brought before the Council, should the termination of City Attorney require Council approval.

No action taken.

Moved by Commissioner Qawwee to amend 4-306.5 to read "Planning Commission" not Planning Board.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Washington expressed interest in separating building safety and code compliance out of the Economic Development and Planning Department.

Motion carried, by unanimous consent, to correct a typo in 4-307.5 to read “by law”.

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to amend 4-308.3 to read “The person appointed to serve as the City Engineer shall be a registered Professional Engineer of the State of Michigan.”

No action taken.

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to amend 4-402.4 to read “Human Resources Director” instead of Chief Personnel Officer.

Motion carried.

Clerk Swope provided data about how City Clerks function as support to City Council across the state.

Commissioners discussed the role of the City Clerk.

New Business

A. Article 5: Line-by-Line Review

Commissioners decided not to take further action at this meeting.

Clerk Swope addressed the Commission about the composition of Boards and Commissions being tied to the number of wards.

Public Comment

Randy Dykhuis spoke about the timeline for appointments to Boards and Commissions.

Joy Gleason spoke about transparency in the appointments process and accountability for the Board and Water and Light.

Loretta Stanaway spoke about Council committee assignments and per diems, and legal counsel to the City Council.

Tirstan Walters spoke about eligibility requirements for the police chief.

Commissioner Remarks

No remarks.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Jeffries at 8:40 PM.