

Minutes for the City of Lansing Charter Commission

Regular Meeting | Tuesday, May 20, 2025, 6:30 PM

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

Present: Commissioners Adams Simon, Anderson (6:34), Bauer, Boyd, Dowd, Jeffries, Lopez, Qawwee, Washington (6:34)

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 Boyd to adopt the May 13, 2025 minutes as presented.

Motion carried.

Public Comment

No comments were made.

Officer Reports

Chair

Chair Jeffries spoke about proposed language for financial transparency.

Vice-Chair

No report.

Clerk

Clerk Swope acknowledged written communications in the packet and clarified the pay the Commissioners receive is a per diem of \$200 per meeting with a set maximum 45 total meetings.

Old Business

Article 3 and 4 Outstanding Sections Requiring Approval.

The Commission started with the attorney memo looking at 3-206.

Moved by Commissioner Dowd to strike the proposed changes to 3-206 made at January 7, 2025 meeting. This rejected change would have allowed the Council to authorize others to conduct investigations.

Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to strike the proposed changes to 3-207 made at January 7, 2025 meeting. This rejected change allowed Council to compel attendance of officers, and mandate cooperation with Council's requests for information.

Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Qawwee to strike the proposed Section D from 2-302.2. This rejected section allowed removal of office to take place for elected officials engaging in misconduct.

Motion carried.

3-201.1, .2, and .3 were adopted as presented

3-202.1 and .3 were adopted as presented.

3-204.1 was adopted as presented, following a discussion on forfeiture of office.

3-204.2 was adopted as presented.

3-205.2 and .3 were adopted as presented.

3-301.1 and .2 were adopted as presented.

3-302.1, .2, .3, .4, .5, and .6 were adopted as presented.

3-303.1 was adopted as presented.

3-303.2 Moved by Commissioner Dowd to amend 3-303.2 to add "and shall be published in accordance with this Charter."

Motion carried 3-303.2 now reads "Notice to the public of a public hearing on the consideration of the proposed ordinance shall be given by publication or in the manner determined by the City Council **and shall be published in accordance with this Charter.**"

3-303.3 was adopted as presented.

3-304.1, .2, and .3 were adopted as presented.

3-304.4 Moved by Commissioner Dowd to amend 3-304.4 to strike "distributed or sold to the public at reasonable prices to be fixed by the City Council" and to strike the word "copies" and then insert "published in accordance with this charter."

Motion carried 3-304.4 now reads "Every ordinance or resolution having the effect of law, and amendment to this Charter, shall be printed after enactment and shall be **published in accordance with this Charter.**"

3-305 was adopted as presented.

3-307.1, .2, .3, and .4 were adopted as presented

3-309 was adopted as presented.

4-101 was adopted as presented.

4-102.12 Moved by Commissioner Washington to amend 4-102.12 to add “or their designee.”

Motion carried 4.102.12 now reads “The Mayor **or their designee** shall receive, investigate, and respond to all requests for information and all complaints concerning the operation of the City government in a prompt and efficient manner.”

4-401 and 4-402 were adopted as presented.

Chapter 4 - INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDITS

Chairperson Jeffries overviewed his proposed language that would eliminate the Internal Auditor to create an Independent Auditor. Discussion followed regarding budgeting, election, and follow through for the auditors.

Articles 4 and 5, Police and Fire

Attorney Rewa overviewed the May 16 legal opinion that addresses the Fire and Police Chiefs. Commissioners discussed the hiring and firing process of chiefs of these departments

4-307 Moved by Commissioner Dowd to amend 4-307 to align the hiring and firing process for the Fire and Police Chiefs.

Motion Carried. 4-307 now reads: “.1 The Chief of Police shall be the administrative head of the Police Department and shall be responsible to the Mayor for the provision of Police service to the City.
.2 The Chief of Police shall be appointed by the Mayor **from candidates recommended by** ~~in consultation with~~ the Board of Police Commissioners, **in consultation with the Board** and subject to confirmation by a majority of the members of the Board of Police Commissioners serving. **Candidates for the Chief of Police shall be licensed by the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards or shall possess comparable licensure from another state and agree to obtain licensure by the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement standards following confirmation as the Chief of Police.**
.3 The Mayor may suspend the Chief of Police and shall notify the Board of Police Commissioners of the reasons for the suspension. The Board shall convene at the earliest opportunity after the suspension and shall determine, by a majority of the Board serving, whether the suspension shall continue. The Chief of Police may be removed by the Mayor only with the concurrence of a majority of the Board serving.
.4 Each member of the Police Department shall, before entering upon the duties of the office or employment, take an oath of office similar to that required of other officers of the City. A copy of the oath shall be subscribed in the presence of the City Clerk and filed in the office of the City Clerk.
.5 The police officers shall have and exercise all the immunities, privileges and powers of peace officers granted by law, for the preservation of quiet, good order and for the safety of persons and property. They shall possess and exercise the powers of arrest granted to peace officers by law, and shall promptly take any person who is arrested before the proper magistrate or court to be dealt with according to law. Violations of City ordinances shall be deemed to be misdemeanors for the purpose of establishing the power of police officers in making arrests.

4-303 Moved by Commissioner Qawwee to adopt 4-303 as presented.

Motion carried.

5-106.1, .2, .3, .4, .5, and .6 were adopted as presented

5-107.1, .2, and .3 were adopted as presented.

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

5-301.1, .2, .3, .4, .5, .6, and .7 were adopted as presented.

5-302 was adopted as presented.

5-401 was adopted as presented.

5-401.2 Moved by Commissioner Washington to correct a typo.

Motion carried. 5-401.2 Now reads “The board shall establish administrative rules for the organization and overall administration of the Department, in consultation with the Chief of the Fire Department and the Mayor. These administrative rules shall not be effectuated in accordance with Section 5-105.8 of this Charter but shall become effective upon the filing with the City Clerk.”

5-401.3, .4, .5, .6, and .7 were adopted as presented.

Article 3 and 5, Training City Council and boards

Attorney Rewa overviewed the May 16 legal opinion that addresses Training Language. Commissioners

3-207 Moved by Commissioner Washington to add City Council training in next available section.

Motion carried. 3-207.4 now reads **“In addition to the training requirements set forth in Section 5-105.12, members of City Council shall undergo training on drafting ordinances and municipal finance which shall be completed within six months of taking office.”**

5-105 moved by Commissioner Dowd to add training in next available section.

Motion carried. 5-105.12 now reads **“Members of all boards and commissions shall undergo training on laws, rules, and municipal matters relevant to the duties of the board served. At a minimum, all members shall complete training on the Michigan Constitution, the City Charter, the Open Meetings Act, the Home Rule Cities Act, the Ethics Ordinance, parliamentary procedure, and such general topics provided to City employees upon hire, including harassment, implicit bias, and privacy. Training shall be completed within six months of appointment.”**

Attorney Rewa suggests creating a 5-201.2 to add BWL Training. Breina Pugh of the BWL came before the Commission to propose the following language: “In addition to the training requirements set forth in Section 5-105.12 members of the Board of Water and Light shall undergo training consistent with that required by employees, as well as training related to governance of municipal utilities”. They state that members get ethics, harassment, and cybersecurity training as basic training.

5-201 Moved by Commissioner Boyd to adopt the proposed language.

Motion carried. 5-201.2 now reads **“In addition to the training requirements set forth in Section 5-105.12, members of the Board of Water and Light shall undergo training consistent with that required of employees, as well as training related to governance of municipal utilities.”**

ARTICLE 8

Attorney Rewa overviewed the May 16 legal opinion regarding Article 8.

8-201.1, .2, .3, .4, .5, and .6 were adopted as presented.

8-202.1 and .2 were adopted as presented

8-301 Moved by Vice-Chair Adams Simon to amend 8-301 in accordance with the BWL services enumerated in Article 5.

Motion carried. Now reads “The City shall have all the powers granted by law to own, operate, improve, enlarge, extend, repair, and maintain public utilities, either within or without its corporate limits and either within or without the corporate limits of counties in which the City may lie, including, but not by way of limitation, public utilities for supplying water and water treatment, **chilled water, thermal energy including heat or hot water and steam, electric services.** sewage disposal and treatment, electric light and power, gas, steam, heat, public transportation, or any similar service to the municipality and the inhabitants thereof; and shall also have the power to sell these services beyond its corporate limits as authorized by law.”

8-303 was approved as presented.

8-304.1, .2, and .3 were approved as presented.

8-401.1 Moved by Commissioner Dowd to amend 8-401.1 to remove the “lowest responsible bidder” provision in favor of “best value to the City.”

Motion carried. Now reads “The City shall establish procedures, by ordinance, to protect the interests of the City and to assure fairness in procuring personal property and services. The ordinance shall require competitive bidding for purchases **in a manner that provides the best value to the City** but there may be exceptional cases, clearly defined in the ordinance in which competitive bidding is not required.”

Moved by Commissioner Boyd to add 8-401.3.

Motion carried. 8-401.3 now reads “The City shall not make a contract with a person who is in default to the City.

8-403.2 and .3 were adopted as presented

New Business

Article 9: Transition

The Commission prepared to review and revise Article 9 at its next meeting.

Public Comment

No comments were made

Commissioner Remarks

No remarks were made.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Jeffries at 8:27 PM.